Endless Peace

Towards a conceptual framing of the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict

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1. Introduction

'My life is my message' – Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

This thesis focuses on the fact that the Norwegian government, during the better part of the last decade, was involved in the bloody and protracted conflict in Sri Lanka. In February 2000, Norway formally accepted a request made by the Sri Lakan government and the Tamil insurgency group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), to contribute to a negotiated solution to the protracted conflict between the two parties (Bullion 2001: 76; Moolakkattu 2005: 392). Officially, the Norwegian involvement in Sri Lanka lasted until early 2008, when the Sri Lankan government stated that it withdrew from the ceasefire agreement that had been signed between the two parties in September 2002 (Shastri 2009: 95).

The Sri Lankan conflict is usually explained as the result of Tamil grievances related to legislative measures relating citizenship, language, state employment, distribution of agricultural lands, and admission into institutions of higher education, that had been adopted by the Sri Lankan government since the country gained its independence from British colonial rule (Shastri 2009: 79). When the LTTE took up arms in July 1983, they fought, as their name indicates, for the creation of an independent state in the north and east of Sri Lanka.[1] When Norway formally accepted to intervene as a third party between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government in 2000, an estimated 64,000 sodiers and civilians had been killed and over 800,000 wounded as a result of the conflict. In addition to this, it was reckoned that more than 800,000 Tamil refugees had fled to Europe, North America, Australia and Asia since the war began (Bullion 2001: 70).

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[1] Eelam means 'homeland'.

In contrast with the five earlier attempts to solve the conflict by more or less non-violent means, the Norwegian intervention was long lasting and produced promising results. In February 2002, after a period of intense shuttle diplomacy by a team of Norwegian mediators, the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government signed a formal ceasefire agreement and agreed to start formal negotiations for a political settlement of the conflict. In the third round of negotiations, moreover, in what was described as a 'breakthrough', the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government agreed to 'explore a political solution founded on internal self-determination based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka' (Norwegian MFA 2002). However, after a series of events and a deterioriating security situation on the ground, in March 2003, the process broke down, and although the ceasefire agreement was still intact, what can be described as a state of negative peace lasted until the Sri Lankan government withdrew from the ceasefire in 2008, and eventually, a year later, after a 26 year long military campaign, defeated the LTTE.

What motivated Norway, a small state in the northernmost corner of Europe, to become involved in the Sri Lankan conflict? That is the underlying question driving this thesis. As such, this thesis does not seek to answer why the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government, India or any other actor accepted Norwegian intervention. It does not seek to explain why the Norwegian intervention failed to make the parties settle their differences by non-violent means. In fact, the numerous references to the Sri Lankan conflict contained in this thesis notwithstanding, this thesis is not about the Sri Lankan conflict at all. Rather, it is about Norway as a foreign policy actor.

Arguably, the understanding of Norway's 'peace and reconciliation' initiatives, and of what is known in Norwegian foreign policy circles as the 'policy of engagement', seems to be based upon a number of tacitly recognised assumptions about what the driving forces behind Norway's foreign policy is and ought to be. Among these assumptions, the binary view – or the *difference*, to allude to Jacques Derrida – of values and interests seems to be an important one. To cite an illustrative example: In his analysis of the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, Kristian Stokke (2010) asks: 'Why does a small country like Norway take on the role of peace

facilitator in distant intrastate conflicts where it has no obvious self-interests, and what characterises and determines the choice of strategy in such peace engagement? (2010: 1). Clearly, this question rests upon the theoretical assumption that foreign policy is a strategic activity driven by self-interests, and the puzzle arising from this assumption, is that Norway seems to have no apparent self-interests in Sri Lanka. As Stokke writes: 'The puzzle that motivates this article is that Norway's peace engagement in distant intrastate conflicts cannot be explained with reference to economic or security interests in the conflict zone' (*ibid*.). Stokke's constructivist epistemology and discourse analytic method, moreover, according to which it is assumed to be a mutual causal relationship between 'Norwegian foreign policy and diplomatic practices' (*ibid*.: 2), on the one hand, and 'the discursive construction of Norway as a peace promoter' (*ibid*.), on the other, leads him to conclude that 'peace engagement has provided an opportunity for merging interests and ideals in Norwegian foreign policy' (*ibid*.: 21). However, by treating the 'Norwegian peace engagement' and the merging of 'ideals and interests' as discursive constructions, it can be argued that the theoretical assumption underpinning Stokke's analysis, i.e. that Norway's foreign policy can adequately be framed by the conceptual distinction between ideals and interests, is left off the hook. In other words, while it might be the case that the Norwegian 'peace engagement' has provided an opportunity for merging ideals with interests in the Norwegian foreign policy *discourse*, the assumption that Norway's foreign policy can be adequately framed by the conceptual distinction between values/ideals and interests, is left unchallenged.

In an attempt to 'break out' of the Norwegian foreign policy discourse, this thesis makes two methodological moves. Firstly, it a presents a view of the *meaning* of foreign policy, derived from a fundamental distinction within the subject field of philsophy of action. And secondly, instead of approaching the question of why Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict head on, this thesis seeks to answer this question *through* an analysis of *how* Norway intervened. As such, this thesis seeks to proceed gradually from an empirical inquiry into the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, to an increasingly higher level of conceptual generality.

Consequently, the next chapter introduces the Aristotelian distinction between *poesis* and *praxis*, and demonstrates how this distinction can provide a useful framing of contemporary forms of foreign policy making. It is argued that the Marixan distinction between activity-with-end-product and activity-without-end-product, the Weberian distinction between an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of ultimate ends, the Laïdian distinction between project and projection, as well as the distinction, introduced by the British IR-scholar David Chandler, between foreign policy and anti-foreign policy, all can be seen as elaborations of the Aristotelian distinction between *poesis* and *praxis*. On the basis of a discussion of these distinctions, and their application in the subject area of International Relations, the research question that this thesis seeks to answer is formulated as follows: *Can the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict be understood as a strategic foreign policy project?* As such, the question this thesis seeks to answer is, in contrast with most research questions in the social sciences, neither of an explanatory, prescriptive, nor a purely descriptive nature. Rather, it is conceptual, asking how the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka should be conceptualised, that is, understood. This thesis draws upon a variety of sources in the subjec fields of International Relations, Political Theory, Political Science and in the Norwegian foreign policy discourse, and can, as such, be seen as an interdisciplinary attempt to make sense of the policy of engagement.

In the third chapter, the question of *how* Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict is pursued. This inquiry, based primarliy on secondary sources, leads to the conclusion that the two concepts of ownership and internationalisation can serve as general designators of the guiding ideas behind the Norwegian intervention.

The fourth chapter pursues the tripartite question of *what* Norway tried to achieve by intervening in Sri Lanka, *why* they tried to achieve this. It is argued that the claim that Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict in order to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by non-violent means, needs some material grounding in order to succeed as a strategic foreign policy project. It is moreover argued that the two conceptualisations of the policy of engagement as a

'globalisation policy', and as 'value-diplomacy' can be seen as attempts to construct the policy of engagement as a political project.

However, as argued in the fifth chapter, these two conceptualisations fails to provide the policy of engagement with material grounding, and consequently fails to make plausible the claim that Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict in order to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by non-violent means. Lacking material grounding, this thesis argues that the policy of engagement, as expressed by the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, should be understood as a non-strategic activity, designed to enable Norwegian policy makers to project an identity as a 'good international citizen' in the international sphere, while at the same time enable them to deny responsibility for policy outcomes.

2. Poesis and praxis

2.1 A fundamental distinction

In what in modern terms is known as the subject field of Philosophy of Action, human activities have traditionally been thought to fall in under one of the two following categories: Activities with an extrinsic purpose, and activities which are ends in themselves. This distinction, it seems, has informed the thinking of a number of political theorists, and can, as most conceptual distinctions, be traced back to the writings of Aristotle.[2] In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle highlights this distinction by the two concepts of *poesis*, on the one hand, and *praxis*, on the other. *Poesis*, Aristotle argues, 'has an end beyond it', whereas *praxis* 'does not, since its end is doing well itself' (Aristotle 1140b). Differently put, *poesis* can be understood as a teleological activity which, as such, is determined, explained and provided with meaning by a *telos* or a vision of a final end state, whereas *praxis* has no extrinsic purpose and must therefore be understood as an end in itself.

As mentioned, this distinction seems to have informed a number of political philosophers and social and political theorists. Karl Marx applied the distinction between activity-with-end-product and activity-without-end-product in his analysis of intellectual labour. Marx argued that it makes sense to distinguish between activities which result 'in commodities which exist separately from the producer [like] books, paintings and all products of art as distinct from the artistic achievement of the practising artist' (cited in Virno 2004: 54) from activities in which the 'product is not separable from the act of producing' (*ibid.*), like playing music, dancing, teaching, preaching and so on. The same conceptual distinction can be seen to have informed Max Webers division of 'ethically oriented conduct' into an 'ethic of responsibility',

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[2] As the British IR-scholar Mary Kaldor points out, ideas tend to recur throughout history: '[y]ou think you've had a new idea and almost invariably somebody else had it before you - usually Aristotle' (Kaldor 2003: 584)

on the one hand and an 'ethic of ultimate ends'[3], on the other (Weber 2004). As he put it in what has become known as 'the Vocation Lectures':

> *We must be clear about the fact that all ethically oriented conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be oriented to an 'ethic of ultimate ends' or to an 'ethic of responsibility [...] You may demonstrate to a convinced syndicalist, believing in an ethic of ultimate ends, that his action will result in increasing the opportunities of reaction, in increasing the oppression of his class, and obstructing its ascent--and you will not make the slightest impression upon him. If an action of good intent leads to bad results, then, in the actor's eyes, not he but the world, or the stupidity of other men, or God's will who made them thus, is responsible for the evil. However a man who believes in an ethic of responsibility takes account of precisely the average deficiencies of people; as Fichte has correctly said, he does not even have the right to presuppose their goodness and perfection. He does not feel in a position to burden others with the result of his own actions so far as he was able to foresee them; he will say: these results are ascribed to my action. The believer in an ethic of ultimate ends feels 'responsible' only for seeing to it that the flame of pure intentions is not quelched: for example, the flame of protesting against the injustice of the social order. To rekindle the flame ever anew is the purpose of his quite irrational deeds, judged in view of their possible success. They are acts that can and shall have only exemplary value (*ibid.*)*

Here, Weber's distinction between an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of ultimate ends can be seen as an extrapolation of the Aristotelian distinction between *poesis* and *praxis*. Ironically, however, the ethic of ultimate ends seems to be not so much about ends as being a self-referential activity which is determined, explained and provided with meaning by quality of the actor's intentions. Because what matters for an actor informed by an ethic of ultimate ends is the quality of the intentions, and not the quality of the outcomes of her actions, her actions can be undestood as ends in themselves. As indicated by Weber's description of an ethic of ultimate ends, extrinsic outcomes, and perhaps especially unintended and unwanted outcomes, are seen, not as the result of the actor's own actions, but as the result of external factors, and responsibility for the outcomes are moreover ascribed to these external factors.

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[3] Sometimes called 'ethics of conviction'.

The ethic of responsibility, on the other hand, is about taking responsibility not only for the intended consequences of actions, but also for unintended consequences. As such, the actor will see intended and unintended consequences as an integral part of his or her own actions. Ironically, again, an actor informed by an ethic of responsibility will be more concerned with the actual end product of his or her actions, than an actor informed by an ethic of ultimate ends.

In more recent years, the Italian political theorist Paolo Virno (2004) has elaborated on the Aristotelian distinction between *poesis* and *praxis*. Apparently sensitive to the fact that it is easier to make sense of *poesis* than *praxis* Virno elucidates this latter concept by analogy to the concept of virtuosity. In *A Grammar of the Multitude*, he explains that virtuosity means 'an activity which finds its own fulfilment (that is, its own purpose) in itself without objectifying itself into an end product, without settling into a "finished product", or into an object which would survive the performance' (2004: 52). Moreover, Virno argues that virtuosic activity 'require the presence of others' and 'exists only in the presence of an audience' (*ibid.*). Virno moreover point out that these two characteristics, i.e. that virtuosic activity has no end product, and that it only make sense if seen or heard by an audience, are inter-related: 'Virtuosos need the presence of an audience precisely because they are not producing an end product, an object which will circulate through once the activity has ceased. Lacking a specific extrinsic product, the virtuoso has to rely on witnesses' (*ibid.*).

2.2 *Poesis* and *Praxis* in International Relations

In the subject area of International Relations, the Aristotelian distinction between *poesis* and *praxis* can be seen to have informed the French *géopolitologue* Zaki Laïdi's (1998) interpretation of international politics in the post Cold War era. In his seminal book *A World Without Meaning: The Crisis of meaning in international politics*, Laïdi argues that the dynamics of post Cold War international politics is marked by a fundamental separation of meaning and power. In contrast with the Cold War, which, as Laïdi puts it, 'managed to combine two absolutes: meaning, symbolized by the ideological combat between two universal and competing value-

systems; and power, carried out by the absolute weapon, the nuclear weapon (1998: 15), in the post Cold War era, 'we are experiencing a real divorce between a pace of power that is intensifying and a meaning, which by becoming fragmented and no longer global, is flaking away, disintegrating and dispersing (*ibid.*: 4). In contrast with the ideological combat between 'Sovietism' and liberalism, which, as Laïdi argues, was able to 'encompass', or give a global meaning to, even 'a minor ethnic convulsion in Africa' (*ibid.*: 18), our present era, marked by globalisation, is characterised by the 'loss of symbolic representation of our future' (*ibid.*: 11). In Laïdi's interpretation, globalisation signifies above all the loss of a *telos* or a final goal and the 'brutal death' of what the German historiographer Reinhart Koselleck calls the horizon of expectation (*ibid.*: 4).

The Aristotelian distinction between *poesis* and *praxis*, becomes visible in Laïdi's description of the post Cold War era as one in which '[p]rojection would contrast more and more with project as future does to becoming'. Political actions, Laïdi argues, 'no longer find their legitimacy in a vision of the future, but have been reduced to managing the ordinary present' (*ibid.*: 7).

A project, Laïdi argues, 'is by nature like a construct. It implies an effort to make the future into an issue, to symbolize destiny, to tear a social or political group away from reality, not to deny it but to transcend it' (*ibid.*: 107). As such, a project is about producing an end result. Projection, on the other hand, is not a construct, not about producing an end result, but simply a reflection of 'the need for individual or collective actors to tie their present ever more strongly into a future brought nearer by the compression of time and made wider in space by the globalization of spaces' (*ibid.*: 106). As Laïdi sees it, actors in the post Cold War era, 'no longer try to move towards a goal, to cross the gap separating experience from expectation' (*ibid.*: 7) and could therefore be described as 'actors without a project' (*ibid.*: 105).

Laïdi cites the international response to the crisis in Bosnia in the 1990s as an illustration of the distinction between project and projection. He writes:

> *[i]t was possible to think of sending 50 000 UN soldiers to Bosnia, not to ensure the country's political existence but to guarantee its official dissection. The size of the resources put to use (projection strategy) was all the greater for not being at the service of a precise or convincing end-goal. In this particular case it was the international community's inability to find a solution that meant it had to provide such an orgy of means. This explains for the most part why, in the Balkan crisis, the more the governments reassured public opinion about their involvement and their humanitarian activism, the more the public felt, with resignation or with indignation, how passive the said governments were. There is no better illustration of the discrepancy between action and the sense of action, between projection and project (*ibid.*: 110)*

As Laïdi sees it, moreover, the general understanding of social actors in the post Cold War era as 'actors without a project' has several implications for state actors. First, Laïdi argues, without a project, state actors lose what he calls the 'language of priorities' (*ibid.*: 107). Instead of starting a project, which as Laïdi sees it implies both a vision of a final end state and a plan of action designed to achieve this end state, the 'sense of urgency' attached to problems in the international sphere makes policy makers behave 'like actors involved in a succession of plots who are asked to use their skills, as different scenes take place, to provide the appropriate reaction to any given situation (*ibid.*). Secondly, and consequently, policy makers will employ what Laïdi calls 'avoidance strateg[ies]', i.e. a plan designed to enable policy makers to deny responsibility for their policies. And thirdly, without a project, policy makers will experience a heightened need to carve out a distinct identity in the global system. For policy makers, he argues, 'globalization is translated above all by the disappearance of opting out, the symbolic possibility of changing systems, of exiting the game' (*ibid.*: 111). The impossibility of opting out, moreover, 'sparks and identity reflect which makes [the states] 'locate' themselves in [the] global system' instead of 'calling for 'a political alternative'' (*ibid.*).

Arguably, the Laïdian distinction between project and projection, and the corresponding distinction between 'action' and the 'sense of action' corresponds in an intriguing and complex way with the Weberian distinction between an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of ultimate ends. An actor with a project will see him or

herself as a producer, i.e. as someone involved in the realisation of a plan of action designed to achieve an overall aim. As such, a project implies a means-end way of thinking about actions and consequences. Projection, on the other hand, is a fundamentally reactive activity, where responsibility for the consequences of a situation is ascribed to other actors or in some cases the situation itself and all that is left is the sheer need, experienced by social actors, to carve out an identity.

Arugably, moreover, the Laïdian interpretation of post Cold War international politics as marked by a fundamental separation of meaning of power, cuts across one of the major debates in the subject field of International Relations: the debate between constructivist (sometimes called reflectivist), on the one hand, and rationalists/realists, on the other. While it seems fair to say that realism and its varieties (neorealism, structural realism and neoliberalism) dominated theorising in the subject area of International Relations during the Cold War, the post Cold War era has seen the appearance of a set of theories which challenges the epistemological assumptions of realism. One of the most frequently cited examples of this constructivist challenge to realist theories, is found in Alexander Wendt's (1992) article 'Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics'. By taking the debate between neorealists (or structural realists) and neoliberalists (or liberal institutionalists), as a point of departure, Wendt sought to challenge the underlying epistemological assumptions underlying both theories. In contrast with more normatively oriented critiques of realism, Wendt did not primarily seek to challenge the descriptive and theoretical content of these theories, but rather the epistemological premises upon which these theories are founded. As he wrote, 'I will not […] contest the neorealist description of the contemporary state system as a competitive, self-help world. I will only dispute its explanation' (1992: 396). The debate between neorealists and neoliberalists at the turn of the Cold War (the so-called neo-neo debate) centred around the question of how likely it was that lasting cooperation between states would occur in an international structure marked by anarchy, defined *via negativa* as the absence of a government over governments (Mearsheimer 2001). In the neorealist framework, the anarchical structure implied a highly limited possibility of cooperation between states because the anarchical

structure, as they saw it, entailed, both logically and causally, that the international sphere would be a self-help system, i.e. a zero-sum game in which states would be concerned with the relative distribution of power. Although the neorealists did not dispute that cooperation between states would in some cases benefit all the cooperating states in absolute terms, the fact that the benefits of cooperation would rarely be distributed equally among the cooperating states, led them to conclude that lasting cooperation was unlikely to occur. Differently put, as long as the modus operandi of the international system was that of self-help, a long-lasting modus vivendi between states would be rare and only occur in exceptional cases. Whereas the neoliberalists shared most of the epistemological and theoretical assumptions of the neorealist framework - i.e. the view that states were rational and unitary actors constituted exogenously by the structural logic of anarchy - they contested its conclusion. In the neoliberalist framework, the anarchical structure entailed a self-help system, but this, they argued, could be overcome by institutionalised cooperation. The idea was that states, by institutionalising their cooperation could gradually learn to trust each other, and thus overcome the concern with relative gains and instead focus on absolute gains.

However, and as Wendt pointed out, this process outlined in the neoliberalist framework, by which states learned to trust each other, were undertheorised and did not follow from the structural logic of anarchy. Instead of viewing state actors as exogenously constituted by the structural logic of anarchy, Wendt suggested that the anarchical structure should be seen as the casual result of an intersubjective process of action and reaction. According to this epistemological scheme, stucture was seen as casually dependent on process, and not the other way around. As he wrote:

> *I argue that self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy and that if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure. There is no "logic" or anarchy apart from the practices that create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process. Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy.* Anarchy is what states make of it *(Wendt 1992: 395, emphasis in original).*

Here, Wendt effectively reverses the epistemological order of the realist argument. Instead of viewing state interests and state identities as the causal and logical entailments of the anarchical structure, Wendt argues that interests are based on identities, which again are constituted through a socialising process of action and reaction and participation in what he calls 'collective meanings'. The conceptualisation of institutions such as the self-help system as 'cognitive' entities that do not exist apart from actors' ideas about how the world works' (*ibid.*: 399) or as 'nothing but' beliefs, rather than a brute facts existing independently of human cognition, indicates a significant departure from the epistemological assumptions upon which realist theories are based.

It is against the background of this constructivist epistemology that the Laïdian interpretation of post Cold War international politics, and his distinction between project and projection, should be understood. Instead of assuming, as the rationalists were inclined to do, that states are rational actors with a clear-cut identity, and a clear conception of what their foreign policies are for, a constructivist epistemology opens up for a probleamtization of the relationship between actors sense of who they are (identities), what they do (actions), and what they want (projects), and to keep as an open question (to allude to the British philosopher G. E. Moore) whether policy actors construct their policies have a clear view to what they are trying to achieve. Laïdi's concepts of project and projection, and the corresponding distinction between 'action' and a 'sense of action', can be seen as an attempt to frame the question of whether actors in the post Cold War international sphere have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve, i.e. a vision of a final end state, and a plan of action designed to reach this overall aim, i.e. a strategy. As Weber, Laïdi juxtaposes a concern with consequences and strategic aims, with a concern with identities and intentions. And as shown, at a certain level, this juxtaposition seems to correspond with the Aristotelian distinction between *poesis*, i.e. an action with an end goal, and *praxis*, i.e. an action which is an end in itself.

2.3 *Poesis* and *praxis* as a framework for policy analysis

Closer to the subject field of Foreign Policy Analysis, this Laïdian and Weberian theme has been pursued by the British IR-scholar David Chandler (2009) in his recent book *Hollow Hegemony*. Inspired by the ontological focus and epistemological framework adopted by Karl Marx in *The German Ideology* – a study of the crisis of political subjectivity and the consequential retreat into idealism of the German bourgeoisie in early nineteenth-century Germany – Chandler takes, as Laïdi and Weber, the policy actor as his object of inquiry. As he writes: '[f]oreign policy, the projection of power externally, often tells us more about the foreign policy actor than any external object' (2009: 50). Noticing that post Cold War foreign policy making is marked by an increased emphasis on globalised norms and values such as human rights, democracy, the responsibility to protect and human security, he argues that this form of 'globalised' foreign policy making is marked by a lack of an 'interest-based instrumental relationship between the policy actor and the ostensible object of concern' (*ibid.*: 30) and moreover that these 'value-based' policy agendas are 'driven by self-image and can be better grasped in terms of performative or simulated techniques' (*ibid.*: 31)

The juxtaposition of instrumental or strategic policy making, on the one hand, with policy agendas driven by self-image, on the other, seems to correspond in a fundamental way with the Aristotelian distinction between *poesis* and *praxis*, as well as the Laïdian distinction between project and projection and the Weberian distinction between an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of ultimate ends.

The analytic value of these distinctions comes to the fore if we compare it to a standard textbook definition of foreign policy. Usually, foreign policy is defined as an instrumental-strategic relationship between a state and its surroundings. As Jackson and Sørensen (2007) argue, foreign policy is

> *the management of external relations and activities of nation-states, as distinguished from their domestic policies. Foreign policy involves goals, strategies, measures, methods, guidelines, directives, understandings, agreements and so on, by which national governments conduct international relations with each other and with international organizations and non-govermental actors (2007: 223).*

Arguably, this definition seems to be based on a rationalist-*cum*-realist understanding of international politics, according to which foreign policy is seen as the logical and causal implication of the anarchical structure of the international sphere.

From the other side of the constructivist/rationalist divide, David Campbell (1998) has argued that foreign policy is a constitutive activity, i.e.

> *a political practice that makes "foreign" certain events and actors. Those events and actors that come to be "foreign" through the imposition of a certain interpretation are not considered as "foreign" simply because they are situated in opposition to a pregiven social entity (the state). The construction of the "foreign" is made possible by practices that also constitute the "domestic". In other words, foreign policy is "a specific sort of boundary-producing political performance" (1998: 61-2)*

Just as the Laïdian interpretation of international politics can be seen to cut across the divide between constructivism and rationalism, Chandler's view of policy making cuts across the view of foreign policy as a strategic activity, and the view of foreign policy as a constitutive activity. Although Chandler does not dispute that the *meaning* of foreign policy implies that it is a strategic-instrumental activity, he questions whether contemporary forms of foreign policy making, and particularly policies referred to as 'values-based', qualifies as a strategic activity. And as already mentioned, he argues that they do not. To highlight the fact that foreign policy denotes a strategic-instrumental relationship between a policy actor and an object of concern, Chandler labels the type of non-strategic and non-instrumental foreign policy that he takes contemporary 'values-based' policy agendas to be an example of, 'anti-foreign policy' (Chandler 2009: 30). This form of policy can be understood as 'anti', or the opposite of, foreign policy, both because it is non-strategic and non-

instrumental, and also because it is driven by self-images and hence says more about the policy actor than any extrinsic or 'foreign' object.

Chandler's juxtaposition of 'values-based' and 'interes-based' frameworks of policy making seems to rest upon a specific view of the relationship between values as interests. As Chandler sees it, values and interests are inherently, that is, analytically, connected. As he points out:

> *In fact, it is clear that there can be no interests without values, without conscious political decisions as to what ends and aspirations of government and society are. As constructivist are right to suggest, without a clear sense of self-identity and clear values, it is not possible to have clear strategic interests (*ibid.*: 192).*

However, the view of values and interests as inherently connected, does not imply that values and interests are the same thing. Chandler writes:

> *There is one difference between values and interests: one can hold values without engaging in foreign policy-making; values do not depend on engagement with the outside world, and success or failure in any engagement will not necessarily impact on one's values. Interests, on the other hand, suggests the need for a strategic engagement with the world of international affairs in order to safeguard or further those interests. Values can never be put at stake by the actions of others, the actions of others may offend against our values but our values cannot be threatened in the same way that our interests can be. Interests are concrete and therefore contingent, subject to change and vulnerable, in ways which abstract values are not (*ibid.*: 216)*

It is not necessary, at this stage, to agree with the Laïdian interpretation of post Cold War international politics as marked by a fundamental separation of meaning and power, or Chandler's interpretation of this dynamics as a 'hollow hegemony', to appreciate the analytical usefulness of the distinction between project and projection, and the associated distinctions between foreign policy and anti-foreign policy, and between 'values-based' and 'interests-based' frameworks of policy making. On the one hand, foreign policy can be understood as *poesis*, i.e. an activity which 'has an end beyond it' (Aristotle 1140b) and therefore has to be understood teleologically

with reference to an extrinsic outcome. Arguably, this form of foreign policy implies the existence of what Laïdi calls a political project, i.e. a vision of a final end state and a strategy, i.e. a plan of action designed to achieve this end state. Moreover, as Weberian distinction between an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of ultimate ends demonstrates, this form of policy also implies responsibility for extrinsic outcomes. On the other hand, foreign policy can be understood as *praxis*, i.e. an activity which can not be explained teleologically, but is itself an end. Arguably, this form of foreign policy is a self-referential activity with no other end than to construct and maintain a distinct identity in the international sphere. It moreover implies an avoidance of responsibility for extrinsic outcomes.

Based on the general discussion of the usefulness of the Aristotelian distinction between *poesis* and *praxis* for an interpretation of post Cold War foreign policy making, the question that this thesis seeks to answer can be formulated as follows: *Can the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict be understood as a strategic foreign policy project?* This question, however, requires specification. To ask whether the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict was a strategic activity is to ask whether the intervention should be understood teleologically, i.e. as determined, explained and provided with meaning by a *telos*, or a final end state, or whether it should be understood as a self-referential activity which says more about Norwegian policy makers than any ostensible object of concern. More radically put, to ask whether the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict was a strategic activity, is to ask whether this intervention should be understood as a foreign policy project, or whether it should be understood as an attempt by Norwegian policy makers to locate themselves in the international sphere by constructing and maintaining a distinct identity (projection)?

In the next chapter, this question will be pursued through an inquiry into the question of *how* Norway intervened in Sri Lanka.

3.   Norwegian style conflict resolution

3.1 Norway's approach: Additive description

 In the course of the last two decades, Norway has been involved in a number of different conflict areas around the world (Norwegian MFA 2009: 118). In a few of these conflicts, Norway has both acted as, and been formally recognized as, a third-party mediator. Although some analysts have criticised the various Norwegian mediation efforts for failing to produce substantive results (see, e.g., Østerud 2006: 309) or even for adding fuel to already flammable conflicts (see, e.g., Said 1998), it is fair to say that the Norwegian mediation efforts have generally been celebrated, internationally as well as domestically, as a small and benevolent country's willingness to allocate resources and attentions to conflict ridden countries and regions. The political analysts Ann Kelleher and James Larry Taulbee (2006) seems to reflect a widespread belief when they argue that 'because of its connections, its willingness to fill gaps and take on tasks major powers find difficult to assume, Norway has emerged as an important player in peace making' (2006: 499).

It seems that the various meditation efforts have largely operated on an *ad hoc* basis, most frequently as a consequence of certain individuals' and Norwegian NGO's contacts and involvement in certain conflict areas. Consequently, many have denied that Norway has a well-defined set of operational principles when they decide to involve themselves in a conflict (Kelleher and Taulbee 2006: 483). The current Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre (2010), recently emphasized the 'flexibility' in the Norwegian 'peace' efforts. As he put it: 'Different means, different ways'.

Yet, several attempts have been made to explore whether the Norwegian approach to conflict resolution has any key characteristics or salient features. In 'Bridging the Gap: Building Peace Norwegian Style', Kelleher and Taulbee (2006) hypothesises that the Norwegian conflict resolution approach is characterized by one fundamental and six procedural conditions. Based on case studies of the Norwegian involvement

in the Guatemalan civil war, in the Middle East (Israel/Palestine) conflict, as well as the Sudanese and Sri Lankan civil wars, Kelleher and Taulbee hypothesises that the Norwegian approach is characterised by six 'operational conditions': First, and as already mentioned, Norwegian Foreign Ministry officials actively involve, and to a certain extent rely upon Norwegian NGOs and trusted individuals in order to build confidence and trust on both sides of the conflict. Second, negotiations between warring factions are usually carried out in secrecy and confidentiality. Instead of seeking media exposure, Kelleher and Taulbee argue, 'Norway has *usually* sought to have its efforts remain islotated from critics and media demands' (*ibid*.: 484, emphasis in original). Third, when Norwegian government officials intervene as a third-party in a conflict area, they prepare themselves for the long haul. As Kelleher and Taulbee put it, Norwegian intervention seems to be based on the idea that 'moving from conflict to constructive communication may entail years and a willingness to accept many short-term setbacks (*ibid.*: 485). Fourth, the Norwegian government may provide funding at critical points in the negotiations. Fifth, Norway's mediatory mode is facilitation, described by Kelleher and Taulbee as 'aggressive good offices' (*ibid.*: 485). As they argue, 'facilitators will do everything they can to get the parties together and keep them together, from providing a place to meet away from public scrutiny to doing what must be done in order to generate the time necessary to work through deeply divisive and emotional issues' (*ibid*.). And finally, Norway acts as a 'team player', 'actively drawing upon the resources and activities of other states and organizations' (*ibid.*: 486).

To a certain extent, Kelleher and Taulbee's additive description of Norway's approach to conflict resolution seems to correspond with the Norwegian government's self perception. The 2009 White Paper from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009) states, among other things, that '[t]he close cooperation between the Norwegian authorities, NGOs and research institutions is a distinctive and important feature of Norway's policy of engagement in [the field of peace and reconciliation]' (2009: 119); that 'Norway's engagement is long-term and process-oriented' (*ibid*.); that 'Norway's engagement is generally in close cooperation with other actors, particularly various UN organisation' (*ibid*.) and that '[o]ne of Norway's advantages

is peace and reconciliation efforts is our ability to keep a low profile where the situation calls for it' (*ibid.*: 120).

A more elaborate account of Norwegian government officials' self perceived approach to peace making is found in a speech made by the current Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in 2010. Asking what Norway's peace making 'trademark' is, he argued that, first, 'Norway's engagement enjoys broad political support' (Støre 2010). A shift in government would therefore not lead to significant changes in the various Norwegian engagements. As Støre put it, the Norwegian foreign policy consensus 'secures decisive continuity and predictability' (*ibid.*). Second, through engagement in different conflicts over the last two decades, Norway has an 'establish competence' in the field of conflict resolution (*ibid.*). Third, the Norwegian policy of engagement is marked by cooperation between 'government agencies, research communities and voluntary organisations' (*ibid.*). Fourth, the Norwegian government has a will to take risks. To be engaged, Støre argued, 'means in most cases a risk' (*ibid.*). Fifth, Norway is an impartial actor with few self interests. Norway has no colonial history and few political and economic interests that could call the Norwegian engagement into question (*ibid.*). And finally, Norway has an ability to 'manage silent, confidential and secret processes […] enabling parties to build confidence and trust' (*ibid.*).

Arguably, these additive descriptions of the Norwegian approach to conflict resolution seem to a certain extent to apply to the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict.

Confidence through civil society actors and trusted individuals
Firstly, as to the point made by Kelleher and Taulbee, the 2009 MFA White Paper and Jonas Gahr Støre about the close relationship between the Norwegian government and Norwegian NGOs and trusted individuals, the official Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict seems to have been preceded by years, indeed decades, of involvement of Norwegian NGOs on the island. Already in 1967, the Norwegian journalist Arne Fjørtoft founded an organisation called Ceynor in Sri Lanka – a development project that sought to revitalize and expand the fishing

industry in Karainagar on the Jaffna Peninsula in Sri Lanka's northern province
(Kelleher and Taulbee 2006: 494; Stokke 2010: 12) - and a few years later
Worldview International Foundation - a project that sought to educate Sri Lankan's in
television and film production as a means to highlight the problems of developing
countries and their 'efforts to emancipate themselves from poverty and
backwardness' (NORAD 1984: 14). In 1974, moreover, Save the Children Norway
(Redd Barna) set up a health care centre in the northern province of Sri Lanka, and
the Norwegian Church Aid had also been involved in development work on the island
(Kelleher and Taulbee 2006: 494; Moolakkattu 2005: 390). From more official
circles, the Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD) had had a long official
working relationship with the Sri Lankan government and Erik Solheim, who was
appointed Special Envoy to Sri Lanka by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
in 2000, had ties to the LTTE through his membership in the Socialist Left Party
(Kelleher and Taulbee 2006: 495). Norway had also, along with the Netherlands and
Canada, dispatched representatives to the monitoring mission set up after the signing
of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Sri Lankan government and
the LTTE in 1995 (Moolakkatu 2005: 390).

Long-term engagement
Secondly, the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka could accurately, it seems, be
described as a long-term engagement. Despite shifts in the Norwegian government
from a centrist coalition government to a minority Labour government in early 2000,
then a shift from to centre-right government in 2001 and a new shift to a centre-left
government in 2005, the Norwegian efforts continued unabatedly. As mentioned,
Erik Solheim was appointed Special Envoy to Sri Lanka by the Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs in March 2000. Solheim was appointed Special Envoy in spite of
the fact that he was a leading figure in the Socialist Left Party, which was not a
government party at that time. Moreover, and in contrast with many other mediation
efforts, which are used as a tool for immediate crisis management, Norway's official
mediation efforts extended over more than 6 years. As Höglund and Svensson (2011)
point out, 'the Norwegian mediation effort was in many respects unique in its long
duration' (2011: 18). In spite of the fact that formal negotiations between the LTTE

and the Sri Lankan government lasted for only seven months in 2002 and 2003, it was first when the Sri Lankan government in 2008 announced that it was withdrawing from the ceasefire agreement that Norway put an end to its mediation efforts.

Secrecy and confidentiality

Thirdly, whereas Jonas Gahr Støre's claim that Norway has an ability 'to manage silent, confidential and secret processes' (2010), might hold for most of the conflict resolution processes that Norway has been involved in over the last twenty years, this was definitely not the case in the Sri Lankan conflict. Although Norway attempted to maintain the confidentiality of the negotiations, the Norwegian role became a divisive topic in the Sri Lankan and Tamil press (Kelleher and Taulbee 2006: 469). At numerous occasions during the process, Norwegian impartiality was publicly questioned from all sides. Sinhalese nationalists and Buddhist monks criticised the Norwegian intervention for being a 'continuation of imperialist designs' (cited in Moolakkattu 2005: 393), while the Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who had been excluded from the negotiation process after her party, the SLFP, was replaced by a UNP-led government after the general elections in 2001, criticised the Norwegian mediation team for siding with the LTTE (*ibid.*) LTTE representatives, on the other hand, at a number of occasions criticised the Norwegian mediation team for siding with the Sri Lankan government (*ibid.*), while human rights organisations, particularly the Tamil-dominated University Teacher's Association for Human Rights (UTHR) criticised Norway for not speaking out against human rights violations committed by the LTTE (*ibid.*: 394).

Critical funding and Norway as a 'team player'

Fourthly, the Norwegian government actively sought funding and support from the other international actors. As a response to the LTTE's and the Sri Lankan government's joint appeal issued at the first round of official negotiations in February 2002, the Norwegian government organised a support meeting for the 'Sri Lankan Peace Process' in Oslo in November 2002'. Here, over one hundred state officials and representatives from nineteen nations, including the United States' Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for

International Development Clair Short, agreed to convene a donor conference in Tokyo the following year. At the following donor conference in Tokyo, which took place despite the LTTE's decision not to attend because the US designation of the organisation as a terrorist organisation had excluded them from a preparatory working meeting in Washington DC (Shastri 2009: 86), officials and representatives from 51 countries and 22 organisations pledged an estimated amount of US $4.5 billion for the four year period from 2003 to 2006 (Stokke 2010: 16).

Moreover, as a consequence of the ceasefire agreement between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, it was decided that Norway should set up and lead the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which should 'conduct international verification through on-site monitoring of the fulfilment of the commitments' in the ceasefire agreement (as stipulated in article 3 of the ceasefire agreement). According to the ceasefire agreement, moreover, the SLMM should be led by Norway and consist of representatives from the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden in addition to Norway).

Facilitation

And finally, at first glance, it seems to be the case that the Norwegian approach to the conflict in Sri Lanka could be described as some form of facilitation. In contemporary mediation research, facilitation is usually understood as a subcategory of mediation, generally understood as 'a form of third-party assistance in which an invited outsider helps the belligerent parties with their conflict management efforts' (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006: 331). According to Bercovitch and Gartner, *communication-facilitation* strategies 'describe mediator behaviour at the low end of the intervention spectrum. Here a mediator typically adopts a fairly passive role, channelling information to the parties, facilitating cooperation, but exhibiting little control over the more formal process or substance of mediation' (*ibid.*: 339). The Norwegian mediation efforts that led to the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO in 1993 is cited as a case in point. The communication-facilitation strategy is moreover distinguished from what Bercovitch and Gartner calls *procedural strategies*, which enable a mediator to exert a more formal control over the process and environment of the

mediation. 'Here a mediator may determine structural aspects of the meetings, control constituency influences, media publicity, the distribution of information, and the situation of the parties' resources and communication processes' (*ibid.*), and *directive strategies*, understood as the most powerful form of intervention. 'Here a mediator affects the content and substance of the bargaining process by providing incentives for the parties to negotiate or by issuing ultimatums. Directive strategies aim to change the way issues are framed and the behaviour associated with them' (*ibid.*).

The idea that the Norwegian role was supposed to be facilitative, seems to be reflected both in the design of the process, and in statements made by Norwegian, Sri Lankan and LTTE officials before and during the process. First of all, and in line with the Norweigan MFA's description of Norway's 'peace and reconciliation' efforts as 'very often initated at the direct request of the parties to a conflict' (Norwegian MFA 2009: 119), it was the Sri Lankan president Chandrika Kumaratunga and the LTTE leader, Velupillai Parbhakaran who in late 1999 asked Norway to act as a third-party facilitator between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE. And after a series of meetings between Norwegian Foreign Ministry officials and representatives from the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government in the beginning of 2000, in February the same year, Norway formally agreed to the request (Bullion 2001: 76; Moolakkattu 2005: 392).[4]

Moreover, in a speech he made in Jakarta in 2002, the Norwegian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2001 to 2005 Vidar Helgesen, although admitting that he 'was not entirely sure of the reason' why the parties had agreed to ask Norway, cited as a possible explanation Norway's reputation for having kept a low-profile in previous conflict resolution processes. As he said,

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[4] In an interview with the BBC, Kumaratunga later reveald that first the Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku and subsequently the Norwegian government had been approached since mid-1997 as potential mediators

Norway's role is to assist the parties in their efforts to reach a political solution. We do not go beyond the tasks that the parties ask us to assume. Concretely, a significant part of Norway's efforts are focused on facilitating understandings between the parties: we let the parties communicated with each other in order to minimize misunderstandings; we clarify the implications of media reports for the parties; and we help bridge the gap between the positions of the parties (Helgesen 2002; see also Moolakkattu 2005: 392).

Clearly, Helgesen's view that the Norwegian mediators did not go beyond the tasks that the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government assigned to them, seems to be in line with the Bercovitch and Gartner's general description of communication-facilitation strategies. However, although the lines demarcating facilitation from other more intrusive forms of mediation seems clear enough and Norway insisted that its role was a facilitating one, this nevertheless quickly became an issue of contention between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

In an interview, President Kumaratunga expressed guarded optimism on the 'talks about talks' that had come about through Norwegian-led shuttle diplomacy, but expressed reservations about the high publicity role played by Erik Solheim, who, as mentioned above, had been appointed Special Envoy to Sri Lanka on 30 March 2000 and assigned with the task of preparing the necessary groundwork for negotiations between the parties (Moolakkattu 2005: 392)

We've made it very clear to the Norwegians - and they accept this fully - that they have been engaged by the parties as a facilitator and not a mediator [...] As a facilitator, their task is to being [sic] the parties together. To facilitate the parties coming together. Because these are two parties that have not been on talking terms, to put it colloquially, for a very long time indeed and between whom there is very deep mistrust and so one, because of all that has happened. What we felt was that it was not possible for the parties to generate this peace process by themselves: and, therefore, that it was timely to engage a third party. [...] A third party's role is limited. It is limited to bringing the two parties together. Shuttling back and forth between the parties. Carrying messages. And laying the groundwork for them to meet. There are logistical things they will have to attend, in due course. There will be times and venues and schedules and various things of that kind. But when it comes to substantive negotiation, the Norwegians will have no particular role at all. [...] They will have no mandate to propose solutions. They will certainly have no mandate to make nay judgemental decisions. In that sense, they're not arbitrators, they're not judges, they're not mediators. Mediators tend to be people who, at a certain stage, are entitled to say to the parties, "Now, we thing you're right and somebody else is wrong. And we say you must do this, that or the other". And they assume a kind of judgemental character. That character the Norwegians will definitely not have in this process' (cited in Bullion 2001: 83-4).

The LTTE, however, apparently disagreed with Kumaratunga, arguing that the sharp distinction between facilitation and mediation was too rigid. In an interview, LTTE's chief ideologue Anton Balasingham, who had acted as the LTTE's negotiating contact point since September 1999 (Bullion 2001: 76), said:

'We are fully aware that [the Sri Lankan government] has been very particular in defining the role and function of a facilitator, mediator and arbitrator. [They want] Norway to function within the rules of facilitation, which is confined to bringing the parties in conflict to the negotiating table. Once that is achieved [...] Norway's facilitatory role comes to an end. I do not share [this] view because it is very rigid, technical and non-creative. It is not flexible or dynamic enough to cope with the new set of problems and difficulties that might arise when the belligerents, with a lengthy history of mutual distrust and hostility, face each other on the negotiating table

without the assistance, advice and guidance of a third party' (cited in Bullion 2001: 82).

Instead of facilitation, Balasingham said that the LTTE favoured the concept of 'third party involvement'.

> *We favour the concept of third party involving rather than adopting the defined roles of facilitation and mediation. In our perspective the third party involvement is crucial even after the commencement of negotiations. Playing the role of neutral advisor and observer, in our case the Norwegians, can continue to involve themselves in the negotiaing process to prevent misunderstandings between the protagonists and to help to promote the forward movement of dialogue without imposing 'judgemental decisions' on the parties. It is our view that without the presence and participation of an experienced third party the negotiations between the two historical enemies may run into serious difficulties (cited in* ibid*.).*

However, a closer look at the two statements made by Kumaratunga and Balasingham reveals that their view of Norway's role was in fact closer to each other than what their confrontational rhetoric would seem to imply. Most importantly, they both argued that Norway should abstain from imposing 'judgemental decisions' on the two parties. Although the distinction between communication-facilitation and what Bercovitch and Gartner calls procedural strategies are not clear cut, Kumaratunga and Balasingham essentially seemed to be on the same page concerning Norway's role as a third-party.

As it turned out, however, the concept of facilitation seems to be problematic as a general designator of the Norwegian mediation efforts. As showed by Höglund and Svensson, on two occasions between 2002 and 2008, Norway threatened to withdraw from the negotiations. First, following a Sri Lankan constitutional crisis in November 2033, during which the Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga had decided to overtake the ministry of defence, the ministry of mass media and the ministry of the police, as well as announcing a state of emergency and a suspension of parliament, Norway decided to halt its mediation efforts. In a statement issued by the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo, Vidar Helgesen ascribed the decision to withdraw to the

chaotic political situation in Colombo: '[p]eace talks could have started tomorrow, provided there were clarity about who is holding political authority and responsibility on behalf of the Government. [….] The resumption of peace talks is seriously impeded by the political crisis in the south. This has disturbed the peace process […]' (cited in Höglund and Svensson 2011*a*: 21).

A second instance of the use of the termination tactic took place when the Norwegian mediators in June 2006 requested that the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government reiterate their commitment to the negotiating process (Höglund and Svensson 2011*a*: 23). The request came after a deteriorating security situation following the assassination of Sri Lanka's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lakshman Kadirgamar, in August 2005, and an attack on the Batticaloa district office of the SLMM in January 2006. At a meeting in Geneva, moreover, the LTTE had refused to meet with the Sri Lankan negotiation delegation, and, as a consequence of the EU designation of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, raised questions about the neutrality of the SLMM, in which three of five participating countries (Denmark, Sweden and Finland) was EU members (Shastri 2009: 94).

In any case, and as pointed out by Höglund and Svensson (2011*a*), threats of withdrawal, or the termination tactic, belong under the umbrella of directive or manipulative strategies. As they put it, 'a withdrawal of Norwegian mediation efforts could be seen as threatening for the parties, given that a return to war was a real possibility at this point. The parties had intermediate incentives for mediation, since there was an intense risk of a return to war' (*ibid.*: 23).

Moreover, the fact that it was Norwegian government representatives who drafted the Memorandum of Understanding that should lead to the ceasefire agreement in 2002, seems to have made the Norwegian role into something more than a mere facilitator.

3.2 Norway's approach: Integrative description

However, albeit more or less useful for purely descriptive purposes, and although it seems to capture many of the aspects of the Norwegian conflict resolution approach

to the Sri Lankan conflict, it can be argued that such an additive description does not bring us much closer to an answer to the question whether the Norwegian intervention should be considered a strategic activity or not. Arguably, moreover, the concepts invoked in this description seem to be too specific to say much about how the different aspects of the Norwegian intervention related to each other. After all, as shown above, Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict not only as a mediator, but also as a monitor and a major donor. In order to reach a more general description of the Norwegian intervention, it is necessary, it seems, to move from an inquiry into the 'operational conditions', to an inquiry into the *guiding ideas* behind the Norwegian intervention.

3.2.1 The idea of ownership

According to Höglund and Svensson (2011*b*), who has carried out a number of studies of the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, one of the most conspicuous ideas underlying the Norwegian intervention was the idea of 'peace ownership' (2011*b*: 63). By this concept, they mean

> *an underlying assumption on which third-parties act and which implies that the responsibility for peace has to be in the hands of the primary parties in the conflict, if it is to be durable. One key to the peace ownership approach lies in its non-imposed nature: the peace is imagined as growing from below and standing in harmony with the interests of the parties in conflict. Thereby the likelihood of sustainable peace (*ibid.: 64).

Arguably, the concept of ownership has more interpretive value because it, in contrast with a more or less accurate description of the 'operational conditions' behind the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, can tell us something about the underlying assumptions behind the Norwegian intervention. In contrast with a concept like facilitation, for example, which is merely a description of a form of mediation, the concept of ownership reflects a more general idea, i.e. that it was the parties, and not Norway, that 'owned' the negotiation process, and consequently, that it was the parties, and not Norway, that was responsible for bringing the process forward. This idea, moreover, seems to have permeated the Norwegian intervention

from beginning to end, and is reflected in a series of statements made by Norwegian policy makers involved in the process. First, Norwegian policy makers seems to have believed that negotiations came about as a result of some kind of mutually hurting stalemate between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. As Vidar Helgesen (2002), Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister from 2001 to 2005, stated in a speech at the Norwegian Human Rights Dialogue Seminar on Transitional Justice and Human Rights in Jakarta, Indonesia in April 2002: 'The current peace process between the Sinhalese-dominated government and the minority Tamil rebel group LTTE grew from a recognition by both parties that the conflict, which has claimed over 60 000 lives since 1983, could not be resolved by military means' (2002). Although some have agued that the negotiation process did not in fact result from 'mutually hurting stalemate' or a 'ripe moment' (Moolakkattu 2005: 385), this is not necessarily important for our purposes. What is important is that this statement shows that the Norwegian policy makers believed that a negotiation process could not start unless the parties themselves saw such a process to be the best way to settle their differences.

Moreover, during the negotiating process, it was repeatedly stated by Norwegian foreign policy makers that it was the parties that was responsible for moving the process forward, thus downplaying Norway's role and describing it in terms of 'assistance' and 'facilitation'. In a speech he gave in Canada in 2005, Jan Petersen, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, underlined that responsibility for implementing the ceasefire agreement and continue negotiations for a political settlement fell to the parties. As he said: '[i]t is they who are responsible for moving the process forward' (2005).

Also after the Sri Lankan army had defeated the LTTE in 2009, Norwegian policy makers continued to insist that it was the parties, and not Norway, that had been responsible for the breakdown of negotiations and the return to war. As the current Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre (2010) said in a speech he made in June 2010:

> *[Sri Lanka] reminds us of a fundamental fact: That it is the parties that carry the main responsibility [in a peace process]. This was our message when Norwegian negotiators contributed to a ceasefire agreement in 2002: That it was the parties that had to take responsibility for a political process which could provide the opportunity for a political solution. As it turned out, they made another choice' (2010).*

While the idea of ownership seems to be based upon the assumption that a peaceful solution to the Sri Lankan conflict could not be imposed upon the parties, but had to grow from below and stand in harmony with the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government's own interests (Höglund and Svensson 2011*b*: 64), arguably, ownership can also be seen as a way for Norwegian policy makers to deny any responsibility for the outcomes of the process.

However, although the idea behind the 'peace ownership' approach is that it is the parties and not any third-party that is responsible for the process, this does not mean that this approach did not have implications. On the contrary, as Höglund and Svensson (2011*b*) has shown, the ownership approach influenced virtually every aspect of the design of the negotiating process: 'the mandate of the intervention, who participated at the negotiating table, the monitoring of the ceasefire agreement, the approach to public relations as well as the relations to the international community' (2011: 64).

As Höglund and Svensson points out, the ownership approach provided Norway with little leverage to prevent escalation when the security situation between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government deteriorated. As they put it, 'once the process went into troubled waters, the Norwegians had little possibility to prevent further escalation. In essence, Norway had no power outside the process' (Höglund and Svensson 2009: 184). Moreover, the ownership approach implied that it was up to the parties themselves, i.e. the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, to decide who should be included, and who should be excluded, from the negotiating process. The resulting two-party model of negotiations led to the exclusion of the Sri Lankan Muslim minority, non-LTTE Tamil groups, and representatives from civil society. Furthermore, as shown above, the fact that the negotiating parties, and especially the

Sri Lankan government representatives, were no 'monoliths', but were characterised by internal friction and disunity, eventually made the Norwegian role an issue of contestation and doubt about Norwegian impartiality (Höglund and Svensson 2011*b*: 69). Ironically, although impartiality seems be a logical implication of the ownership approach, in the Sri Lankan case, the ownership approach seems to have made it more difficult for the Norwegian mediators to present themselves as impartial. As pointed out by Höglund and Svensson, '[a]lthough these intra-party tensions were present and threatened the process, the Norwegians took few measures to mitigate them. Their focus was solely on the mediation between the primary parties. The Norwegian peace diplomats were reluctant to engage in intra-party mediation, since it was not part of their mandate' (*ibid*).

3.2.2 The idea of internationalisation

However, while the idea of ownership seems to have been a guiding one in the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka, another idea seems to have been equally important: the idea of internationalisation. As pointed out by Höglund and Svensson (2009), Norway was 'instrumental in efforts to direct the attention and wide engagement of the international community towards Sri Lanka' (2009: 185). Seemingly, moreover, international support was seen by the Norwegian government as a requirement for success. As the Norwegian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vidar Helgesen, stated in his speech before the first round of official negotiations between the parties was about to start in 2002: 'In this quest [for a political settlement of the conflict], the parties cannot be left alone. Neither can the accompaniment of the Norwegian government suffice. They [i.e. the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government] need to be accompanied by the entire international community' (2002*b*).

Consequently, as shown above, in November 2002, between the second and third round of official face-to-face negotiations between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, Norway convened an international support meeting in Oslo. At the meeting, which were attended by more than 100 state officials and representatives from 19 nations, it was agreed to convene a major international donor conference in

Tokyo the following year. At the ensuing conference, which was chaired by Norway, the United States, the European Union and Japan, officials and representatives from 51countries and 22 organisations pledged an estimated amount of US $4.5 billion for development and reconstruction in Sri Lankan in the period from 2003 to 2006 (Stokke 2010: 16). Notably, moreover, the LTTE had made a decision not to attend the meeting because the US designation of the organisation as a terrorist organisation had excluded them for a preparatory meeting to the Tokyo conference, which took place in Washington DC (Shastri 2009: 86).

As pointed out by Kristian Stokke, the 'Declaration on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka', which was adopted at the Tokyo conference, tied the pledged support to a call for progress in the peace process, by listing a set of demands to the negotiation parties:

> *The international community intends to review and monitor the progress of the peace process closely, with particular reference to objectives and milestones including: (a) Full compliance with the cease-fire agreement by both parties; (b) Effective delivery mechanisms relating to development activity in the North and East; (c) Participation of a Muslim delegation as agreed in the declaration of the fourth session of peace talks in Thailand; (d) Parallel progress towards a final political settlement based on the principles of the Oslo Declaration; (e) Solutions for those displaced due to the armed conflict; (f) Effective promotion and protection of the human rights of all people; (g) Effective inclusion of gender equity and equality in the peace building, the conflict transformation and the reconstruction process, emphasizing an equitable representation of women in political fora and at other decision-making levels; (h) Implementation of effective measures in accordance with the UNICEF-supported Action Plan to stop underage recruitment and to facilitate the release of underage recruits and their rehabilitation and reintegration into society; (i) Rehabilitation of former combatants and civilians in the North and East, who have been disabled physically or psychologically due to the armed conflict; (j) Agreement by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE on a phased, balanced, and verifiable de-escalation, de-militarization and normalization process at an appropriate time in the context of arriving at a political settlement (cited in Stokke 2010: 17).*

It can be argued that the efforts made by the Norwegian government to attract international attention to the Sri Lankan conflict stands in a, at least potentially, conflicting relationship with the principle of ownership. Although it was the parties who first requested international financial support, the fact that the donor conference took place despite the LTTE's absence, and the rather extensive list of conditions tied to the financial support, seems to have undermined, at least to a certain extent, the principle of ownership.

4.   Framing the Norwegian policy of engagement

If ownership and internationalisation can serve as an adequate description of the guiding ideas behind the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, what aims were these guiding ideas thought to fulfil? Why, in other words, did Norway, a relatively small country in the northernmost country of Europe, allocate a great deal of attention and resources to another small country literally on the other side of the world? And why did the Norwegian policy makers approach characterised by ownership and internationalisation? This chapter will pursue these questions by situating them in the Norwegian foreign policy discourse. It is argued that the rationale of the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka and of the policy of engagement more broadly, needs to be grounded materially if it is to succeed as a strategic project. As shown below, in the Norwegian foreign policy discourse, this need for a material grounding is usually understood as a need to show that the policy of engagement is somehow in Norway's interests. Two different conceptualisations of the policy of engagement as, respectively, 'globalisation policy' and 'value-diplomacy' are identified. Arguably, these conceptualisations, by constructing the policy of engagement as in some way serving Norway's interests, represents two different answers to the question of why Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict.

On the face of it, the question of why Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict seems to have a ready-made answer: Peace. As Vidar Helgesen, the Norwegian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, said in his opening statement of the first round of negotiations between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government: 'What the parties [to this process] are seeking is a different way of settling conflicts, namely through peaceful and democratic means' (Helgesen 2002*b*). Peace, he moreover stated, 'is about restoring normalcy in people's daily lives. Peace is about upholding human rights and human dignity, not least for women and children who suffer the most from the war. Peace is about securing people a democratic right to influence the running of their community and their country […]. Peace is an aim in itself […]' (*ibid.*).

However, quoting the political and ideological leader of the Indian independence movement, Mohandas Gandhi, who once said 'there is no path to peace - peace is the path', Helgesen added that peace was not only an aim, but also a means: '[…] Peace is an aim in itself. But peace is also a means. A means for the betterment of human life' (*ibid.*). In other words, what first appeared to be an answer to the first question, i.e. *what* Norway was trying to achieve, also appears to be the answer to the second, i.e. *how* they were trying to achieve it. It seems fair to say, therefore, that as a strategic concept, peace seems to have little value, as it conflates the distinction between ends, on the one hand, and means, on the other.

If peace cannot be the strategic aim of the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, what, then, was? In the same speech, Helgesen expressed optimism on the prospects for finding a 'political settlement of the ethnic conflict' (*ibid.*). In another speech, he explicitly stated that 'Norway's role is to assist the parties in their efforts to reach a political solution' (Helgesen 2003). Notwithstanding Carl Von Clausewitz' famous dictum, that war is the continuation of politics by other means, Helgesen seems to have tried to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government solve their differences by non-violent negotiations, instead of war. Hence, judging from the Norwegian foreign policy makers' own statements, a negotiated solution to the Sri Lankan Conflict seems to have been what their efforts were aiming at.

Arguably, however, to take the Norwegian policy makers' own statements at face value would be somewhat naïve, and imply an outright disregard for the fact that Norway is not an NGO with purely idealistic aims, but a state. Norway's formal status as a state in the international system, has led some analysts to inquire into whether the Norwegian invention in Sri Lanka can have been driven by other motives than the sheer willingness to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by non-violent means. As shown above, Sinhalese nationalists and Buddhist Monks, sceptical of the Norwegian presence in Sri Lanka, criticised the Norwegian intervention for being a 'continuation of imperialist designs' (cited in

Moolakkattu 2005: 393). One of their main arguments was that Norway, a major exporter of oil and fish, were somehow interested in the fisheries and oil resources of Sri Lanka (Moolakkattu 2005: 392). Another argument presented by Sinhalese critics, was that Norway, because of the Norwegian Special Envoy Erik Solheim's close ties with leading figures in the LTTE and because of the relatively large number of Tamil expatriates living in Norway, was somehow supporting terrorism. However, as pointed out by Höglund and Svensson (2009), the causal claims made by these critics are exceedingly hard to validate. As they write, 'although there are common interests in, for instance, the fishing industry, Sri Lanka is only of marginal importance for Norway's business interests' (2009: 180), and although the Tamil expatriate community in Norway has staged some demonstrations and petitions, they 'have kept a relatively low political profile [and believes themselves] that they have not influenced the Norwegian mediation efforts' (*ibid.*).

Despite their implausibility, these objections seem to highlight the need for a material grounding of the claim that Norway intervened in the Sri Lanka in order to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by non-violent means. Differently put, what is needed is some account of why *Norway* decided to become involved in a bloody and protracted conflict on the other side of the world. Apparently sensitive to the need for a material grounding of Norwegian policy makers' stated aims, a number of Norwegian foreign policy analysts, policy commentators, politicians and policy makers have attempted to show how the official Norwegian conflict resolution initiatives, such as the intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, and more generally the branch of Norway's foreign policy officially referred to as the policy of engagement, are reconcilable with Norway's role as a state.

The policy of engagement
In Norwegian foreign policy circles, the term 'policy of engagement' applies to a series of Norwegian policy efforts related to the eradication of global poverty, international humanitarian questions, peace and reconciliation efforts between warring factions between and within states, and the promotion of human rights and democracy internationally (Norwegian MFA 2009: 112). More specifically, the

policy of engagement can be seen as an umbrella term covering, firstly, official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries. Since the Institution Norwegian Development Aid, later renamed the Directorate for Norwegian Development Aid (NORAD), was established in 1962, the amount of economic resources Norway has committed to this policy area, has increased rapidly, In 1971, NORAD administered around NOK 300 million,[5] or 0.3 per cent of Norway's gross domestic product (GDP). In 1982, however, this amount increased to NOK 3.6 billion, or slightly more than 1 per cent of Norway's GDP. In the years ahead, the Norwegian development budget continued to increase, and in 1995, the amount committed to development aid had reached approximately NOK 8 billion. However, due to a general growth in the Norwegian economy, this amount continued to make up around 1 per cent of Norway's GDP (Sørbø 1995: 218; see also Pharo 2008: 88).

Secondly, the policy of engagement is commonly seen to include mediation and reconciliation initiatives taken by the Norwegian government. In the period between 1992 and 2002, Norway was involved in 14 so-called peace processes, most famously, perhaps, in the process that led to the signing of the Oslo Accord between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993 (Thune and Ulriksen 2002. 4). In recent years, and in addition to the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, Norway has been involved in the peace process in Sudan, contributing, alongside the United Kingdom and the United States, to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement in 2005. Norway is also participating in the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNIMIS), which was established to monitor the peace agreement.

Thirdly, the policy of engagement can be applied to the general promotion of human rights and democracy in the international sphere. Norway repeatedly raised its voice against the human rights violations of the Greek Military Junta after they staged a

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[5] NOK: Norwegian kroner

coup d'état in 1967 and filed a formal complaint to the European Commission of Human Rights (Gjerdåker 1995: 206). In more recent years, Norway has initiated human rights dialogues with government representatives in Cuba, China and Indonesia (Matlary 2002). Fourth, the policy of engagement is usually seen to cover Norwegian support of the development of international humanitarian law. In recent years, Norway has pushed for the 1997 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel mines and on their Destruction' and was listed as one of the organisers behind the process that led to the 2008 'Convention on Cluster Munitions'. In 1998, moreover, Norway and Canada established a 'Human security network' which aimed to redefine international security from state-cum-military security to a 'people-centred' security concept, which replaced the traditional notion of territorial security with a concept based on individual human beings' 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear' (Matlary 2002; see also UNDP 1994: 22). Finally, the policy of engagement is usually thought to apply to Norway's participation in international military operations, notably UN-led operations.

Although there seems to be a general consensus in Norwegian foreign policy circles regarding the conceptual extension of the policy of engagement, analysts differ in emphasis and focus. The Norwegian foreign policy analyst Janne Haaland Matlary, for example, understands the policy of engagement as including foreign policy programmes related to 'peace mediation, peace operations, [development and humanitarian] assistance, democracy building and the promotion of human rights, bilaterally as well as multilaterally' (Matlary 2002), whereas the NUPI researchers Henrik Thune and Ståle Ulriksen downplay the focus on human rights promotion and development aid, and emphasise instead Norway's support of, and active involvement in multilateral decision-making, such as Norway's chairmanship in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OECD) (Thune and Ulriksen 2002). Terje Tvedt, moreover, say close to nothing about Norway's participation in international military operations, but gives instead special attention to programmes related to development aid and humanitarian relief. For our purposes, however, it is sufficient to point out that it seems to be a general consensus in Norwegian foreign policy

circles that the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka is covered by the broader term of the policy of engagement. Norway's tripartite role as mediator, monitor and donor in the Sri Lankan conflict can in other words be subsumed under the broader conceptual category of policy of engagement.

4.1 The discourse on the policy of engagement

In the Norwegian discourse on the policy of engagement, the question of why Norway allocates attention and resources to policy programmes included in the concept of the policy of engagement, has most commonly been framed by an assumed conceptual distinction between a foreign policy driven by ideals and values, on the one hand, and a foreign policy driven by interests, on the other. It moreover seems to be a widespread belief in Norway's foreign policy circles that the policy of engagement and, by implication, the Norwegian conflict resolution initiatives, somehow combines cosmopolitanist values with Norway's interests. Indeed, its alleged ability to transcend realism and idealism, arguably the two main classical theories of International Relations, seems to be a defining and also one of the most striking characteristics of the Norwegian policy of engagement.

The view that the policy of engagement somehow makes the division of Norway's foreign policy into two policy areas, one concerned with core interests such as security and economic interests, and one concerned with the altruistic projection of solidarist values abroad, seems to depend upon a certain view of Norway's foreign policy during the Cold War. In the report, 'Value-diplomacy: a source of power?' (2002), Janne Haaland Matlary argues that 'throughout the entire Cold War, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs […] could keep the two major foreign policy arenas [i.e. the field of security and economic interests and the field of values such as human rights, democracy and so on] separated'. This division of Norway foreign policy into two distinct areas, she argues, 'was appropriate to that period - it was primarily about Realpolitik and just secondarily about value-diplomacy'. Similarly, the NUPI researchers Henrik Thune and Ståle Ulriksen (2002) argue that during the Cold War, these two 'foreign policy arenas were institutionally and thematically

separated, [and] priorities and strategies were easily identified as belonging to one arena or the other. The perceived balance between realism and idealism, or between alliance and activism, was easily quantified and analysed' (2002: 1).

The view of Norway's Cold War foreign policy as running along two separate lines, one values-based, and one interests-based, also seems to inform the historian Olav Riste's (1995) account of the policy of engagement during the Cold War. In *Norway's Foreign Relations: A History*, he writes:

> *The kind of political activism displayed by successive Norwegian governments in favour of left-of-centre and preferably social democratic movements and governments, or liberation movements fighting against their erstwhile colonial overlords, reflected a genuine conviction that the forces they supported were the best hopes for the future of the countries in question. Norway here frequently found herself at odds with many of her allies, not least the United States, whose quest for stability more often than not led Washington to support authoritarian regimes. Occasionally, however, Norway was at odds with herself. Her ideals at times came into conflict with not only her interests in maintaining her links with her allies but also her material and economic interests (1995: 262-3).*

It moreover seems that this binary view of Norway's foreign policy as either values-based or interests-based was influencing Norwegian foreign policy makers during the Cold War. In the memoirs of Knut Frydenlund (1982), who was Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1976 to 1981 and again from 1986 to 1987, the perceived conflicting relationship between a foreign policy based on 'ideal claims', on the one hand, and a foreign policy concerned with Norway's core interests is accentuated:

> *Sometimes our ideal claims about the principles that ought to apply to our foreign policy come in conflict with concreted business interests. Moral attitudes are expensive, in terms of money as well as jobs. At other times the ideal must be balanced against the achievable, and we have to find compromises. Situations can arise where principles draw in different directions. The wish to influence the situation in a country can come in conflict with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries (1982: 191).*

In response, moreover, to what Frydenlund identified as an increasing internationalisation, understood as the reduction of trade barriers and increased interdependence between states during the Cold War, he predicted that 'as more parts of the Norwegian society becomes dependent on decisions made outside the country's borders, we will experience more conflicts between concrete Norwegian interests and ideal attitudes' (*ibid.*: 192).

However, with the end of the Cold War, this binary understanding of Norway's foreign policy as running along two separate lines seems to have been replaced by a view of values and interests as pulling in the same direction. Already in the 1989 White paper from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - a governmental report which has been referred to as 'the bible' of Norway's post Cold War foreign relations (Thune and Ulriksen 2002: 9), it is stated that Norway's basic foreign policy strategy is to 'promote Norway's interests in its foreign relations, including both our particular interests and the interests we share with other countries' (Norwegian MFA 1989: 9, cited in Skånland 2008: 33).

In 1995, Bjørn Tore Godal (1995), Norwegian Foreign Minister at that time, pursued this theme by claiming that Norway's 'global humanitarian efforts […] are part of a Norwegian foreign policy which is both idealistic […] and realistic […]' (1995). In Godal's view, after the end of the Cold War, the individual human being had replaced 'the state, the race, the territory and […] social classes' as the main reference point in international politics and international security. And in an international security environment, in which 'the comprehensive security concept has become reality', Godal argued that Norway could strengthen its own national security by 'promoting justice and welfare for the weakest of the international society'.

From the more academic corners, Thune and Ulriksen (2002) has argued that a series of developments in the international sphere after the end of the Cold War problematizes the stark division of Norway's foreign policy into one based on values and one based on interests. Referring to this divison, Thune and Ulriksen writes:

> *In the 1990s, these two policy arenas gradually converged. In Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, humanitarian values were supported and indeed enforced by military means. NATO, the main institution in Norway's security policy, became involved in crisis handling previously dominatd by the UN. Thus "hard" security moved into "soft" fields, and "hard" means were employed for "soft" goals' (2002: 3)*

Likewise, Matlary argues that the 'division into 'national' and 'ideal' interests […] is no longer valid. Frequently, there is no incompatibility between taking international responsibility and to promote national interests - quite the contrary, a country's international standing and power is often built on this' (Matlary 2002).

This understanding of Norway's foreign policy in general, and the policy of engagement in particular, seems to correspond with what in discourse analytical terms can be called the 'dominant representation' of the policy of engagement. According to Øystein Haga Skånland (2008), who has carried out a thorough discourse analysis of the policy of engagement, there exist three main representations of the policy of engagement in Norwegian post Cold War foreign policy circles. Drawing on the analytic framework of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Skånland identifies what in discourse analytic terms is called 'nodal point' and 'floating signifiers' in the discourse on the Norwegian engagement policy from 1993 to 2008. This in turn enables him to construct different 'representations' of the engagement policy, defined by Skånland as 'a structuring set of lenses through which we view the world. Consisting of a system of intersubjective understandings, meanings, and concepts constructed in and through language, it constitutes reality for its carriers' (2008: 11).

The first and dominant representation of the engagement policy provides a rationale and a justification of the engagement policy. According to Skånland, this representation includes a variety of different claims: (a) Norway gave an important contribution to peace in the Middle East in 1993 and are playing an important role also in other peace processes; (b) the engagement policy is an important part of Norway's foreign policy, partly because it enhances Norway's reputation in the international sphere; (c) idealism and self interest go 'hand in hand' when it comes to

the engagement policy; (d) Norway has a distinctive approach to peace promotion, highligted, among other things by Norway's alleged small state advantages, close cooperation between the Norwegian government and humanitarian NGOs as well as other international actors, Norway's long term perspective and consistence, and the strategy of supporting peace efforts with development aid and humanitarian assistance (*ibid.*).[6]

The dominant representation has moreover received criticism from two different strands, labelled 'realist' and 'idealist' by Skånland. According to Skånland, the 'realist representation' appears in the discourse on the engagement policy as a reaction to the dominant representation. It builds on a criticism of the policy for being fragmented, vague, and lacking in priorities. It moreover includes the claim that Norway's foreign policy should be concentrated around the country's core interests and with a heightened focus on neighbouring areas (*ibid.*: 53-4). On the other side, and partly as a response to this alternative 'realist' representation, Skånland identifies an 'idealist' representation, which builds on a criticism of the engagement policy as not 'idealist' or 'moral' enough and that certain Norwegian foreign policy practices, such as the Norwegian export of weaponry, is inconsistent with the rationale behind the engagement policy. This representation, which, as Skånland points out, is 'a diverse category', includes the claim that Norway does not do enough to live up to it's image as a 'peace nation' (Skånland 2008: 69). Skånland writes:

> *The realist and idealist representations criticize the dominant representation and the Norwegian foreign policy from radically different perspective; the former takes the lack of priorities and attention to 'real' Norwegian interests as its starting point, the latter do exactly the opposite when claiming that self interest guides the policy, that morale (sic) and idealism should be higher on the agenda, and that Norway's foreign policy practice is not in line with the peace nation image (*ibid.: 69).

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[6] The list presented here is a summary of the claims discovered by Skånland and has been slightly altered for the sake of clarity and brevity.

Judging from this general overview of the discourse on the policy of engagement, the question of motivation and the relationship between values and interests is central in current framings of this policy. As shown above, the dominant representation includes the claim that the engagement policy enables idealism and self interest to go 'hand in hand', while the two alternative representations are, at least partly, reactions to this claim. According to the 'realist' representation, the engagement policy suffers from a lack of connection to Norway's core interests. From this perspective, the promotion of Norway's security and economic interests is and ought to be the main driver of Norway's foreign policy, and the engagement policy is viewed as outside this category. According to the 'idealist' representation, the engagement policy is not as 'idealistic' or 'moral' as it ought to be. From this perspective, the projection of values abroad could in theory form a valid basis for Norwegian foreign policy, but the engagement policy, this representation states, does simply not live up to its promise.

What seems to unite these representations, however, is that they all view the conceptual distinction between a values-driven and an interest-driven foreign policy as analytically valid and a reasonable starting point for an analysis of the policy of engagement. In other words, the realist, idealist and the dominant representations all seem to be based upon the premise that the distinction between values and interests, between a concern with the plight of people in distress and a concern with Norway's own security and economy, provides an adequate framework for an understanding of the policy of engagement.

4.2 Policy of engagement as globalisation policy

To the list of claims included in the dominant representation of the policy of engagement should the claim that globalisation has given this policy a new relevance be added. In a speech he made in 2003, Vidar Helgesen, Norwegian Deputy Minister

of Foreign Affairs at that time, argued that the changed dynamics of international politics in the post Cold War era has made the policy of engagement more important:

> *During the Cold War […] peacemaking efforts in the third world was seen largely as the work of "do-gooders" in far-away places. This has changed. Security has become globalised. We, meaning we in the West, no longer have the luxury of pretending that we can carry on with our life and uphold our values regardless of what the rest of the world is doing. This was made abundantly clear to us all on 11 September 2001. The terrorist attacks on the epicentres of economic and military power were organised from mountain caves in one of the world's poorest and most conflict-ridden countries. The lesson we should draw is that trying to resolve conflicts and addressing security threats in far-away places is in our own interest as well as being humanitarian imperative' (2003: 1)*

In recent years, this view, that changes in the dynamics of the international sphere has blurred the lines between values-based and interests-based foreign policies, seems to have become prevalent in official foreign policy circles. In the 2009 White Paper from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which received widespread acclaim for its alleged analytical rigour and which was interpreted by some policy analysts as a harbinger of a new 'paradigm' in Norway's foreign policy (Jørgensen 2009:525; see also Hernes 2009:519), the argument outlined by Helgesen, is developed into a general framework for understanding the current dynamics of Norway's foreign policy. According to the NUPI researcher Nina Græger, the MFA White Paper 'confirms a new line of consensus where globalisation and the new geopolitics constitute the most important external framework conditions for Norway's foreign policy' (Græger 2009: 519). Correspondingly, the White Paper argues that the reason why the division of Norway's foreign policy into traditional categories such as values based idealism and interest based realism has been rendered obsolete, and why there is a need to think of Norway's interests 'in an expanded sense', is due to the globalisation of international politics. As the MFA White Paper states:

In the close network of relationships resulting from globalisation, the development of Norwegian society is dependent on that of other societies in a number of sectros and at a number of different levels. Areas of Norwegian foreign policy that are often regarded as purely altruistic of value-based, such as economic development and development cooperation, facilitating the UN's ability to resolve humanitarian crises, peace and reconcilitation, democracy-building, strengthening the international legal order and institution-building, are therefore becoming more relevant and significant in terms fo realpolitik (Norwegian MFA 2009: 22).

According to a popular view, the White Paper moreover argues, reflected in the media and the public political debate, foreign policy is assumed either to be informed by realpolitik, i.e. 'economic, security and business interests' (*ibid.*: 24), or 'the soft, ethical policies based on idealpolitik which are often considered to be altruistic […]' (*ibid.*). However, although the White Paper argues that globalisation has rendered the division of Norway's foreign policy into values-based *Idealpolitik* and interests-based *Realpolitik* 'less clear' (ibid.: 22), this does not imply that the distinction, on an analytic level, between these two forms of foreign policy has been rendered obsolete, or that the idea of a foreign policy based on ethical values and moral duty, is no longer of any use.

This is evident in the MFA White Paper's section concerned with the policy of engagement, where it is stated that this policy 'is first and foremost motivated by altruism. It is based on core moral principles and values that underlie Norwegian society' (*ibid.*: 112). It moreover aims to 'improve the lives of vulnerable individuals and groups in poor parts of the world, enabling them to realise their fundamental human rights and facilitating peaceful social development' (*ibid.*). Clearly, according to the MFA White Paper, the idea of a values-driven foreign policy based on ethics and morality has not lived out its usefulness. Nor has the analytical separation of this policy from interests-based Realpolitik. Nevertheless, the MFA White Paper argues that the policy of engagement has 'increasing relevance for Norwegian interests and developments in Norwegian society in terms of Realpolitik' (*ibid.*), and this, supposedly, because of globalisation. As the MFA White Paper states: 'the broad globalisation process and geopolitical changes we are seeing today are giving the

policy of engagement new significance as it promotes the realisation of objectives that are also in Norway's interests' (*ibid.*). Consequently, the MFA White Paper conceputalises the policy of engagement as a *globalisation policy* (*ibid*.)

In the section concerned with Norway's 'peace and reconciliation efforts, moreover, the MFA White Paper states that

> *Norway's efforts to promote peace, reconciliation and development are based on a sense of solidarity and respect for human dignity. [...] Norway has the expertise and resources to be able to make a difference in several (but not all) conflict areas, and hence a moral duty to do its part. This is our main motivation (*ibid.*: 118).*

At the same time, however, the White Paper argues, first, that the peace and reconciliation efforts 'is an integral part of our long-terms, comprehensive security policy' (*ibid.*) and that it is 'of great importance in terms of acquiring knowledge and developing vital international networks; it also opens doors for Norwegian partners' (*ibid.*). Again, according to the MFA White Paper, globalisation has not so much rendered the conceptual distinction between a values-based and interests-based foreign policy obsolete, as it has expanded Norway's interests so as to include the projection of values in the international sphere.

The main reason, moreover, why globalisation is seen to necessitate a broadened or expanded view of Norway's interests, seems to due to what the White Paper sees as the emergence of a whole range of new security threats. It is argued that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, contagious diseases, civil wars, failed states, climate change, international crime and human trafficking can all produce 'external instability' (*ibid.*: 26), and *ipso facto*, because the instability is seen first and foremost as 'global' and neither regional, national, or local, it is at least potentially a security threat to Norway. As a note of caution, it is admitted that not everything ought to be conceptualised as a security threat, and that many areas and events have no direct relevance for Norway's security, but nonetheless, the White Paper argues, 'in this highly globalised world there is always a

possibility that far-away events that initially appear marginal can have ever-widening ripple effects that directly touch on Norwegian security' (*ibid.*).

A similar view of the impact of globalisation on Norway's foreign policy is expressed by Vidar Helgesen (2007). As he sees it, the line separating values and interests in Norway's foreign policy has become 'fluctuant' partly because

> *it is not only the world economy that is globalised. The international security landscape is also globalised and fluctuating: the threat from weapons of mass destruction fluctuates between strong states, weak states and non-state actors. The threat from terrorism fluctuates over regions and borders [...] It is linked to international organised criminality, which marks our societies in the form of drugs, arms trade, human trafficking and money laundering. Questions concerning the environment and health have also become part of the global threat and risk landscape' (2007: 102).*

The argument presented here, that because of globalisation and the emergence of 'global security threats' there is no longer any distinction between an interest-based and a values-based foreign policy, can be supported, it seems, from a liberal cosmopolitanist perspective in the subject area of International Relations. In Progressive Foreign Policy: New Direction for the UK, the British IR-scholar David Held and the director of policy for the UK branch of Save the Children David Mepham (2007) argue that globalisation has caused a radical reconfiguration of the relationship between liberal values such as human rights, social justice and democracy, on the one hand, and foreign policy interests, on the other. As the White Paper, Held and Mepham argue that this development necessitates a new and expanded conceptualisation of national interests. Traditionally, they argue, 'the national interest was framed largely in strategic terms, as the measures necessary to defend the state against threats posed by other states' (2007: 4). However, globalisation, understood as 'the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of interregional flows and patterns of social interaction' (*ibid.*), has made a conceptualisation of the national interest in territorially and socially defined terms of territorial security and national economic gains, 'no longer true' (*ibid.*). Slightly more radically, in Germany, the sociologist Ulrich Beck have argued

that globalisation, or 'really existing cosmopolitanization' (Beck 2006: 19), as he calls it, renders what he calls 'the cosmopolitan outlook' necessary. As he writes:

> *the national outlook, together with its associated grammar, is becoming false. It fails to grasp that political, economic and cultural action and their (intended and unintended) consequences know no borders; indeed it is completely blind to the fact that, even when nationalism is reginited by the collision with globality, this can only be conceptualised from a cosmopolitan perspective (*ibid.*: 18).*

As Held and Mepham, as well as the MFA White Paper, Beck argues that globalising tendencies such as 'capital flows, flows of cultural symbols, global risks, terror attacks, migration flows, anti-globalization movements, ecological and economic crises' have the consequence that

> *the unites of 'international relations' - the fetish-concepts of 'state' and 'nation' - are being hollowed out because in a world risk society national problems can no longer be solved on a national basis; because human rights are being turned against states, and are being 'defended' by states against other states; and because highly mobile capital forces territorially fixated states to disempower and transform themselves (*ibid.*: 37).*

To sum up, the reason why a conceptualisation of foreign policy interests in strategic-cum-military terms, is 'no longer true' is explained by the emergence of new and global security threats. Reflecting an expanded view of security, Help and Mepham argues, '[i]n a world that is ever more interdependent, countries face major new threats like climate change, the spread of infectious diseases and the risks of nuclear accidents' (*ibid.*: 4). They cite John Ikenberry and Anne-Marie Slaughter (2006), who in an analysis of the United States' security policies argue that

> *'[d]anger now emanates from weakness as well as strength; distant lands can have a mighty reach, even if they lack modern technology. Failed and failing states can give rise to catastrophic terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction [...], regional aggression, global instability, massive human rights abuses, AIDS, drug trafficking and countless other evils' (cited in* ibid.*: 5).*

4.3 Policy of engagement as values-based diplomacy

A slightly different conceptualisation of the policy of engagement has been provided by the Norwegian political analyst Janne Haaland Matlary (2002). In 'Value diplomacy, a source of power?' she puts a positive gloss on what she sees as a shift from an interest-based to a values-based foreign policy discourse, which in her view has paved the way for a reconceptualization of interests and the emergence of what she calls 'value-based interests' (*ibid.*). In Matlary's argument, this term is used to denote something else that the foreign policy interests associated with the term *Realpolitik* (also called 'hard interests' or 'core interests'). What makes a value into a 'value-based interest' is as Matlary sees it that it is pursued in a strategic manner. A foreign policy interest, she writes, can

> *[…] be what we call 'value-based'. By this we mean that one promotes a value standpoint - let us say 'anti-apartheid' - but in a goal oriented and strategic way. One has a goal that is made up by a norm or a value - that human beings should not be discriminated against because of their skin colour - but when this goal becomes the object of a rational strategic analysis of political means, one makes a plan to achieve this goal (*ibid.*)

As Matlary sees it, moreover, the concept of 'value-based interests' as a rationale for the policy of engagement can be justified with reference to exogenous changes in the dynamics of contemporary international politics. Whereas the Cold War, as she writes, 'was primarily about Realpolitik and just secondarily about values' (*ibid.*), after the end of the Cold War 'we see the contours of a development towards a Realpolitik of values' (*ibid.*).

Although Matlary holds that 'most of [a country's] foreign policy is about the promotion of national interests' (*ibid.*), she nevertheless argues that what is meant by the concept of 'national interests' has changed after the end of the Cold War. Reflecting the argument made in the MFA White paper, she argues that 'strictly speaking, national interests are no longer framed in terms of state territory - security is for example no only defence against invasion, but also security in a regional and global sense' (*ibid.*).

In Matlary's view, a set of interlinked factors occurring in the post Cold War era, such as the increased importance of both multilateral diplomacy and public diplomacy, the emergence and explosive multiplication of new actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the globalisation of communication and the media, has effectively transformed the international discourse into one 'based on rights rather than interests' (*ibid.*).

The shift from an interest-based discourse on foreign policy to a rights-based or value-based discourse, is primarily explained by the rise of so-called public diplomacy, which, as Matlary understands it, 'implies that foreign policy have to legitimized in terms of values' (*ibid.*) and not, as during the Cold War, in terms of national interests. However, as a note of caution, she claims that 'although values like human rights, democracy and the rule of law to an increasing extent [are] used as a basis for political rhetoric […] internationally' (*ibid.*), it is still 'an open question how much they really mean' (*ibid.*). Differently put, although international politics is increasingly expressed in terms of values Matlary argues that we cannot 'infer causality' (*ibid.*), and claims that to invoke values 'can be sheer rhetoric in order to conceal the real motive' (*ibid.*) which can still be based on hard interests.

Nevertheless, Matlary argues that 'new actors, such as NGOs and an internationalised media put policy makers under pressure' (*ibid.*), something which implies that domestic and international actors are able influence foreign policy making in an unprecedented manner. Reflecting the view of Robert Cooper, former advisor to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who claims that in today's 'postmodern' international order, 'foreign policy is the continuation of domestic concerns beyond national borders' (Cooper 2003: 50), Matlary (2002) argues that 'transnational NGO-organisation, global media and the internet create an international public sphere which challenges the 'inside-outside'-distinction between domestic and international politics' (2002). An ostensible 'democratisation' of foreign policy is supposed to take place because 'modern media brings the news and the debates into everyone's homes, but also because non-state actors increase in numbers, are better organised through

transnational networks, and because the political discourse is marked by value-based argumentation' (*ibid.*).

In Matlary's view, the increased influence of domestic and international opinion on foreign policy making has created a 'new' kind of foreign policy, on in which 'ones values has to be acceptable and popular' (*ibid.*). As she puts it, in the post Cold War era, foreign policy is not so much about military power as about 'visibility and reputation' (*ibid.*). This policy area, moreover, which is more about visibility and reputation, more about being 'a good international citizen' or a 'good international contributor' than a military great power, 'is the area where a small state [like Norway] can distinguish itself' (*ibid.*). She argues that power comes in many forms in international politics: 'military power, economic power, diplomacy, assistance, praise and critique etc.' (*ibid.*), and hypothesises that 'if there is a shift in international politics away from military to moral power, then the time has come for a small and active country like Norway' (*ibid.*).

In the discourse on Norway's foreign policy, the argument that small countries like Norway are better placed to do well in an international sphere where values are more important than military and economic might, is usually traced back to Jan Egeland's (1985) comparative study of Norway's and the United States' human rights policies, *Impotent Superpower, Potent Small State*. Egeland, a human rights activist and later State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is frequently credited for being one of the main architects behind the policy of engagement in the 1990s. In his study, he argued that small states like Norway can promote a values-based human rights policy in a more coherent and effective manner that its greater counterparts. By way of a comparative analysis of the human rights policies of Norway, a relatively small state as measured by traditional parameters such as military capabilities, population, and size, and the United States, in the period after the second World War, Egeland concludes that, 'the superpower is, in relative terms, [...] a more ineffective and inefficient human rights actor than the smaller state' (1985:329).

In contrast with Matlary, Egeland's analysis clearly rests upon the assumption that the promotion of security and economic interests, on the one hand, and the promotion of human rights, on the other, belong to two qualitatively different foreign policy areas, and he makes no attempt to show how the promotion of human rights might serve Norway's interests. Instead, he claims that one of the preconditions for an 'effective' and 'cost-efficient' human rights policy is 'the perception of having few *national interests* which conflict with human rights objectives' (Egeland 1988: 179, emphasis in original).

In Egeland's view there were three main reasons why a small state like Norway could be a more effective human rights activist than the United States: First, and most importantly, Egeland points out that a superpower has 'more complex and more security oriented foreign policy objectives than the small state' (Egeland 1985: 309). These objectives are moreover 'perceived as conflicting with human rights goals' (*ibid.*). Egeland in other words argues that Norway, because it lacks strategic interests, is better placed to promote a value-based, or ethically informed, foreign policy than the United States. Secondly, invoking the geopolitical dynamics of the Cold War era, Egeland argues that '[f]or the United States the all-important challenge is the East-West conflict. In Norway the North-South conflict is, at least periodically, recognized as equally or even more important' (*ibid.*: 309). Differently put, because Norway had no leading role in the East-West conflict, 'she may', as Egeland puts it, 'therefore focus on the most important moral challenge of our time: the North-South conflict' (*ibid.*: 315). The binary understanding of foreign policy as driven either by interests or by values is here seen to correspond with two different global conflict lines. The East-West conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States is seen as determined and dominated by the strategic interests of the two superpowers, while the North-South conflict is seen primarily as a moral issue, which, as such, concerns norms and principles about what is right and wrong from a moral point of view (Egeland 1988: 11).

Thirdly, referring to a difference in European and American political culture, Egeland argues that 'the American political system has a result oriented, short-term

perspective, intensive media exposure on policy controversy, and [...] high administrative turn over. Norway belongs to a more stable and pragmatic Northern European tradition where the diplomatic-bureaucratic establishment designs long term human rights policies' (Egeland 1985:309). In other words, based on the assumption that a human rights policy ought to have a long-term perspective, the lack of concern with (short-term) results in the Norwegian political culture, is seen as an advantage rather than a drawback when it comes to the promotion of a values such as human rights.

In more recent years, the Swedish IR-scholar Annika Bergman-Rosamond (2007) has pursued the question, posed by Egeland, of whether small states like Norway can promote an ethical or value-based foreign policy more coherently and effectively than its greater counterparts. In the article 'Non-Great Powers, Solidarism and the Responsibility to Protect – Nordic Forces for Good' Bergman-Rosamond seeks to explore whether small states like Norway is better placed than great powers 'to perform some of the duties arising from good international citizenship' (*ibid.*). As Matlary, Bergman-Rosamond holds that there has been a development towards an increased emphasis on ethics and values in the discourse on post Cold War policy making. The specifically mentions the idea, promulgated in the Canadian International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty report, that the international community has a 'responsibility to protect' (ICISS 2001) victims of crimes against humanity, genocide and ethnic and religious violence, and the idea of human security, i.e. that the concept of security be expanded as to include, not only security threats posed by states to other states, but also threats that individuals face in their daily life (UNDP 1994: 22). Drawing on a set of scholars which she situates in the 'solidarist' branch of the 'English School' - a school in the subject area of International Relations associated with Hedley Bull and conceptualised as via media between realism and idealism - Bergman-Rosamond argues that ideas such as the responsibility to protect and human security have become 'powerful' norms in post Cold War international politics which, moreover, 'raise questions as to the future viability of the non-intervention principles that has constituted the backbone of international relations since the 17th century' (Bergman-Rosamond 2007).

Bergman-Rosamond moreover argues that, although leading Western states, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, have increasingly justified their foreign policies in terms of values and ethical responsibilities in the post Cold War era, 'most empirical developments' in the post Cold War era, 'suggests that great power are just as likely to act as the "great irresponsibles" of the international society of states' (*ibid.*). Although she rejects to put down an unambiguous conclusion, Bergman-Rosamond nevertheless suggests that so-called 'non-great powers', and in particular the Nordic countries, can, 'by drawing upon specifically Nordic values including the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, redistributive justice domestically and globally, consensual democracy as well as using the national militaries as "forces for good" [...] have some hope of materializing the philosophical foundations of the global responsibility to protect norm' (*ibid*).

However, Neither Egeland or Bergman-Rosamond seems to answer the question of why small states like Norway would be more inclined to pursue a foreign policy concerned with the promotion of international norms such as human rights and the responsibility to protect in the first place. To be sure, Bergman-Rosamond argues that the Norway's objections to the latest war in Iraq were not 'realist-inspired', but came about as a result of the country's 'normative commitment to international law, a rule-bound international society as well as solidarism amongst its members' (*ibid*). She also argues, as already mentioned, that one of the reasons why the Nordic countries is better placed to promote values in the international sphere is because their foreign policies are informed by values such as 'the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, redistributive justice domestically and globally' (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, it can be argued that, first, what Bergman-Rosamond calls 'specifically Nordic values' are not specific to Norway at all. After all, it would be fair to say that most western democracies would argue that the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and redistributive justice are part and parcel of their core values. And secondly, it can be argued that Bergman-Rosamond, instead of answering the question of why small states like Norway promotes an ethically informed or values-based foreign policy, she simply reflects the views and statements of leading Norwegian policy makers, and concludes, on the basis of this, that Norway's foreign policy is not 'realist-inspired'.

Matlary, however, seems to be sensitive to this objection. Instead of viewing Norway's foreign policy as a mere reflection of the statements made by leading Norwegian foreign policy makers, she holds that, as a rule, a state would construct its foreign policy with a view to what it perceives to be its national interests. As such, Matlary sides with one of the fundamental assumptions of realist theorising in the subject area of International Relations, i.e. that foreign policy both is and ought to be about the promotion of national interests. From this point of view, Matlary's challenge becomes to show how the policy of engagement can be interpreted as to promote Norway's interests. She takes issue with the traditional realist or neorealist understanding of the national interests as concerned with power, either in the form of military or economic capabilities, or both. To show how the promotion of values can be in Norway's interests, Matlary invokes Joseph Nye's tripartite definition of interests. According to Nye interests come in three different forms. First, there are A-interests, concerned with security and territorial integrity; B-interests, concerned with economic gains; and C-intersts, which are defined as common interests (Matlary 2002). In line with Matlary's argument outlined above, Nye argues that in the post Cold War era, the distinction 'between a foreign policy based on interests and a foreign policy based on values' is no longer valid (Nye 2002: 138). The reason why there is no longer any incompatibility between a value-based and an interest-based foreign policy, is according to Nye due to the rise of what he calls 'the global information age' (Nye 2002: 136; see also Chandler 2004: 59). Changes in the way information are spread are in other words thought to imply a redefinition of the foreign policy interests.

Matlary's argument seems to correspond with the argument presented in the 2009 MFA White Paper in a two essential ways. First, Matlary's argument is based on the assumption that the distinction between values and interests is analytically useful and an adequate starting point for a framing of the Norwegian policy of engagement. Indeed, by being seen as a contrast to core security and economic interests, the term 'values-based interests' reinforces the analytical distinction between values and interests. Second, the reason why the division of Norway's foreign policy into values-based *Idealpolitik* and interests-based *Realpolitik* is argued to make less sense in the

post Cold War era, is argued to be due to exogenous developments in the international sphere. Whereas in the structure of the argument presented in the 2009 MFA White Paper, globalisation is cited as the reason why our understanding of foreign policy interests has to be expanded as to included 'values-based' foreign policy areas, in Matlary's argument, the an ostensible rise of public diplomacy in the international as well as the domestic sphere has the same explanatory function. In both arguments, our understanding of Norway's foreign policy is assumed to lag behind recent developments in the international sphere, and the stretching of concepts such as 'foreign policy interests' is seen as a reaction and a consequence of these developments.

5. Poesis and praxis revisited

5.1 The ghost in the machine

The two conceptualisations of the policy of engagement as a 'globalisation policy' and as 'value-diplomacy' can both be seen as attempts to construct the policy of engagement as a political project and make plausible the claim that Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict in order to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by non-violent means. As argued above, in order to give the policy of engagement some material grounding, and show that this policy is somehow in Norway's interest, these conceptualisations invoked globalising tendencies such as the emergence of global security threats and the rise of public diplomacy.

This section, however, argues these globalising tendencies cannot materially ground the claim that Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict in order to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by peaceful means. Instead, it is suggested that the conceptualisations of the policy of engagement as globalisation policy and value-diplomacy indicates the exact opposite, namely that the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict is marked first and foremost by the absence of a strategic project and that instead, the Norwegian approach to conflict resolution, as expressed by the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, should be understood as a set of principles designed to enable policy makers to project statements of purpose internationally while at the same time enable them to deny responsibility for policy outcomes.

First, as shown above, the MFA White Paper invokes the concept of globalisation, and more specifically the emergence of a whole range of new global security threats in order to demonstrate that there is 'no longer' any clear-cut division between values-based and interests-based forms of foreign policy. At face value, this can, at

least potentially, provide some material grounding of the claim made by Norwegian policy makers, that they intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict in order to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by non-violent means. Arguably, if the Sri Lankan conflict can be conceptualised as a 'external instability', and hence a potential threat to Norway, then this could potentially explain why Norway intervened in Sri Lanka. However, even if one accepts the argument that the conflict in Sri Lanka constituted a global security threat, the conceptualisation of the policy of engagement as a 'globalisation policy' seems to be far to general to explain why Norway intervened the way it did. As shown in the second chapter, one of the guiding ideas behind the Norwegian intervention was that it was the parties which 'owned' the process. However, if the conflict in Sri Lanka was really perceived as a potential security threat to Norway, it is hard to explain why Norwegian policy makers would leave it to the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government to settle their differences.

Secondly, it can be argued that globalising tendencies in the post Cold War era, such as the emergence of global security threats and the emergence of new global norm entrepreneurs such as international NGOs and the global media, cannot suffcently explain why there is 'no longer' any clear cut distinction between values-based and interest-based forms of foreign policy. In the logical structure of the argument, the ghost in the machine (to allude to the British philosopher Gilbert Ryle's description of Descartes mind-body dualism) doing the explanatory work in the MFA White Paper's as well as in Matlary's argument, is globalisation. Although, as shown above, the two arguments put forward in the MFA White Paper and by Matlary seem to reflect a general tendency in the subject area of International Relations to understand the dynamics of post Cold War international politics as a reaction to globalisation, many have argued that this understanding rests upon shaky epistemological foundations.

As the British IR-scholar Justin Rosenberg (2000) has convincingly argued in *The Follies of Globalisation Theory*, analyses that invokes the transformative power of globalisation for our understanding of the dynamics of international politics, hinge

upon an unjustified epistemological move from regarding globalisation as a dependent variable, i.e. as something which has to be explained (*explanandum*), to regarding globalisation as an independent variable, i.e. as something which serves as an explanation for something else (*explanans*). As he writes:

> *By asserting that the emergence of a single global space as the arena of social action increasingly outweighs in its consequences other kinds of causality which have traditionally been invoked to explain social phenomena; by extrapolating the geographical dimension of this process into an alternative, spatio-temporal problematic for social science; and finally, by pitting this new problematic not simply against competing perspectives in the contemporary social sciences, but also against the classical foundations of modern social thought as a whole - in all these ways, they have raised their sights beyond any purely descriptive role for the concept [of globalisation]. In the logical structure of their argumentation, what presents itself initially as the explanandum - globalisation as the developing outcome of some historical process - is progressively transformed into the explanans: it is globalisation which now explains the changing character of the moderns world [...]' (2000: 3).*

Rosenberg's concern seems to be that so-called globalisation theories put the cart before the horse, i.e. that what was initially something that had to be explained, i.e. globalisation, has gradually turned into something which explains the transformed nature of international politics.

The British IR-scholar David Chandler (2009) has also warned against confusing the globalisation of international politics with globalisation understood as a description of economic and social change, but has taken the argument further, inquiring into the implications of this confusion for our understanding of contemporary forms of policy making.

At a discursive level, he agrees with the general description of post Cold War policy making as being marked by a development in which 'soft' areas of policy making has gradually merged with 'hard' areas, arguing that 'it would seem that the Cold War world of realpolitik, in which the territorial interests of state security were considered primary, has been transformed into the post-Cold War world of globalised, values-led policy-making in which security has been redefined in terms which see the security of

regions of the world as interdependent, rather than conflicting priorities, and the issues of concern extended away from external threats in the military sphere to internal questions of democracy, good governance and relief from poverty' (2009: 185). He also agrees with Matlary's observation that norms are seen as been 'driven by NGOs and other 'norm entrepreneurs' acting in the global political sphere, shaping public perceptions of the global political agenda and forcing states to respond and gradually take on board assumptions about the importance of issues such as human rights and the rule of law (*ibid.*: 9).

However, and in line with Rosenberg's warning against invoking globalisation as an explanatory variable, Chandler argues that discursive change cannot itself provide the answer to the question of why we appear to live in a global world. As he points out,

> *It appears that our subjective understanding, that politics has been globalised, has undergone a transformation which bears little direct relationship to changes in the processes of economic and social relations. It seems clear that the end of the Cold War is the is the constitutive point of transformation and yet this cannot, in itself, adquately explain why there has been such a radical shift in perceptions of the political. At the level of geo-politics, it is not clear why the end of the Cold War, understood as shaping international relations through super power rivalry and maintaining a balance of power, should result in the globalisation of politics. Clearly there are fewer barriers to the expansion of market relations and to the return of western domination and intervention, but why should this take the form of globalised discourses? (*ibid.: 14)*

Instead of understanding the emergence of new and global security threats and the increased importance of NGOs and a globalised media, as mere consequences of globalisation, it appears that it is the globalised understanding of the contemporary dynamics of international politics and international security that has to be explained.

Thirdly, as demonstrated above, both the argument presented in the MFA White Paper and the argument presented by Matlary, rest on a binary view of values and interest. Although they argue that the changed dynamics of international politics has made the relationship between values-based and interests-based forms of policy making less clear, both arguments seems to rest upon the assumption that the

distinction between values and interests is an adequate starting point for an analysis of the policy of engagement. Indeed, as shown above, the binary view of values and interests seems to permeate the discourse on the Norwegian policy of engagement as such. However, it can be argued that this binary view of values and interests is fundamentally misconceived.

Seemingly, the argument that the changed dynamics of international politics in the post Cold War era has somehow altered the relationship between a values-driven and an interests-driven foreign policy seems to imply a certain reading of the dynamics of international politics during the Cold War. Egeland's reading of the Cold War as running along two axes, one characterised by the geopolitical rivalry between the Soviet Union and another characterised by the moral relations between North and South seems to be a case in point. However, it can be argued that this reading of the Cold War as structured by two different spheres, one strategic-geopolitical, and one moral, overlooks the appearant fact that the the superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union was not only a geopolitical struggle, but also an ideological stuggle. As Zaki Laïdi (1998) argues, the Cold War was as a struggle which 'managed to combine two absolutes: meaning, symbolised by the ideological combat between two universal and competing value-systems; and power, carried by the absolute weapon, the nuclear bomb' (1998: 15). Consequently, as Chandler (2009) puts it, it is possible to look back on the Cold War period, 'as one where values and interests were co-determinate with each other' (2009: 192).

This understanding of the Cold War as a period, in which values and interests were essentially on the same line, seems to cut across two fundamentally different conceptualisations of the Cold War. As David Campbell (1998) points out, there is a general tendency in the literature on the Cold War either to understand it as 'a period of intense rivalry between the post-World War II blocks of "East" and "West"' (1998: 16), or to understand it as 'the rivalry of greater duration between communism and capitalism' (ibid.). What Chandler and Laïdi argues, is that this is not a question or either/or: The Cold War effectively synthesised, to allude to Hegel, the distinction between values and interests; between meaning and power.

By conceptualising values and interests as inherently connected, what appears as striking in post Cold War frameworks of policy making, is not first and foremost the increased emphasis put on values-based frameworks of policy making, as Matlary argues, but the binary understanding of values and interests that undergirds these frameworks. Differently put, if values and interests are inherently connected, why do we tend to see them as two different forms of policy making? As Chandler sees it, the increased emphasis put on values in contemporary frameworks of policy making reflects a 'crisis of political subjectivity' and 'a difficulty of developing and projecting collective societal goals in the international sphere' (2009: 216). As he writes:

> *Politics has never been restricted to the national level: the conceptions of left and right, which framed understandings of politics from the French Revolution until the end of the Cold War, were universal in nature. Politics has always been deterritorialised in terms of its conceptualisations, in terms of the aspirational content of political demands: for women's rights, for democracy, for national independence, and so on. However, it is necessarily territorialised in terms of the specific strategies and articulations of those demands, with a view to influencing or gaining political power to put those demands into practice. The globalisation of politics maintains the appearance of deterritorialised political claims and counterclaims for progress and rights but lacks the territorialised organisational aspects which sharpened and clarified political positions and enabled strategic instrumental engagement with political institutions. This shift in political levels evades the transformational tasks which were central to traditional views of political activity in liberal modernity (ibid.: 16-7).*

Arguably, then, the conceptualisations of the policy of engagement as either a 'globalisation policy', as the MFA White Paper argues, or as 'value-diplomacy', as Matlary argues, rests on a misconceived relationship between values and interests in policy making, and an unjustified belief in the explanatory power of globalisation. Consequently, these conceptuliastions fails to materially ground the claim that Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict in order to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by non-violent means. However, this does not imply that the Norwegian MFA's invocation of globalisation in their conceptualisation of the policy of engagement, or Matlary's hypothesis that, 'if there

is a shift in international politics away from military to moral power, then the time has come for a small and active country like Norway' (2002), are insignificant.

5.2 Explaining the intervention in Sri Lanka

In fact, it seems that Matlary's conceptualisation of the policy of engagement as driven by 'visibility and reputation' (2002) can, if not materially ground, then at least explain why Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict, and why Norwegian policy makers constructed the intervention around the idea 'ownership' and 'internationalisation'. In other words, if it is true that Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict in order to enhance its image and reputation in the international sphere, then it seems to be a sensible tactic to follow the principles of ownership and internationalisation. From this perspective, internationalisation of the Sri Lankan conflict was necessary to give the Norwegian policy makers an audience in front of which it could present its good intentions and its willingness to act as a 'good international citizen'. This understanding of why Norway actively tried to attract international attention to the Sri Lankan conflict is supported by more empirically focused studies of the Norwegian intervention. As Höglund and Svensson (2009) points out in their analysis of the Norwegian 'peace diplomacy' in the Sri Lankan conflict, 'Through its peace efforts, Norway has promoted its national interests by gaining a reputation as a skilled and effective peacemaker. The involvement in conflict-torn areas has given it access to the key centres of power in the world, such as the World Bank, and the White House in Washington, DC' (2009: 179). They cite Norway's Special Envoy to Sri Lanka, Erik Solheim, who has said that 'the involvement in peace processes creates interest in Norway with other major countries in the world' (cited in *ibid.*). Höglund and Svensson argue that this can explain, not only why Norway decided to become involved in the Sri Lankan conflict, but also why the Norwegian policy makers sought to internationalise the conflict:

> *Norway's interest in cultivating its international reputation as a peacemaker explains its interest in getting involved. It also explains its interest in getting this conflict, once it was involved, on the radar screen of the international community [...] Norway's interests in acting as a peacemaker in Sri Lanka was related to its aspiration to be a significant voice in the international system (*ibid*.: 186).*

As they are right to point out, as such, 'Norway's interest in acting as a peacemaker in Sri Lanka is not related to the conflict itself, but rather lies in Washington, DC, Brussels and Delhi' (*ibid*: 179).

Moreover, if a concern with reputation and visibility was the driving force behind the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka, then this can also explain why Norway chose to place the responsibility for solving the conflict in the hands of the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government: The insistence on the parties 'ownership' of the process enabled Norwegian policy makers to deny any responsibility for setbacks and the lack of progress in the process, and put the responsibility for the eventual return to war squarely on the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. As it turned out, this is exactly what happened. In the aforementioned speech given by the current Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, in 2010, he made the point that

> *[Sri Lanka] reminds us of a fundamental fact: That it is the parties that carry the main responsibility. This was our message when Norwegian negotiators contributed to a ceasefire agreement in 2002: That is was the parties that had to take responsibility for a political process which could provide the opportunity for a political solution. As it turned out, they made a difference choice (2010).*

5.3 The policy of disengagement?

However, although a concern with 'visibility and reputation' can explain why Norway intervened in the Sri Lankan conflict, and why the Norwegian policy makers built their intervention upon the principles of ownership and internationalisation, this does not necessarily imply that the Norwegian intervention was a strategic activity. Although, as Matlary (2002) points out, a values-based foreign policy *can* be understood as a strategic activity if the values are pursued in a goal oriented way, it does not necessarily follow that the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka was a goal

oriented activity. As argued above, in order to be constructed as a strategic activity, the claim that Norway intervened in Sri Lanka in order to make the two parties resolve their differences by non-violent means, needs some material grounding that the concept of globalisation cannot provide. If the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka cannot be constructed as being in Norway's material interests, how should we theorise the Norwegian intervention?

The general claim made by Matlary that visibility and reputation has become more important in the post Cold War era, has been pursued by the NUPI[7] researchers Henrik Thune and Ståle Ulriksen (2002), although from a different epistemological perspective. In 'Norway as an allied activist: Penance thorough Peace', they take issue with conceptual framings of the policy of engagement which rests upon the distincion between values and interests. As they see it, the standard view of Norway's foreign policy can be dissected into two conceptualisations: Essentialism and structuralism. By essentialism, the mean 'the notion that policy is determined by, and connceted to, a given "national essence", either in the form of some continuous strategic interests arising out of Norway's geopolitical position and natural resources, or in the form of a set of national values rooted in the history of Norwegian society' (2002: 5). By structuralism, which seems to be a subcategory of essentialism, they mean that 'Norway's foreign policy priorities are seen as a function of Norway's position in the state system as such: binding alliances with other states […], and Norway as a territorial entity within a particular geopolitical triangle' (*ibid*.).

According to Thune and Ulriksen, neither of these conceptualisations can account for the contemporary dynamics of the Norwegian policy of engagement. As they put it,

> *the structuralist view is determinist and the idealist-realist dichotomy is reductions; both positions are far too general to grasp any specific mechanisms, or even to make sense of the particular experiences of Norwegian activism in the 1990s. It is fair to say that the actual conduct of Norway's foreign policy in the last decade contradicts the whole notion of the idealism - realism divide (*ibid.*).

[7] Norwegian Institue of International Affairs.

Instead of viewing the policy of engagement as a result of some national essence or as the outcome of Norway's position in the system of states, Thune and Ulriksen argues that the policy of engagement has less to do with values and morality than a willingness to exploit internationally accepted cosmopolitan norms in order to enhance Norway's reputation in the international sphere. As such, they indicated that the policy of engagement should be understood as some kind of PR-device for the Norwegian MFA. As they write:

> *[T]he current activist dimension of Norwegian foreign policy is best understood by analogy to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's conception of the social person, for whom motivations for actions, and identity, are rooted in a concern with other people's judgements. Or to rewrite a few lines from a commercial - "image becomes everything", and results are nothing", or at least, secondary (ibid.: 6).*

Consequently, they argue that the policy of engagement should be understood as 'pragmatic idealism', which they understand as 'a practice formed in response to, and to some extent dictated by, internal and external "audiences". The rational of this policy is social; that is to say, to maximize international recognition and attention from allies as a substitute for a constant and systematic political strategy' (*ibid.*)

However, although Tune and Ulriksen suggests that an analysis of the Norwegian policy of engagement has to start from the premise that it is an activity which first and foremost seeks to enhance Norway's image in the international as well as the domestic sphere, this does not necessarily imply that there is not an ulterior driving force behind this policy. As they argue, the policy of engagement seems to rest upon the belief that active involvement in peace processes and the reputational benefits that such involvements bestows upon Norway can be converted into what they call 'high political' gains (*ibid.*). Consequently, Thune and Ulriksen suggests that pragmatic idealism could be interpreted as 'realpolitik through soft power' (*ibid.*), i.e. as a form of foreign policy which seeks to enhance Norway's reputation in the international sphere and convert it into security and economic interests.

However, as pointed out by a team of NUPI researchers led by Halvard Leira (2007) in the report 'Norwegian self-images and Norwegian foreign policy', while the policy

of engagement is frequently justified by the claim that it provides Norwegian foreign policy decision makers with access to important decision makers, and hence can be seen as 'realpolitik through soft power', as Thune and Ulriksen suggests, it is unclear how this access can be utilized. As they put it, 'generally, we see that the altruistic self-image is driven more by the desire to do what is right, than the results on the ground around the world' (Leira et al. 2007: 37). Consequently, they suggest that the policy of engagement could be framed as 'engagement for the sake of engagement' (*ibid.*).

Terje Tvedt (2009) has situated this view of the Norwegian policy of engagement in the subject area of International Relations, and argued that if one adopts a traditional definition of foreign policy, i.e. as a state's result oriented actions vis-à-vis its international surroundings, the policy of engagement will not qualify as foreign policy. As Tvedt sees it, this is because the policy of engagement 'is not in accordance with the premise of goal orientation' (2009: 53). This leads Tvedt to redefine foreign policy, arguing that it should be understood as 'the more or less result oriented plans and actions a country's political leadership develops on the basis of, and within, a country's political culture, and which is seeks to implement in near and far areas with the tools that the state has at its disposal' (*ibid*: 56).

However, instead of redefining the concept of foreign policy in order to make is suitable for the current dynamics of policy of engagement, it is possible to insist that the concept of foreign policy making implies goal orentiation and strategic and instrumental thinking, and argue that the policy of engagement, from this perspective, appears as a fundamentally non-strategic and non-instrumental activity. As shown above, the attempts to construct the policy of engagement as a strategic project rest upon a misconceived relationship between values and interests, and an unjustified belief in the explanatory power of globalisation. Instead of understanding the policy of engagement as a 'globalisation policy' or as 'values-based diplomacy', it can be argued that the policy of engagement, as expressed by the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict, should instead be understood as what Laïdi describes as a 'projection strategy', i.e. as a policy designed to enable policy makers to project an

identity as a 'good international citizen' while at the same time enable them to deny any responsibility for extrisic outcomes.

This coneptualisation of the policy of engagement, moreover, would open up a field of critique with several implications:

First, the conceptualisation of the policy of engagement as a projection strategy highlights the gap between ends and means. As shown above, at the first round of negotiations between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government in 2002, the Norwegian Deputy Foreign Mininster Vidar Helgesen stated that the aim of the negotiations was 'peace', understood as being about 'normalcy in people's lives', 'human rights and human dignity', and about 'securing people a democratic right to influence the running of their community and their country' (Helgesen 2002*a*). However, the conceptualisation of the policy of engagement as a projection strategy would imply that the aims outlined by Helgesen will not be reached, in fact, can not be reached, unless one manages to articulate these demands in a strategic way, with a view to influencing or gaining political power to put those demands into practice (Chandler 2009: 17). The conceptualisation of the policy of engagement as a projection strategy would in other words encourage modesty, and invite policy makers to think realistically and strategically about what they can, and what they can not, achieve. Crucially, simply to *be* Norway, is not enough.

Second, the conceptualisation of the policy of engagement as a projection strategy would highlight the need for responsible foreign policy making. Here, responsibility means responsibility for extrinsic outcomes. As shown above, the current Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, argued that the Norwegian appraoch to conflict resolution was marked by a will to take risks. To be engaged, he argued, 'means in most cases a risk' (Støre 2010). The conceptualisation of the policy of engagement as a projection strategy would stand as a corrective to this statement. After all, to design a conflict resolution approach in a way that enables you to deny any responsibility for the outcomes of the process hardly qualifies as a risk.

i.e. as a policy designed primarily to enable Norwegian policy makers to project an identity as a 'good international citizen' on an international level, while at the same time enable them to deny responsibility for external outcomes.

Third, the MFA White Paper's conceptualisation of the policy of engagement as a 'globalisation policy' would, from this perspective, acquire a new significance. What appears as a striking characteristic of this conceptualisation is that it makes it exceedingly difficult to call Norway's foreign policy into question. As shown above, in the MFA White paper, a material grounding of the policy of engagement was supposed to be provided by the emergence of a whole range of new security threats. It seems to follow from this conceptualisation of the policy of engagement that Norway tried to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their difference by non-violent means for reasons of security. However, this conclusion does not really follow from the MFA White Paper's view of the expansion of Norway's foreign policy interests. As the MFA White paper states,

> *globalisation poses a new type of security challenge to Norway: threats caused by external instability. This does not mean that all crises and disasters everywhere in the world threaten Norway's security. On the contrary, one of the features of the current globalisation process is that a number of areas and events in the rest of the world have no or only limited relevance for Norwegian security and development in Norwegian society. However, in this highly globalised world there is always a possibility that far-away events that initially appear marginal can have ever-widening ripple effect that directly touch on Norwegian security. Globalisation reduces the significance of geographical distance and means that a number of new, often unpredictable, factors and relationships become relevant to security policy (Norwegian MFA 2009: 26)*

Following the Chandlerian understanding of globalisation of security, not as a real world phenomenon, but as a framework of understanding, the globalised justification of the policy of engagement appears as an attempt to put off the debate about Norway's foreign policy. Instead of presenting a clear picture of what is, and what is not, in Norway's interests, globalisation seems to have rendered the international sphere so unpredictable that an attempt to carve out a strategy based on a clear view of Norway's interests is impossible. As such, and as pointed out by Colin Hay,

globalisation is 'the enemy of political deliberation in the sense that it is seen to dictate policy choices while itself being beyond the capacity of domestic political actors to control' (cited in Heartfield 2009: 25).

6.   Conclusion: Endless Peace

The research question posed in this thesis was whether the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict can be understood as a strategic foreign policy project. In a sense, this question can be seen as having constituted both the design and the argumentative content of this thesis.

As argued above, in order to qualify as a strategic project, the claim made by Norwegian policy makers, that they intervened in Sri Lanka in order to make the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government settle their differences by non-violent means, needed some material grounding. In the Norwegian foreign policy context, the perceived need for a material grounding of the policy of engagement has led policy makers and policy analysts to argue that the changed dynamics of the international sphere after the end of the Cold War has provided values-based forms of policy making with a new relevance and significance. The attempts to show how the projection of values across borders can be in Norway's interests, can be seen as an attempt to construct the policy of engagement as a strategic project. However, this thesis has argued that two these attempts – one provided by the Norwegian MFA, and another by a leading Norwegian policy analyst – hinge on an unjustified belief in the explanatory potency of the concept of globalisation and a misconceived relationship between values and interests. Accordingly, without a convincing accout of how the Norwegian intervention in Sri Lanka can be seen to be in Norway's interests, it is hard to see how the policy of engagement can qualify as a strategic foreign policy project.

Instead, this thesis suggested that the policy of engagement should be understood as a projection strategy, which, as such, says more about the policy actor's inability to project clear strategic goals in the international sphere, than any object of concern. In this sense, the Norwegian intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict can be characterised as 'endless': It was endless both because it was not, it seems, designed to reach any specific aim.

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