

# “Norway is a Peace Nation”

*Discursive Preconditions for the Norwegian Peace Engagement Policy*

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# 1 Introduction

On September 13<sup>th</sup> 1993, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands on the lawn before the White House in Washington D.C. The two former arch enemies had just signed the Declaration of Principles, the first official agreement ever between Israel and the Palestinians. The signing became a world sensation; it brought hopes for peace in one of the world's most intractable contemporary conflicts.<sup>1</sup>

Israel and the Palestinians had not reached their agreement without outside help, however. In late August 1993, it became known that a small state in the northernmost corner of Europe, with seemingly no connection to the Middle East conflict, had played a key role in the negotiations that led to the signing of the Accords. Norwegian academics and politicians had established a secret back channel between the two parties, and they had succeeded in negotiating an agreement where much more powerful third parties, like the US, had failed.<sup>2</sup> The Norwegian third party role did not go unnoticed. The media response and public attention was massive, both in Norway and internationally, and the secret negotiations were consequently termed 'the Oslo Back Channel' or the 'Oslo Process'. Similarly, the negotiated Declaration of Principles was baptized the 'Oslo Accords' by the world press.<sup>3</sup>

The object of study in this thesis is not the Middle East peace process and Norway's role in it.<sup>4</sup> The event of the signing of the peace accords, and the attention Norway received, are nevertheless highly relevant here. In their wake, and supported by the

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<sup>1</sup> Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 82; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, p. 384; Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2004, p. 221; Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2007, p. 157

<sup>2</sup> Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2004, pp. 221f; Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2007, pp. 157ff.

<sup>3</sup> Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2007, p. 175, see also Matlary, Janne Haaland 2002

<sup>4</sup> There already exists a comprehensive academic literature on this theme. See for example Butenschøn, Nils A. 1997; Corbin, Jane 1994a; Corbin, Jane 1994b; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, pp. 376-384; Tveit, Odd Karsten 2006; Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2000; Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2004; Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2007

momentum from the accolade Norway earned, a policy of substantial international peace engagement was adopted.<sup>5</sup>

The wish to promote international peace, and the willingness to engage actively towards this end, were by no means innovations in Norwegian foreign policy thinking. In a major foreign policy study, the historian Rolf Tamnes views the ‘engagement policy’ as one of the most distinct features of Norwegian foreign policy from the 1960s and onwards. ‘Engagement policy’ denotes Norway’s moral engagement and the wish to be an international front runner.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Olav Riste, in his historical study of Norway’s foreign relations, underlines that the ‘missionary impulse’, “the conviction that Norway has a special role to play in leading the world up the straight and narrow path towards a peace based on international justice and humanitarian values”<sup>7</sup>, is one of the most important and long-standing driving forces in Norway’s foreign policy.<sup>8</sup>

It should also be noted that Norway also prior to the Middle East peace process had been involved in attempts at conflict resolution and engagement in specific peace processes. In 1989, academics at Christian Michelsen Institute attempted at facilitating negotiations between the parties to the conflict in South Sudan.<sup>9</sup> The same year, a Norwegian initiative to bring the parties in the Guatemalan civil war to the negotiation table gradually brought Norway into the peace process.<sup>10</sup> And in 1990, Arne Fjørtoft, a Norwegian NGO representative, tried to involve Norway in peace talks at Sri Lanka.<sup>11</sup> However, until the autumn of 1993, all these efforts retained a distinctly ad hoc character. They were mainly the result of individual initiatives by academics and NGO

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<sup>5</sup> Butenschøn, Nils A. 1997, pp. 371, 386; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 95; Riste, Olav 2001, pp. 272; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, pp. 444ff; Butenschøn, Nils A. 1997, pp. 371, 386

<sup>6</sup> Tamnes, Rolf 1997, pp. 339, 469, see also 339-447

<sup>7</sup> Riste, Olav 2001, p. 255

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 255f

<sup>9</sup> Tamnes, Rolf 1997, p. 446

<sup>10</sup> Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, pp. 252ff; see also Bucher-Johannessen, Bernt 1999, pp. 213f; Kelleher, Ann & Taulbee, James Larry 2006, pp. 488f, 491

<sup>11</sup> Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 104; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, p. 446

workers; they received little public attention; and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs seemingly had no explicit strategy for this kind of involvements.<sup>12</sup>

The real turning point came with the massive attention to the ‘Oslo Back Channel’ and Norway’s efforts in the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. In its wake, Norway became established as an important peace promoter internationally, possessing particular qualities as a mediator and facilitator. Norway’s potential in contributing to conflict resolution was consequently very optimistically assessed.<sup>13</sup> The result was a distinct increase in the Norwegian efforts in peace promotion and reconciliation.<sup>14</sup> Norway became involved in an increasing number of peace processes, and the peace promotion was elevated to an important part of the country’s foreign policy.

Today, fifteen years after the sensational revelation of Norway’s role in negotiating the ‘Oslo Accords’, the peace engagement still goes strong. Norway is probably involved in more peace processes than ever, and the resources spent on various kinds of peace promotion have rocketed since 1993. The engagement has also become more institutionalized; in 2002, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established Section for peace and reconciliation to coordinate the Norwegian involvements, and a number of Ministry of Foreign Affairs employees now work almost exclusively with peace promotion.

## **1.1 Research Question and Analytic Approach**

The massive scope of the peace promotion efforts, the amount of resources spent, and the importance it has assumed in the country’s foreign policy, are intriguing: how can it be that a small and remote state like Norway adopts such an activist policy to further peace around the globe? I am certainly not the first to pose this question; there already exists a considerable body of scholarly literature that explores it from various

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<sup>12</sup> Matlary, Janne Haaland 2002, pp. 51, 54f; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 102

<sup>13</sup> Gjerdåker, Svein 1997, p. 237; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, pp. 95f, 103f; Riste, Olav 2001, p. 272; Sørnbø, Gunnar 1997, p. 251; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, pp.443f

<sup>14</sup> Butenschøn, Nils A. 1997, pp. 386; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, pp. 14, 81, 98,105; Riste, Olav 2001, pp. 255, 273; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, pp. 443-447

perspectives.<sup>15</sup> However, and with the exception of the analyses of Halvard Leira, Leira et al., Terje Tvedt, and Thune & Larsen, the literature mainly focuses on the intentions and motivations behind the engagement. It analyzes the interplay between and relative saliency of altruism on the one hand and instrumental considerations based on national self interests on the other, and its explanations for the Norwegian peace engagement rely heavily on this analysis. In other words, it tries to answer *why* Norway adopted an activist peace policy.

This analysis aims at complementing the insights in the existing literature by posing a different kind of question and trying to answer it. Rather than looking at the intentions behind the Norwegian policy, I aim at highlighting the preconditions for its adoption and continuation. My basic research question is thus a *how-possible* question<sup>16</sup>:

*How has the Norwegian peace engagement policy been made possible? And how has it been constructed as a natural and important part of Norwegian foreign policy?*

In order to be able to give a non-trivial answer, I adopt a discourse analytic approach. I will, in other words, focus on how the peace engagement has been spoken and written about from the early 1990s and up to 2008. The underlying argument here, which will be elaborated on in the analysis, is that in this period, a Norwegian peace engagement discourse<sup>17</sup> can be identified. My approach is broad, analyzing a wide variety of empirical textual sources, including Government White Papers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs' Foreign Policy Addresses to the Storting, and other texts emanating from the Government; parliamentary foreign policy debates; and newspaper articles.

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<sup>15</sup> Most of the existing studies of contemporary Norwegian foreign policy and aid policy analyze the peace engagement in greater or lesser detail. See for example Bucher–Johannessen, Bernt 1999; Kelleher, Ann & Taulbee, James Larry 2006; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003; Lodgaard, Sverre 2000; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2001; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2002; Skogmo, Bjørn 2000; Riste, Olav 2001; Stokke, Olav 2005; Sørbo, Gunnar 1997; Sørbo, Gunnar 2000; Tamnes, Rolf 1997; Thune, Henrik & Larsen, Torgeir 2000; Tvedt, Terje 2003; Tvedt, Terje 2006. See also Leira, Halvard 2004; Leira, Halvard 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1993, pp. 298. Doty here distinguishes between 'why questions', leading to a focus on why decisions were made given a set of circumstances, and 'how-possible questions', pointing in the direction of studying the preconditions for the adoption of certain policies

<sup>17</sup> I argue that this discourse may be seen as distinct from, but drawing on and relating to, the general foreign policy discourse, the security discourse, the development aid discourse, and the already existing peace discourse. Halvard Leira has studied this latter discourse, and argues that it has influenced Norwegian foreign policy thinking from about 1890 and onwards. Leira, Halvard 2002, 2004, 2005; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007. However, I argue that the peace engagement discourse is a more specific discourse, emerging at the same time as the activist Norwegian peace promotion policy was established.

The inclusion of a large body of material prevents me from analyzing single texts in detail, but it allows me to get a general overview of the discourse and ensures that no major discursive developments are ignored.

This kind of broad, empirical investigation of the contemporary peace engagement discourse has, as far as I know, not been conducted before. However, there do exist some analyses on related subjects that have similar theoretical and methodological starting points; Halvard Leira has analyzed the historical Norwegian peace discourse in detail<sup>18</sup>, Leira et al. have studied Norwegian self images in relation to foreign policy<sup>19</sup>, and Terje Tvedt has adopted a discourse analytic perspective in parts of his seminal study of the Norwegian ‘South political system’<sup>20</sup>. I build on the approaches and findings of these analyses, particularly the two former, aiming at complementing their insights with empirical findings from the period under study.

Employing discourse analysis as the theoretical and methodological foundation of the analysis implies that the focus is on uncovering the shared or intersubjective understandings that appear in the empirical material, and the structures of meaning that are established therein. The basic assumption underlying the approach is that these understandings and meanings are socially constructed in discourse and have a fundamental influence on our worldviews, self images, perceptions, and frames of understanding; and therefore also our perceived interests. The discursively constructed intersubjective meanings and understandings are thus seen as preconditions for the adoption of policies, including the Norwegian peace engagement policy.

One caveat is in its place here: I do not view the peace engagement discourse as monolithic. Within the discourse, there exist different positions or ways of viewing the engagement, or *representations*. A representation may here be defined as ‘reality’; or as a packet of claims about reality, a bundle of concepts, notions, intersubjective understandings, and meanings, that structures and patterns texts that belong to it.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Leira, Halvard 2002, 2004, 2005

<sup>19</sup> Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007

<sup>20</sup> Tvedt, Terje 2003; see also Tvedt, Terje 2006

<sup>21</sup> Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 33, 51, 60ff, 94, 177f. The definition of representation given here is a combination of the different definitions Neumann presents. For a further discussion, see theory and methodology chapter.

Drawing out and presenting the different representations, and analyzing their relative strength within the discourse, is an important part of the analysis.

Given that discourses and representations establish important preconditions for the formulation of policy, detailed studies of their nature and of what they do may yield non-controversial findings from a scholarly point of view. In this thesis, I aim at detailing the emergence, establishment, evolution, and stability of the peace engagement discourse, and its effects on Norwegian policy. I am particularly interested in how the discourse has legitimized, naturalized, defended, and perpetuated the extensive Norwegian peace engagement, and how it has contributed to the establishment of the engagement as an important part of the country's foreign policy.

## **1.2 Disposition**

In the second chapter, I present discourse analysis as the theoretical and methodological basis of the thesis. Key theoretical assumptions and concepts are elaborated on, and I detail how the analysis will be conducted. The next part of the thesis is the analysis. The analysis is presented in four chapters, each of them detailing the discourse in one temporal period. The first chapter is brief; it presents the longstanding Norwegian peace discourse and the discursive position of the concepts of 'peace' and 'peace promotion' in the years prior to the revelation of the Norwegian involvement in the Middle East peace process in 1993. The next chapter analyzes the emergence and establishment of a distinct peace engagement discourse, and a dominant representation therein, in the years from 1993 to 1997. The third concerns the consolidation and reproduction of the established discourse in the 1997 to 2003 period. The last analyses the increasing criticism of the peace engagement, the rise of the alternative representations, the subsequent opening of the discourse, and the signs of discursive struggle that ensued from 2003 and up to 2008. The conclusion draws together the findings of the analysis, discusses them, and looks at the discourse's effects on the Norwegian foreign policy in general and the peace promotion policy specifically. I also suggest some directions for further research.

## 2 Theory and Methodology

This thesis is theoretically and methodologically inspired by discourse analytic approaches. I have chosen to conduct a discourse analysis because it seems well suited to give new insights into how the Norwegian peace engagement was made possible. Discourse analysis focuses on identifying the *discursive preconditions* for the adoption of policies. In other words, it allows us to study how discursively constructed meanings, knowledge, identities, and self images influence decisions and practice, making some policies possible while excluding others. It thus has the potential for denaturalizing policies that appear as obvious or necessary in a given context.<sup>22</sup>

In this chapter, I present and discuss what I view as central meta-theoretical and theoretical premises and claims. I argue that discourse analytic theory draws on general meta-theoretical assumptions about the social construction of meaning, knowledge, and social reality; and on more specific claims about language, discourses, and practice. The resulting framework may be employed to analyze the role of discourses in political processes.<sup>23</sup>

Then follow a discussion of methodological issues and a presentation of the concrete approach of this thesis. I aim to show how discourse analysis may function as a tool for textual analysis geared towards uncovering the role of discourses in the production and reproduction of intersubjective meanings and knowledge. At the outset, it should be noted that discourse analysis is a diverse body of scholarship, and that we may distinguish between several different and partly incompatible theories and methodologies. The framework I present here draws on insights from several of these, while striving for theoretical coherence.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1993, pp. 298f; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, p. 236; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, p. 83

<sup>23</sup> See for example Mathisen, Werner Christie 1998, p. 3; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 9, 12ff; Hardy, Cynthia and Phillips, Nelson 2002, pp. 4-9

<sup>24</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 12, 16, 143. The authors argue that it is desirable to draw on different approaches and customize the theoretical framework to the object under study as long as the resulting framework is theoretically coherent.

## 2.1 Discourse Analysis as Theory

### 2.1.1 Meta-theory

On the level of meta-theory, I view discourse analysis as a poststructuralist approach drawing on and compatible with social constructivist key tenets.<sup>25</sup> At the core of social constructivism lie two claims, specifying its stance on the nature of meaning, knowledge, and social reality: “(...) social constructivism is epistemologically about the social construction of meaning and knowledge and ontologically about the construction of social reality.”<sup>26</sup>

This implies that the social world is viewed as context specific, contingent, and open to change.<sup>27</sup> It is made up of intersubjectively meaningful structures and processes. Material resources, events, and actions have no inherent or ‘natural’ meaning; they acquire meaning and are made intelligible through interpretation. The interpretation, in turn, is based on the social context generally, and on structures of shared (intersubjective) understandings and knowledge specifically.<sup>28</sup>

Intersubjective understandings, worldviews and knowledge are, in other words, viewed as the lenses through which we interpret the world, and as constituting reality. They are not reflecting an objective and given world “out there”; they are rather the results of social construction. As such, they are historically and culturally specific, defined and shaped through processes of social interaction and practice where shared truths are established. It follows that they are subject to continual struggles about their content.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Here, I take as my starting point studies that view discourse analysis as a social constructivist approach. See for example Adler, Emanuel 2002, pp. 95, 97f; Checkel, Jeffrey T. 2006, pp. 6f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, s. 13f; Milliken, Jennifer 1995, s. 229f; Phillips, Nelson & Hardy, Cynthia 2002, pp. 2, 5, 10. The claim that discourse analysis can be subsumed under the category of social constructivism is not completely uncontroversial, however. Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver for example view discourse analysis as a poststructural theory, and poststructuralism as incompatible with social constructivism. Hansen, Lene 2002, p. 4f; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 1-5; Wæver, Ole 2002, p. 21ff. Iver B. Neumann similarly argues that all discourse analysis is poststructuralist. Neumann, Iver B. 2001, p. 24

<sup>26</sup> Guzzini, Stefano 2000, p. 147, see also pp. 149, 159-162. Guzzini is quoted in Adler, Emanuel 2002, p. 95, see also 100f.

<sup>27</sup> Adler, Emanuel 2002, p. 96, see also 100f; Hopf, Ted 1998, p. 175f; Guzzini, Stefano 2000, p. 154f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, s. 13f.

<sup>28</sup> Adler, Emanuel 2002, p. 100; Guzzini, Stefano 2000, p. 159; Checkel, Jeffrey T. 1998, p. 326

<sup>29</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 13f. See also Adler, Emanuel 2002, pp. 95, 100; Guzzini, Stefano 2000, p. 164

It should also be noted that social constructivist meta-theory views agents and structures as mutually constituted or constructed. Agency and actions are embedded in structural context, and are therefore constituted, or given meaning, by it. At the same time, actions, understood as practice, are crucial for the reproduction of the structure. The structure may in other words change as a result of changing practice.<sup>30</sup> Constructivists thus focus on the interaction between the structural and individual level, in theory attaching equal importance to both.<sup>31</sup>

### ***2.1.2 The discourse analytic view of language***

The theoretical core of all discourse analysis is, in line with structuralist and poststructuralist language philosophy, the importance of language and discourse in the social construction of the world.<sup>32</sup> Discourse analytic theory rejects the positivistic, instrumentalist, and referential view of language as a transparent and neutral tool that acts as a medium for the communication, dissemination and registration of data.<sup>33</sup> Language is not viewed as reflecting an objective and material reality; rather, it is of pivotal importance in its construction and organization. Language shapes what we think and do; it draws boundaries for what is thinkable and doable.<sup>34</sup>

In discourse analytic theory, the social nature of language is emphasized. In line with social constructivist meta-theory, language is viewed as an important intersubjective structure in which meaning and understanding is created. It is not a private property of the individual; it is intersubjective of nature, a series of collective codes and conventions that individuals need to employ to make themselves understood.<sup>35</sup> Drawing on structuralist and poststructuralist language philosophy, language is viewed as a relationally structured system of signs. The meaning of each sign is defined by its

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<sup>30</sup> Adler, Emanuel 2002, pp 100f; Checkel, Jeffrey T. 1998, pp. 326, 340ff; Hopf, Ted 1998, p. 178

<sup>31</sup> Checkel, Jeffrey T. 1998, pp. 326, 340ff. Checkel emphasizes that studying agency and structure simultaneously is very problematic in practice. Most scholars end up bracketing one or the other (usually the individual level), thus violating the underlying ontology. The relationship between agents and structure has also been the subject of heated controversies and theoretical debates within the constructivist camp. For a brief overview, see Adler, Emanuel 2002, pp. 104ff.

<sup>32</sup> For discussions of the commonalities between structuralist and poststructuralist language philosophy and discourse analytic theories, see Jørgensen, Marianne Winther & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 17-21; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 18-24

<sup>33</sup> Wæver, Ole 2002, p. 24, 28; see also Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina 2005, pp. 305f, 326f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winther & Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 18; Phillips, Nelson & Hardy, Cynthia 2002, p. 6

<sup>35</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 17

relation to other signs, that is, through a series of juxtapositions. One element is often valued over its opposite, creating a structure where signs are differentiated, not just in meaning, but also in value.<sup>36</sup> However, and in line with the poststructuralist critique of structuralism, the relationships between the signs are viewed as inherently unstable. The meaning of a sign can not be fixed indefinitely because its place within the web of relations may change. Structures exist, but they are temporary and changeable.<sup>37</sup> Empirical investigation of the changing meaning of signs and their links to other signs may therefore be an important part of a discourse analysis.

### ***2.1.3 Defining discourse and representation***

While the importance of language remains undisputed, discourse analysis goes beyond pure linguistic analyses that focus exclusively on language and its structure.<sup>38</sup> Discourses do not consist of language alone; they also include practices and patterns of action. They are inscribed in institutions, and they therefore have a material expression.<sup>39</sup> Discourse analysis thus aims to include language, social practice and the material in an integrated perspective, exploring the relation between them and how they influence and constitute each other.<sup>40</sup>

A proper definition of discourse should incorporate these insights. In this thesis, I draw on a definition proposed by Iver B. Neumann:

*A discourse is a system for the production of a set of statements and practices which, through inscribing themselves in institutions and appearing as more or less normal, constitute reality for its bearers and has a certain degree of regularity in a set of social relations.*<sup>41</sup>

This definition captures the capacity of discourses to produce new statements and practices, and to constitute reality for its bearers. The social importance of discourses

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<sup>36</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 19; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter og Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 17-23; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, p. 229; Wæver, Ole 2002, pp. 24, 29

<sup>37</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 19; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter og Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 20f; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, p. 229; Wæver, Ole 2002, p. 24, 29

<sup>38</sup> Discourse analysis thus mirrors Mikhail Bakhtin's critique of structural linguistics (Ferdinand de Saussure). While de Saussure draws a clear line between *langue* (language understood as a relational system) and *parole* (the spoken word, the specific speech act), and privileges the former as the object of linguistics, Bakhtin argues that *parole* must be included in our analyses to make us able to understand the social importance of language. Jørgensen, Marianne Winter og Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 19ff; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 18ff

<sup>39</sup> Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 38, 80f

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pp. 38, 81, see also 80

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 18, my translation, italics added. For a related definition, see Wæver, Ole 2002, p. 29

is in other words highlighted. So are some of the mechanisms through which discourses work; discourses influence and shape institutions, and they appear as normal, obvious or self-evident. They may, as a result, be taken as given, and their effects may therefore be seen as ‘natural’. Discourses can thus be viewed as intersubjective structures that construct reality through producing meaning, knowledge, and world images, thus providing individuals with the basis for their decisions.

The concept of discourse is, within the discourse analytic literature, used in a variety of ways and specified at different levels. Some theorists for example identify several competing discourses that partly cover same social domain, inscribing the same concepts with different meanings.<sup>42</sup> Here, I again follow Iver B. Neumann, who uses the concept of *representation* to denote such different positions or ‘realities’. Neumann gives several different definitions of representation. I combine several of these and construct my own:

*A representation may be defined 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.*<sup>43</sup>

Within one discourse, there usually exist several competing representations. The concept of discourse is in other words seen as denoting a more overarching level.<sup>44</sup> In this thesis, I for example use the term ‘peace engagement discourse’ to denote the totality of utterances and texts concerning Norway’s peace engagement, and the structures of meaning established therein. I will use this terminology throughout; when referring to theorists that use ‘discourse’ to denote phenomena similar to what I have defined as ‘representation’, I will use ‘representation’.

#### ***2.1.4 What do discourses and representations do? Discursive productivity***

The rationale behind the use of discourse analysis in social science is that discourses and representations have implications beyond themselves, implications relevant for our

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<sup>42</sup> See for example Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 51ff; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 69f, 83, 146f.

<sup>43</sup> This definition is based on Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 33, 51, 60ff, 94, 177f.

<sup>44</sup> Jørgensen & Phillips use the term ‘discursive order’ in much the same way as I use discourse. Discursive order denotes the competing and overlapping discourses within a particular social domain. Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 69f, 83, 146f.

understanding of social reality. At the very heart of discourse analytic theory thus lays the claim that discourses and representations are productive. In line with social constructivist meta-theory, this implies that the representations we employ shape and construct intersubjective structures such as truth, knowledge, worldviews, identities, self-images, categories, models and perceptions. Representations provide the lenses and identities through which we perceive the social and material world, inscribe objects with meaning, and thus produce the basis on which we make decisions and act. They are, as such, constitutive of reality.<sup>45</sup>

The basis for this view is the assertion that human beings are unable to perceive or grasp the physical and social world independently of language. We do not have direct access to the world as it ‘really is’; what appears as reality for us is a result of filtering, ordering, interpretation, and inscription of meaning in sense impressions through discursively constituted frames, categories, and models.<sup>46</sup> In Lene Hansen’s words: “There is no ‘extra-discursive’ materiality that sets itself forward independently of its discursive representation (...)”<sup>47</sup> This does not imply a rejection of the text-independent existence of objects; it implies that these objects have no meaning for us as human beings outside language and discourse. We cannot grasp the world directly; the material is always discursively mediated. Discourses and representations construct meaning and intersubjective structures, thus producing social reality. They are in other words ontologically productive, and an integral part of ‘reality’.<sup>48</sup>

Discourses are, however, not only productive of meaning. Jennifer Milliken neatly captures this point:

The point here is that beyond giving a language for speaking about phenomena, discourses [and representations] make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting

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<sup>45</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina 2005, pp. 326f; Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1993, p. 302; Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 17; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter og Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 17f, 79; Milliken, Jennifer 1995, p. 229; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 23, 33, 38, 51, 60-63, 94, 177f

<sup>46</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winther & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 17f; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, pp. 236f; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 23, 30-36

<sup>47</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 25, see also pp. 18, 213; see also Neumann, Iver B. 2001, p. 23

<sup>48</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina 2005, pp. 326f; Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1993, p. 302; Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 17; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 17f; Milliken, Jennifer 1995, p. 229; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 23, 38, 63; Phillips, Nelson & Hardy, Cynthia 2002, p. 6

towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular 'regime of truth' while excluding other possible modes of identity and action.<sup>49</sup>

Besides constructing objects and their meaning, discourses and representations define what practices and interventions are possible, logical, proper, and legitimate. At the same time, they exclude other practices and interventions, rendering them unthinkable or illegitimate. Discourses and representations also define which subjects are authorized to speak and act, thus empowering and privileging them, while others are excluded and silenced. They thus draw the boundaries for what is thinkable and doable, and shape what is regarded as truth and knowledge. Through the mechanisms of authorization and exclusion, discourses and representations produce and routinize practices, 'regimes of truth', and knowledge, and heavily influence social relations.<sup>50</sup>

### ***2.1.5 Representations as relationally structured systems of signs***

As we have seen, discourse analytic theory attaches great importance to language, and views it as an intersubjective, relationally structured, and inherently unstable system of signs.<sup>51</sup> Discourses and representations are viewed in a very similar way, and as having the same characteristics. We may say that language is the overarching system, while discourses and representations are smaller subsystems occupying specific social domains.

The discourse analysts Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have developed a set of concepts that may be usefully employed to capture the systemic and unstable nature of discourses. Their starting point is that social phenomena are never total. Meaning can never be fixed or closed completely, and there is thus always room for contestation. Structures of meaning are established and challenged through conflicts, conventions and negotiations in a social space.<sup>52</sup> Laclau & Mouffe thereby underline the inherent

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<sup>49</sup> Milliken, Jennifer 1999, p. 229

<sup>50</sup> Hopf, Ted 2002, pp. 15, 266f; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, p. 229; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 38f, 133; Wæver, Ole 2002, p. 29. Hopf finds that discourses, understood as social cognitive structure, establish what is thinkable and imaginable, excluding other ways of thinking and apprehending reality. It is not impossible to think outside the boundaries drawn by discourse, but it is difficult, and the probability of doing it is low.

<sup>51</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 19; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter og Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 17-23; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, p. 229; Wæver, Ole 2002, pp. 24, 29. Jennifer Milliken indeed views 'discourses as structures of signification' as one of three bundles of theoretical claims defining discourse analytic scholarship.

<sup>52</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 34f

instability of discourses and representations. As such, they complement Neumann's definition of discourse, which focuses on their regularity.

Laclau & Mouffe view representations as a temporary fixing of the meaning of words and terms (signs) within a particular domain. Representations thus fill signs with meaning. All representations have certain *nodal points* or key terms; privileged signs around which other signs are ordered and get their meaning in relation to. However, the meaning and content of nodal points are often particularly unstable. Different representations operating within the same social domain struggle to fill these nodal points with meaning and content and thus achieve discursive dominance. Such unstable nodal points are called *floating signifiers*. Identifying such floating signifiers is often central in concrete discourse analyses, and it is done through tracing conflict about the content and meaning of a sign.<sup>53</sup>

Discursive dominance is achieved if the meaning of a term or sign appears as unproblematic or natural, and no competing or alternative representations present themselves. Such closure or fixing of meaning is, however, always temporary. Alternative, marginalized representations often exist; the challenge is identify them, include them in the analysis and thus denaturalize the dominant representation. When conducting a discourse analysis, it is always a goal to include and highlight what is excluded by dominant representations.<sup>54</sup>

### **2.1.6 Discursive change and practice**

It follows from Laclau & Mouffe's theory that even apparently stable and dominating representations, having a high degree of regularity and appearing as 'natural' or obvious for its bearers, may be challenged and changed.<sup>55</sup> But how are we to understand discursive change? How does it come about? In discourse analytic theory, it is often seen as a result of practice.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina 2005, pp. 315-318; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 35-40

<sup>54</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 39f, 147; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, p. 230; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 52f, 60f

<sup>55</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 20f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 19ff; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, pp. 230, 242; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 60f, 94f

<sup>56</sup> Milliken, Jennifer 1999, p. 230; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 19ff; Friis, Karsten 2007, p. 89

The relationship between representations and social practice may be seen as dialectic. According to discourse analytic theory, practices are made intelligible and acquire meaning through their discursive representations. These representations thus structure practice. At the same time, representations exist only insofar as they are actualized in discursive and social practice. If representations are not actualized and have no bearing on social practice, they cease to exist. Practice and discursive representation is, in other words, mutually constitutive.<sup>57</sup> They are not, however, seen as determining each other; changes in practice may occur without a preceding change in discourse.<sup>58</sup>

This dialectic or mutually constitutive relationship implies that practices have the potential for changing discourses. The most obvious example is the potential for change inherent in discursive practices such as text production and consumption. Text production, involving concrete instances of language use, or *articulation*, draws on and is structured by existing discourses and representations.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, it may involve creative combining of elements of existing structures and patterns, resulting in changes in the meaning of signs and key terms, and thus discursive change. The same is true for text consumption and interpretation; even though our reading and interpretation are structured by previous interpretations and the existing discourse, innovative readings leading to discursive change are always possible.<sup>60</sup>

The issue of discursive change also touches upon the relation between discourses and human agents/ subjects. This relation has been subject to major meta-theoretical controversy, and at the theoretical level, it is doubtful whether it is possible to solve.<sup>61</sup> Some discourse analytic approaches view subjects' social position, actions, and

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<sup>57</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 1f, 5f, 10, 21, 28, 37; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, pp. 7ff; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, pp. 229f; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, p. 83. For a related point, see section on social constructivist meta-theory

<sup>58</sup> For a thorough discussion, see Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1997. See also Hansen, Lene 213

<sup>59</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 144; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 23f. On the importance of focusing on explicit articulations in discourse analyses, see Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 41-44

<sup>60</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 21, 39f, 81-85, 143-146

<sup>61</sup> Adler, Emanuel 2002, pp. 104ff; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, p. 132. The most recent contributions to the debate (within International Relations) also seem to agree on the impossibility of a general solution. See Bieler, Andreas & Morton, Adam David 2001, p. 5; Wight, Colin 1999; Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1997

practices as fully determined by discourse; the subject is decentered and has no freedom of action or true agency.<sup>62</sup>

However, at the practical level, I think it is fruitful to adopt a social constructivist ontology, viewing agents and structures as mutually constituted.<sup>63</sup> With this starting point, we may view subjects, practices, and discursive representations as influencing each other. Existing representations are seen as frames limiting the subject's freedom of action and ability to be innovative. The very basis on which subjects act; their realities, identities, self-images, and social positions; are influenced by these representations.<sup>64</sup>

Agency is thus embedded in and dependent upon discursive structures, but some degree of freedom of action always exists. Subjects always have the opportunity to resist the reality constituted by discourses and representations.<sup>65</sup> The discursive representations do not fully determine the practice of subjects/ agents; in most instances, several lines of action are available, and it is possible to act with purpose, on the basis of intentions. Indeed, discourses only exist in and through discursive and social practices, and practices are intimately linked to, and inseparable from, actions by individuals or groups. Subjects carry out practices, and they may therefore influence and change them, at least to some extent.<sup>66</sup>

Having outlined the propensity for change inherent in all discourses, and some of the mechanisms through which change may come about, it should be kept in mind that discourses may appear to be highly stable and resilient to change. In Iver B. Neumann's terminology, discourses have considerable inertia. Discourses exist in and rest on certain regularities in discursive practices, and they routinize certain social practices. These practices are partly self-sustaining; they reproduce the discourse and repel alternative practices that bear in them seeds for change. Discursive change is

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<sup>62</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina 2005, pp. 312, 328; Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1993, pp. 298f, 302; Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1997; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 24-27, 53-56

<sup>63</sup> See section on meta-theory

<sup>64</sup> Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1993, p. 302; Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 17; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 17f, 79; Milliken, Jennifer 1995, p. 229; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 23, 38, 63

<sup>65</sup> Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 87, 94f, 103, 110f, 150; see also Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 212

<sup>66</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 13, 26f; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, p. 103; Wight, Colin 1999; Bieler, Andreas & Morton, Adam David 2001

therefore often gradual and it usually involves conflict and struggle.<sup>67</sup> Stability should not, however, be viewed as ‘natural’, rather, it is a result of active reproduction and exclusion of alternative representations through discursive and social practices. As such, instances of consensus, discursive stability, and dominance are interesting from a discourse analytic perspective.<sup>68</sup>

### ***2.1.7 Intertextuality and interdiscursivity***

These two terms are useful for understanding and analyzing both the potential for discursive change in concrete articulations, and discourses’ considerable inertia. The latter is developed by the linguist Norman Fairclough; the former originates from Mikhail Bakhtin and has been used by other linguists, for example Julia Kristeva.<sup>69</sup> Here, I mainly draw on Fairclough’s use of the terms.<sup>70</sup>

*Intertextuality* means that all texts (understood as all concrete instances of language use) draws on, refers to, and interpret existing and previously formulated texts.<sup>71</sup> Texts are thus connected to other texts through references and shared elements. They respond to, reformulate, and rework other texts, changing the way these texts are understood.<sup>72</sup>

Being constructed on the basis of other texts, all texts may therefore be viewed as heterogeneous mosaics containing contradictions and ambivalence. As such, they carry in them potential for change and innovation. Innovation happens when existing texts are combined in new ways, creating new perspectives and understandings.<sup>73</sup> The potential for innovation inherent in the production and interpretation of all texts is,

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<sup>67</sup> Neumann, Iver B. 2001, p. 133, see also pp. 60, 102, 143; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 14, 22, 67-71; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 128-131, 145ff, 214. Hansen gives a practical example of discourse resilience through showing that the British discourse on the Bosnian war was remarkably resilient in face of events that apparently challenged it.

<sup>68</sup> Doty, Roxanne Lynn 1997, p. 378; Friis, Karsten 2007; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 7f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 20f, 39f, 144; Milliken, Jennifer 1999, pp. 230, 242; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 53,133

<sup>69</sup> For an introduction to Kristeva’s understanding of the term, see Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 55-72. Here, I draw mainly on Fairclough’s understanding of the term as laid out in Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999

<sup>70</sup> More specifically, I draw on the presentation of Fairclough’s terminology in Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999

<sup>71</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 84; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 20f, 40f

<sup>72</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 55, 148-178, 216. Hansen exemplifies the power of new texts to change the meaning of older texts by showing that two widely referred texts on Balkan, Robert D. Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghosts* and Rebecca West’s *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, changed meaning as they were interpreted anew in the context of the Bosnian war.

<sup>73</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 55f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 83ff

however, by no means unlimited. The existing discourse(s) limit the possibilities for new combinations of texts and what texts can legitimately be drawn upon.<sup>74</sup>

*Interdiscursivity* may be seen as a specific variant of intertextuality. It concerns the actualization and combination of different discourses or representations in one articulation.<sup>75</sup> Inclusion of resources and representations that originally belong to another discourse and social domain widens the repertoire of discursive resources that may be drawn upon in subsequent articulations. Such innovative interdiscursive practices thus work to widen and change discourses, and their construction of reality.<sup>76</sup>

When analyzing texts in the Norwegian peace engagement discourse, investigating the aspect of intertextuality may enable us to locate continuities in the discourse by specifying how previous texts inform the present one and what texts are conventionally referred to. It also allows us to uncover innovative discursive practice, that is, instances of unconventional references or new combinations of texts. The same is true for interdiscursivity; identifying innovative combinations of and references to discourses may take us a long way towards specifying the characteristics of a specific discourse and reveal how discourses are constructed and changed. As such, investigating intertextuality and interdiscursivity allows us to trace the production, reproduction, and development of the peace engagement discourse.

## 2.2 A Discourse Analytic Methodology

Generally, discourse analytic literature has tended to focus on meta-theory and theory, thus neglecting the level of methodology and failing to specify how analysis may be carried out in practice. However, the importance of methodology for producing transparent, rigorous, empirically based, and well organized studies has recently been put to the fore.<sup>77</sup> Focusing on the reliability of the studies, clearly specifying the

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<sup>74</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 8, 55f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 85

<sup>75</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 83f

<sup>76</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina 2005, pp. 324f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 83f

<sup>77</sup> Checkel, Jeffrey T. 2006, pp. 14-18; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. xviii-xix (Preface); Jørgensen, Marianne Winther & Phillips, Louise 1999; Milliken, Jennifer 1999 (particularly pp. 226ff, 235f); Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 13ff

research design, the basis for the knowledge claims set forth, and how results have been obtained, is now seen as a prerequisite for scholarly legitimacy.<sup>78</sup>

In this section, I present the methodology and approach of this study, specifying the nature and scope of my analysis, what kind of empirical material is included, what kind of analytical concepts and tools I will use, and what I will focus on.

### ***2.2.1 The nature of the study, and its empirical material***

As laid out in the introduction chapter, this study is built around a broad analysis of the Norwegian peace engagement discourse. I analyze empirical material from the late 1980s and up to 2008, aiming at including as broad a selection of texts as possible. The scope of the thesis prevents me from analyzing the ‘prehistory’ of the Norwegian peace engagement. I have chosen to focus on the period from the revelation of Norway’s role in the Middle East peace process in 1993, and up to today. In principle, all texts concerning or commenting upon the Norwegian peace engagement is thus relevant. However, it is not possible to study the discourse in its totality. There are two reasons for this. First, it is simply not possible to find all texts that are potentially relevant. Some texts, like Government White Papers on foreign policy, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs’ Foreign Policy Addresses to the Storting, are readily available and easily identified as part of the discourse. Other texts, and particularly newspaper articles, may be much more difficult to identify as part of the discourse and to obtain. Second, the number of potentially relevant texts and the extent of the material are enormous. Carrying out a proper discourse analysis requires us to conduct a relatively detailed and in-depth reading of the texts that is used, and it is therefore simply an insurmountable task to read and analyze everything. We can thus never be absolutely certain that we do not miss anything with significance for the analysis; texts that are not included in the material may articulate unidentified representations or other discursive innovations that would have a bearing on the results.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 45; Jørgensen, Marianne Winther & Phillips, Louise 1999, p. 168. Hansen also stresses that some readings are better than others, and that reliable studies have to be based on explicit discursive articulations of signs and identities, include all important signs, pay careful attention to the linking and juxtaposition of signs, to how signs constructs Selves and Others, and how they legitimize particular policies.

<sup>79</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 85f; Neumann, B. Iver 2001, pp. 53ff

With these caveats in mind, I nevertheless try to include as wide and broad body of texts as possible. Ideally, and according to Lene Hansen, an analysis of foreign policy discourse would include texts expressing the official position; texts emanating from the political opposition, corporate structures, and the media; scientific or scholarly texts; texts produced in the context of popular culture; and texts expressing marginal political positions.<sup>80</sup> Such a broad approach would ensure that we do not miss or exclude marginal representations.

In this study, I include texts emanating from the government (texts expressing the official position, that is); texts from the political opposition; texts appearing in the media; and some scholarly texts.<sup>81</sup> However, I generally do not analyze the different kinds of texts separately, like Hansen seems to suggest.<sup>82</sup> When reading through the empirical material, it became apparent that there were no clear boundaries between the different kinds of texts; a majority of the texts from the political opposition for example articulate the dominant representation. The presentation of the analysis is therefore structured on the basis of the representations, not on the basis of type of text.

The official texts include Government White Papers on foreign policy and development aid; the Minister of Foreign Affairs' yearly Foreign Policy Addresses to the Storting<sup>83</sup>; reports and articles from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' web pages; and other relevant official documents such as official reports, policy frameworks, speeches, and newspaper articles written by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or State Secretaries. Taken together, this constitutes the largest part of the material, covering most official texts that are relevant and publicly available.

The texts from the political opposition are mainly from the Parliamentary Proceedings. All the debates on the Minister of Foreign Affairs' Foreign Policy Addresses are

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<sup>80</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 59-64, 73f. Lene Hansen develops three intertextual models to be utilized in discourse analysis. Model 1 includes the official discourse only, Model 2 adds the wider political debate, Model 3A adds cultural representations, and Model 3B adds marginal political discourses and scholarly analyses. An analysis including all the elements mentioned here is in line with Hansen's Model 3, and has a very broad analytic scope.

<sup>81</sup> In Hansen's terminology, I conduct a Model 2 or Model 3B analysis. Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 59-64, 73f

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, pp. 59-64, 73ff.

<sup>83</sup> The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs traditionally delivers one general Foreign Policy Address to the Storting each year. This address, together with the subsequent Stortinget debate and the relevant White Papers, form the basis for Norwegian foreign policy. For an interesting discourse analytic analysis of the practice of address production in the Norwegian MFA, see Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 135-152

included, and so are debates and Committee Recommendations on the relevant White Papers. I have also included relevant newspaper articles emanating from the political opposition.

The included media texts are newspaper articles exclusively. Almost all these articles have been found using the largest Norwegian newspaper database, Atekst.<sup>84</sup> I have also searched the web using search engines such as Google and Sesam, to include sources that may not be included in Atekst, and used academic literature on the peace engagement to identify interesting articles.<sup>85</sup> However, a lot of newspaper articles, particularly from the early 1990s, are simply not available online, and they have thus not been included in the analysis.

When searching for articles, I have used keywords like ‘Norway’, ‘peace’, ‘engagement’, ‘peace nation’, ‘peace talks’, ‘peace agreement’, ‘peace diplomacy’, ‘humanitarian great power’, ‘foreign policy’, ‘Middle East’, ‘Guatemala’, ‘Sri Lanka’, ‘Colombia’ (the most well-known peace processes Norway has been involved in); the names of central actors, such as Jan Egeland, Kjell Magne Bondevik, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs; and a variety of combinations thereof.<sup>86</sup> This should, in theory, get me most of the relevant newspaper articles in the databases. It should be noted, however, that such a search may easily miss articles that do not use the words and terminology I have based the search on. Moreover, some searches yield so massive a number of hits that it simply is impossible to include all the articles in the analysis.<sup>87</sup> I have, in such cases, chosen articles on the basis of their apparent relevance.

Lastly, I have also included some texts written by academics, particularly from the 2003 to 2008 period. Most of these texts are newspaper articles, but there are also some scholarly studies in the empirical material. The scope of this thesis prevents me from conducting a thorough discourse analysis of academic texts on the peace

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<sup>84</sup> It should be noted that although Atekst has a comprehensive archive, it does not cover all the major newspapers in the early 1990s. *Verdens Gang* and *Aftenposten* are included in the entire period under investigation here; *Dagbladet* is included from 1996; *Klassekampen* from 2001; and *Dagsavisen* from 2002

<sup>85</sup> I have drawn on Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003; Tvedt, Terje 2003; Leira, Halvard 2005; and Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007 in this respect

<sup>86</sup> All these keywords are translated from Norwegian

<sup>87</sup> This is for example the case with texts concerning the Middle East peace process after 1993; and the Sri Lankan peace process

engagement. When I nevertheless have included some academic texts, I have done so because of their apparent influence on the discourse, and their position as points of reference for other kinds of texts.

With such an extensive empirical material, it is not possible to analyze each and every text in detail. This thesis rather aims at giving a broad overview of the discourse, identifying all the representations therein, and tracing their evolution over time. It thus covers the discourse's historical development, maintaining sensitivity to the temporal dimension.<sup>88</sup> I systematize and categorize all the texts according to what concepts, notions and links they articulate, and thus what representation they draw on. This quantitative classification of the general textual material allows me to assess the strength of the different representations, and what concepts and links are central.

I also pick some pieces of text for more detailed analysis. These are selected because they appear as central, are frequently referred to by other texts, appear as representative for a position or representation, and/or clearly articulate central concepts and discursive constructions.<sup>89</sup> It should be noted that the vast majority of my empirical material is in Norwegian. The quotes I present are therefore translated to English. I have chosen to maintain the Norwegian sentence structure as far as possible, because this structure according to discourse analysis may carry meaning. The translations may therefore sound a bit strange in English.

### ***2.2.2 On events***

So far, my discussion of empirical material for analysis has concerned texts exclusively. However, a proper discourse analysis also must also incorporate practice, and it must be sensitive to the influence of events. The goal is to incorporate texts, discourse and practice in one single account, highlighting their mutual constitution.<sup>90</sup>

The discourse analytic literature is mainly focused on analyzing texts and discourses, and the tools developed primarily lend themselves to textual analysis. Despite the lack of methodologically sound tools, it is possible to remain sensitive to the influence of

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<sup>88</sup> For a discussion of the temporal dimension of discourse analytic studies, see Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 75, 79

<sup>89</sup> I thus follow the guidelines found in Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 82f, 85

<sup>90</sup> Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 80-85

(non-discursive) practice and events on the discourse. In her study of the Western discourse on the Bosnian War, Lene Hansen takes events into consideration and shows how they in some instances put pressure on the dominant discourses, necessitated responses, and thereby induced discursive changes.<sup>91</sup> However, Hansen also underlines that events should not be viewed as extra-discursive, external influences. The extent to which events are constructed by discourses are underlined:

Tracing the evolution of discursive constructions over time involves (...) an examination of how key events are responded to by official foreign policy discourse. These events do not exist in and of themselves, but are constituted as events by governing political bodies, oppositional parties and groups, international institutions, and the news media, yet once established they have the potential to destabilize existing discourses.<sup>92</sup>

In other words; events and facts exist in and by themselves, but they have no particular meaning and salience for us until they are inserted into and situated within one or more existing discourses. Events and facts are not accessible to us outside of discourse, and discourses form the basis on which they are interpreted.<sup>93</sup> The process of insertion and situation is not automatic, however; it depends on agency. Moreover, once facts and events become established, they may challenge the existing discourses.<sup>94</sup>

In this study, I will mainly focus on textual analysis that aims at identifying representations and their distinguishing characteristics, and at showing how discourse and representations work and what they do. However, I will incorporate foreign policy practices and events where we can reasonably expect them to be influential. I will also examine whether events that have been constituted as important or salient in the foreign policy discourse have led to discursive change.<sup>95</sup> In this respect, the event of the Middle East peace process stands out; its discursive construction and fundamental importance for the peace engagement discourse is analyzed in detail.

### ***2.2.3 Delimiting discourse and representations***

In all discourse analyses, identification and delimitation of discourses and representations are crucial; they are the basis for discussing what discourses and

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<sup>91</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 115-147

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 115, see also p. 32

<sup>93</sup> See the sections 'Discursive productivity', and 'Discursive change and practice'

<sup>94</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 32, 115

<sup>95</sup> This mirrors Lene Hansen's examination of how key events in the Bosnian War were responded to discursively. Ibid, pp. 115- 147

representations do and how they work in concrete cases. The criteria we use in the identification and delimitation process must therefore be explicitly laid out.

In the theory part of the chapter, I define both discourse and representation.<sup>96</sup> However, the definitions give few guidelines for identification and delimitation. Neumann underlines that identification and delimitation must be defended as reasonable in each case, and that correspondence with the actual discursive terrain is important.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, the research question and the object of the study clearly influence what is usefully seen as discourse and representation. They may be identified at different levels of specificity, and the level chosen depends not only on the empirical material at hand but also on the analytical needs of the researcher. General guidelines for the delimitation of discourses are hence difficult to establish.<sup>98</sup> Jørgensen & Phillips and Lene Hansen suggest that discourses and representations may be viewed analytical tools constructed to frame the research, and that they therefore are analytically delimited.<sup>99</sup>

Identification and delimitation of discourses will, in other words, impose some order on the textual material, but it is crucial that this order is reasonable and takes the textual material as its starting point. It should therefore not be done a priori; rather, it is done after a thorough reading.<sup>100</sup> Representations that are unexpected, partly hidden or articulated in only some texts may therefore be identified and brought into the analysis.

Discourses and representations are analytically established and delimited on the basis of the patterns and structures found in the texts. More specifically, the process of identification may take as its starting point the capacity of discourses and representations to structure and pattern both our utterances and our thinking. Discourses and representations necessarily leave an imprint on the texts they are found in, and precisely by identifying particularly salient discursive constructions (nodal

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<sup>96</sup> The definitions are both based on Neumann, Iver B. 2001

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, pp. 55ff

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 55ff, 67. Neumann shows that the discourse analysis literature identifies both very general discourses, for example the state sovereignty discourse, and very specific discourses, for example the discourse on the vegetable swede (as identified by Runar Døving).

<sup>99</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 51ff; Jørgensen, Marianne Winther & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 148ff

<sup>100</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 51ff; Jørgensen, Marianne Winther & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 148ff

points and links) and the meanings they establish in the textual material, we may thus identify and delimit them.

In most cases it is possible and useful to identify several representations that partly cover the same domain, try to impose meaning on the same concepts, and thus compete. By identifying competing representations, rather than one monolithic and all-encompassing discourse, the aspects of discursive conflict and instability are emphasized.<sup>101</sup> When identifying several distinct and competing representations, we want to capture the main structural positions within the debate. The representations identified should be clearly differentiated; they should use different expressions and terminologies, impose different meanings on things, draw on and construct different identities, and differ in the positions they take. Moreover, explicit articulations of key positions and identities should be the basis for the identification.<sup>102</sup>

Analyzing how the discourse and the representations therein have developed, evolved, and changed is a central part of this study. When reading and analyzing the texts, I thus aim at maintaining sensitivity to the temporal dimension, and to present representations as dynamic rather than static structures.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, contemporary discourses and representations, and the key concepts they draw on, always have a prehistory. Ideally, this should be traced. Within the confines of this study, I am not able to study the history prior to the late 1980s of the relevant discourses and representations. I therefore draw on already existing conceptual histories and discourse analyses. Halvard Leira's studies are a very useful source for the history of the peace engagement discourse.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, I draw on Bjørn Arne Steine & Carl Emil Vogt's study of the historical Norwegian peace tradition, on Carl Emil Vogt's study on the importance of Fridtjof Nansen in this tradition<sup>105</sup>, and on Terje Tvedt's studies of the

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<sup>101</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 51ff; Jørgensen, Marianne Winther & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 69f, 83, 146f. These authors use 'discourse' or 'basic discourse' in the same way as I use 'representation'

<sup>102</sup> Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 52ff. Hansen also demonstrate her analytic guidelines in practical use by identifying the main discourses in the Western debate over the Bosnian war. See particularly pp. 95ff.

<sup>103</sup> Lene Hansen heavily emphasizes discursive evolution and change in her study of the Western debate on the Bosnian war. One of her chapters (ch. 6) is devoted to a historical reading (a genealogy) of the identified basic discourses, another (ch. 7) traces evolution and change in the discourses between 1992 and 1995. Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 95-114, 115-147, see also p. 51

<sup>104</sup> Leira, Halvard 2002; Leira, Halvard 2004; Leira, Halvard 2005; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007

<sup>105</sup> Steine, Bjørn Arne & Vogt, Carl Emil 2004; Vogt, Carl Emil 2005

Norwegian ‘South-political system’<sup>106</sup>. I also utilize general scholarly literature on Norwegian foreign policy and aid policy.<sup>107</sup> The chapter on the ‘prehistory’ of the peace engagement discourse draws heavily on these secondary sources.

#### ***2.2.4 Analytical framework***

On the basis of the above theoretical and methodological considerations, an analytical framework that will inform the empirical analysis throughout may now be outlined. I have chosen to organize the analysis on the basis of a periodization based on a preliminary reading of the empirical material and my impression of the discourse therein. The periodization is in other words grounded. This implies that each period I identify has some distinct characteristics setting it apart from the other periods in terms of the discourse and the representations therein, and that these characteristics are relevant from a discourse analytic perspective. When constructing the periodization, I have focused on discursive characteristics such as the peace discourse’s relation to other discourses, the stability of the discourse, the articulated representations, discursive constructions constituting the representations, and the meaning of and links between key terms or nodal points. Although arguably carefully grounded in the empirical material, the periods should be seen as analytical tools that help structure my account, and not as objective categories that exist independently of the analysis. It should also be noted that there are many continuities in the discourse, and that the periods therefore are quite open ended.

On the basis of the discourse, I distinguish between these four distinct periods:

- Up to 1993. The peace engagement discourse’s ‘prehistory’  
The signing of the Oslo Accords, and the subsequent attention to Norwegian facilitation for the peace process, marks the end of this period.

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<sup>106</sup> Tvedt, Terje 2003; Tvedt, Terje 2006

<sup>107</sup> Knutsen, Torbjørn L.; Sørbo, Gunnar; Gjerdåker, Svein (eds.) 1997; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003; Riste, Olav 2001; Tamnes, Rolf 1997. Lene Hansen suggests that standard works on the history, processes, events, and debates constituting a foreign policy phenomenon provide essential background information. Moreover, such works may be read through discourse analytic lenses with a view towards identifying historically salient basic discourses. Hansen, Lene 2006, p. 83ff

- 1993-1997. The establishment of a distinct peace engagement discourse, a dominant representation and one alternative representation in the wake of the revelation of Norway's role in the Middle East Peace process.
- 1997-2003. The consolidation of the discourse, its dominant representation, and the related practices. The emergence of a second alternative representation.
- 2003-2008. The discourse is opened, discursive struggle ensues. The discourse takes a reflexive turn, the alternative representations gain in strength, and the official representation is reproduced and mobilized in response.

Within each period, I identify the discursive structures and patterns in the texts under study. In other words, I look for discursive constructions that are reproduced, nodal points, and floating signifiers. *Key terms/ nodal points* are defined as terms, concepts or notions that appear as nodes in the conceptual web of the discourse; privileged signs around which the discourse revolves and that other signs get their meaning in relation to.<sup>108</sup> They will therefore often appear as particularly salient concepts, and they are thus relatively easily identified and mapped. Because texts articulating the same representation will often draw on the same key terms, link them in a similar fashion, and thus inscribe them with similar meaning, such a mapping is very useful when identifying and constructing representations. Moreover, analyzing the meaning of key terms at different points in time also enable us to trace discursive evolution. If we find that the meaning of a key term has changed, or that some key terms disappear and others become prominent, we have ample evidence of change.

Identifying *floating signifiers* is done in much the same way as identifying key terms, but the focus is on terms that are ambiguous and filled with different meanings in different texts. The existence of floating signifiers therefore indicates discursive conflict and lack of discursive hegemony; it is interpreted as a result of different representations competing to fill a term with content and meaning. Identifying floating

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<sup>108</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina 2005, pp. 315-318; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 35-40; see also section on 'Representations as relationally structured systems of signs'

signifiers therefore allows us to distinguish between competing representations, and to identify potential discursive changes.<sup>109</sup>

I also remain sensitive to the *intertextual* and *interdiscursive* aspects of texts.<sup>110</sup> Mapping these aspects thoroughly is simply not possible within the confines of this thesis, but the concepts may nevertheless be employed in a less ambitious way, in the analysis of continuity and change. This implies that we note the degree to which a given text differs from others in terms of links to existing articulations and discourses. If we find unusual or innovative links or interpretations, it indicates discursive change.<sup>111</sup> I will thus use the concepts when they seem to capture important aspects of the discursive evolution.

On the basis of these analytical tools, the analysis aims to show what position peace and peace promotion had in the foreign policy and development aid discourses prior to the Oslo Agreement, how the peace engagement discourse was established as a distinct discourse with certain key terms and floating signifiers, how it related to and drew on already existing discourses, how different representations were established and reproduced, and what signs and concepts the representations were organized around. Throughout, I will focus on continuities and changes in the discourse, tracing its evolution and assessing its stability. The effects of the discourse will also be assessed; how the discourse has naturalized and legitimized the Norwegian practice of peace promotion, how it has defined certain actions as appropriate and excluded others, and how it has contributed to the establishment and maintenance of peace promotion as one of the main pillars of Norway's foreign policy. I will also touch upon the issue of identities, suggesting what identities and self images the discourse and its representations have inscribed Norway with.

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<sup>109</sup> Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 39f, 154

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 83ff; see also section on 'Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity'

<sup>111</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina 2005, pp. 324f; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 55f; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 83ff; Neumann, Iver 2001, pp. 20f, 40f

### 3 The Prehistory of the Peace Engagement Discourse: up to 1993

In this section, the historical Norwegian ‘peace tradition’ and peace discourse is briefly presented, and the position of peace and peace promotion within the official foreign policy and development aid discourses of the late 1980s and early 1990s is analyzed. I focus on identifying discursive resources; key terms, concepts, and meanings; that existed in these discourses and that could be drawn on by the peace engagement discourse when it came into being.

#### 3.1 The Norwegian Peace Discourse and Peace Tradition

At the outset, it should be noted that ‘peace’ is a concept with a particular resonance in the Norwegian society. It has been firmly established that Norway has a distinct peace tradition that reaches back at least to the 1890s, before Norway got its independence.<sup>112</sup> ‘Peace’ was indeed a crucial concept in the political mobilization that ultimately led to the break-away from Sweden. It consequently came to dominate the foreign policy discourse of the newborn state. Peace was established as the primary goal of Norwegian foreign policy, and neutrality as the main tool.<sup>113</sup>

Peace remained an organizing concept in Norwegian foreign policy discourse after World War I. Fridtjof Nansen’s highly regarded aid to refugees and famine-stricken people in the Soviet Union were instrumental in this respect; humanitarianism was adopted as part of the peace discourse and has remained an important concept ever since. References to the ‘legacy from Nansen’ are commonplace, also in contemporary peace discourse.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Leira, Halvard 2002; Leira, Halvard 2005, Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, p. 11-13; Steine, Bjørn Arne & Vogt, Carl Emil 2004, pp. 17ff; Neumann, Iver B. 2004, p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> Leira, Halvard 2002, pp. 76-102; Leira, Halvard 2005, pp. 135-160; Riste, Olav 2001, pp. 254f, Steine, Bjørn Arne & Vogt, Carl Emil 2004, pp. 19f; see also Neumann, Iver B. 2004, p. 4

<sup>114</sup> For a thorough study of Nansen’s influence on the Norwegian peace tradition and peace discourse, and of contemporary references to the heritage from Nansen, see Vogt, Carl Emil 2005. See also Steine, Bjørn Arne & Vogt, Carl Emil 2004, p. 23; Leira, Halvard 2005, p. 143

The peace discourse also remained important in the years prior to the outbreak of World War II. However, its policy implications changed. Where it had inspired a proactive Norwegian role in international cooperation and conflict prevention in the 1920s, it was used as an argument for neutrality in the 1930s. Despite these policy changes, the peace discourse remained largely intact. It was, in other words, flexible in terms of policy implications.<sup>115</sup> Halvard Leira also states that the discourse, although not as pervasive, dominant and visible as earlier, continued to inform Norway's foreign policy during the Cold War. The strong support for the UN, the importance attached to international law, the development aid, the efforts in humanitarian assistance, and the substantial participation in UN peacekeeping operations may all plausibly be seen as practices inspired by the peace discourse.<sup>116</sup>

Although the continuity of the Norwegian peace discourse has not been subject to detailed discourse analytic studies<sup>117</sup>, Leira suggests that the peace tradition and the related discourse has remained an important influence on Norwegian foreign policy thinking throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>118</sup> Olav Riste, although not adopting a discourse analytic perspective, similarly underlines the 'missionary impulse' and the wish to be a frontrunner in the issue areas of international justice and humanitarian values as important and stable motive forces in Norwegian foreign policy.<sup>119</sup> Riste also captures a distinct feature of general Norwegian foreign policy discourse: the emphasis on Norway's special role in peace and human rights promotion. Indeed, a Norwegian exceptionalism, underlining Norway's distinct qualities and abilities, appears to be an important part of Norway's identity and self image.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Leira, Halvard 2002, pp. 112-122; Leira Halvard 2005, pp. 144-150; Steine, Bjørn Arne & Vogt, Carl Emil 2004, p. 23. It should be noted, however, that Steine & Vogt view the Norwegian foreign policy as non-activist and focused on defending Norway and maintaining neutrality throughout the pre-World War II period.

<sup>116</sup> Leira, Halvard 2005, p. 151; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, p. 12

<sup>117</sup> Leira's studies focus mainly on the periods 1890-1906 and 1935-1940, the other periods are less thoroughly examined

<sup>118</sup> Leira, Halvard 2005, pp. 150-154; see Neumann, Iver B. 2004, p. 5 for a related view

<sup>119</sup> Riste, Olav 2001, p. 255f. For a similar view, see Tamnes, Rolf 1997, pp. 343, 469

<sup>120</sup> Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, pp. 10f. Leira identifies the idea of Norwegian exceptionalism in the issue areas of peace and humanitarian efforts as a central component of the dominant self-image of Norway as a peace nation. See also Tamnes, Rolf 1997, p. 343

## 3.2 Discourse Prior to 1993

Within the confines of this thesis, it is not possible to conduct a thorough investigation of the discourse prior to 1993. I have thus chosen to focus on the official foreign policy and development aid discourses as articulated in relevant White Papers. One academic study is also included due to its apparent influence: Jan Egeland's "Impotent Superpower – Potent Small State".

### ***3.2.1 Impotent Superpower – Potent Small State: Norway's foreign policy potential***

In 1988, Jan Egeland published his study "Impotent Superpower – Potent Small State. Potentials and Limitations of Human Rights Objectives in the Foreign Policies of the United States and Norway."<sup>121</sup> Its central thesis is that Norway as a small state in certain circumstances may be a more effective human rights advocate on the international scene than the US.<sup>122</sup>

The argument behind this claim proceeds in two steps. First, Egeland focuses on Norway's positive international image as a precondition for effective human rights advocacy. First, Norway has "no legacy of foreign excesses" such as colonialism, imperialism and interventionism. Second, it has a good domestic human rights record. Third, it has a high level of foreign aid. Fourth, Norway has actively supported decolonization processes and national liberation.<sup>123</sup> It should be noted that Egeland's thesis on this point draws heavily on and establishes intertextual links to former Minister of Foreign Affairs Knut Frydenlund's book on Norway's international challenges from 1982. Frydenlund here articulates very similar notions.<sup>124</sup>

Egeland then turns to structural preconditions, arguing that Norway is very well equipped as a human rights advocate in this respect:

The potentials for Norway as an important entrepreneur for international human rights lies (sic) in the existence of three of the four suggested preconditions: policy consensus,

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<sup>121</sup> Egeland was at that time, Head of Information and Studies in the Norwegian Red Cross

<sup>122</sup> Egeland, Jan 1988, pp. 3, 185

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>124</sup> Frydenlund, Knut 1982, p. 190; see also Leira, Halvard 2005, p. 151; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, p. 11. Frydenlund attributes Norway's positive image to honesty, anti-colonialism, support for national liberation, efforts to strengthen human rights, and substantial emergency relief efforts. He also states that this profile is well grounded in the Norwegian people.

few conflicting foreign policy interests, and increasing funds for foreign assistance. The fourth criteria (sic), which is only poorly covered, institutional memory, is one which may be remedied through the build-up of domestic expertise.<sup>125</sup>

From the perspective of this thesis, Egeland's book is interesting for a number of reasons. First, by articulating the construction of Norway's international image as positive, the book invests it with academic legitimacy, actualizes it, and thereby strengthens the concept of Norwegian exceptionalism.<sup>126</sup> Second, Norway is portrayed as a state with clear advantages and unexploited potentials in human rights advocacy. Third, the study explicitly lays out the factors enabling Norway to play such a role. Finally, Egeland presents an agenda for the future that in effect is a program for further improvements in Norway's potential. It focuses on capacity and expertise building and closer cooperation between the state, the NGOs and the academic institutions.<sup>127</sup> Because Egeland later became State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and one of the main architects behind Norway's activist peace promotion policy, this program is noteworthy. So are the concepts he articulates; although they concern human rights advocacy and not peace promotion, they seem compatible with activist peace engagement as well.

### ***3.2.2 Official and authoritative discourse: White Papers***

In the period prior to 1993, the government presented three White Papers concerning foreign policy and development aid. Analyzing their treatment of peace and peace promotion gives us a picture of how these issues were discursively constructed prior to the emergence of the activist peace promotion policy.

In the 1987 White Paper on development aid and relations to the global South, peace promotion is established as one of five intermediate aims of Norwegian development aid.<sup>128</sup> However, no explicit strategy for peace promotion is devised, and the issue is hardly discussed at all.<sup>129</sup> It is stated that Norway may use development aid funding to

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<sup>125</sup> Egeland, Jan 1988, p. 185, see also p. 179

<sup>126</sup> For an introduction to the importance of genre in general and academic analyses as sources of authority and influence in particular, see for example Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 55, 65ff

<sup>127</sup> Egeland, Jan 1988, p. 185f

<sup>128</sup> Ministry of Development Cooperation 1987, p. 28, see also p. 7

<sup>129</sup> Developing countries' economy, structural adjustment, debt, and environmental degradation are the issues dominating the text.

support local peace initiatives, but no active role for Norway is envisioned.<sup>130</sup> Norway is thus established as a passive rather than an active contributor.

The 1989 White Paper is a comprehensive overview of Norwegian foreign relations.<sup>131</sup> Its stated aim is to devise a foreign policy which attends to Norway's interests. However, these interests are defined broadly to include not only interests that are specific to Norway, but also "global common interests" shared by all.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, and despite the interest focus, the text also ascertains that the Norwegian policy is value based.<sup>133</sup>

The White Paper's treatment of Norway's global engagement to help people in crisis is also notable. It is seen as springing from values, but it is also underlined that it is "important to safeguard our own security and prosperity."<sup>134</sup> The text repeatedly articulates the position that security cannot be viewed in isolation from global challenges.<sup>135</sup> The definition of security set forth is thus comprehensive. Such a notion of security was, at the time, innovative, and the White Paper introduced it to the official Norwegian foreign policy discourse.<sup>136</sup>

It is also striking that the White Paper states that Norway, despite its status as a small state, may be an international frontrunner in issue areas where it has experience, traditions, resources and competence.<sup>137</sup> Being a small, homogenous state with substantial political consensus and no colonial past or great power liabilities, is

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<sup>130</sup> Ministry of Development Cooperation 1987, p. 28

<sup>131</sup> It is, in fact, the last such overview that the MFA have produced. The MFA is, at the time of writing, working on a similar general White Paper. It is to be presented in the autumn of 2008

<sup>132</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1989, pp. 9f, 44ff; see also Recommendation from the Foreign Policy Committee (Innst. S) no. 181, 1989-1990, p. 6. The global common interests explicitly mentioned are international peace and security, an international society based on international law and codes of conduct that also safeguards small states' interests, and a world economy that allows sustainable development and maintenance of the ecological balance.

<sup>133</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1989, p. 49. The Christian view of fellow human beings and the Labor movement's notion of solidarity are mentioned as the policy's value basis.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44f

<sup>136</sup> Butenschøn, Nils A. 1997, p. 371; Gjerdåker, Svein 1997, p. 236; Knutsen, Torbjørn L. 1997, p. 21; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 84f; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, p. 444. It should be noted that international interdependence, the concept on which this notion rests, was not new in Norwegian foreign policy discourse. Liland & Kjerland state that it was explicitly referred to in parliamentary debates over development aid as early as the 1950s and 1960s. What was new was its official and authoritative establishment as the basis for Norwegian foreign policy.

<sup>137</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1989, p. 11, see also pp. 49f

considered an advantage in certain issue areas.<sup>138</sup> Promotion of peace is, interestingly enough, not considered an area where Norway has particular advantages.<sup>139</sup> The White Paper thus gives few ‘early warnings’ of the peace promotion activism of the 1990s.

The 1992 White Paper on North-South relations and Norwegian development aid was produced and presented after Norway got involved in the Guatemalan peace process, but before the Oslo Channel and the Middle East peace process were established. To a large extent, it reproduces the 1989 White Paper’s positions on peace and peace promotion and the concepts it employs. The comprehensive notion of security and the mutual dependence of the world’s states and peoples are repeatedly articulated.<sup>140</sup> Although helping the developing countries is also motivated by ethics of duty, respect for the human rights, and international solidarity,<sup>141</sup> the self interest perspective is prominent. Idealism and self interests are thus seen as pulling in the same direction.<sup>142</sup>

Despite the focus on security, peace and peace promotion are not treated as pivotal parts of the Norwegian development policy.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, peace promotion is not seen as one of the areas where Norway has particular competence and traditions. It is generally constructed as a sub-category of humanitarian assistance and democracy promotion and subsumed under the sections treating these issues.<sup>144</sup> In discourse analytic terminology, peace promotion is not a nodal point or privileged sign within the discourse, it is a subordinate sign.

However, the 1992 White Paper does seem to point towards peace promotion becoming more important:

Because stability and peace is a precondition for development to take place, the Government thinks that Norway should contribute to the largest extent possible to prevent and abate conflicts in the South. Such contributions may come in the form of peace promoting efforts, cooperation across boundaries, defense of democracy and

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<sup>138</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1989, pp. 51f; see also Tamnes, Rolf 1997, p. 341. Egeland’s study, Frydenlund’s book, and Norwegian exceptionalism in general, are very likely important influences here.

<sup>139</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1989, pp. 13, 38f, 50f

<sup>140</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1992, pp. 10, 21, 26, 37

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11

<sup>143</sup> In this context, it is noteworthy that in the parliamentary debate over the White Paper, peace and peace promotion is hardly mentioned at all. *Stortingstidende* 1992-1993, pp. 4090-4134

<sup>144</sup> For statements underlining Norway’s special competence in humanitarian assistance, see Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1992, pp. 238, 241

human rights, negotiation efforts, and peacekeeping operations by the UN. (...) Norwegian government officials, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions have participated in negotiation efforts and confidence-building measures in different parts of the world, including the Horn of Africa and Central America.<sup>145</sup>

This can be read as pointing in the direction of more substantial engagement in peace promotion. Stability and peace are constructed as preconditions for development, and it follows that Norway should contribute to reducing conflicts.<sup>146</sup> In line with this, the White Paper treats support for peace as an important future focus, and it suggests that conflict prevention and reduction should be integrated in the development strategy.<sup>147</sup> In contrast to the previous White Papers, peace promotion is thus seen as an integral part of the Norwegian development aid and foreign policy. Although little is said about means and strategies, Norway is established as an actor that may contribute to peace, at least in some circumstances. It is also underlined that the experiences with peace building so far have been positive enough to warrant further efforts.

### 3.3 Summary

The peace engagement discourse that developed after the signing of the Oslo Accords in the autumn of 1993 did not come out of nowhere. The existence of a historical peace discourse and peace tradition, and the positive link between peace and Norwegian foreign policy articulated therein, almost certainly eased the establishment of the peace engagement discourse as a central foreign policy discourse in the 1990s. Both the historical peace discourse and the foreign policy and development aid discourses of the late 1980s and early 1990s provided discursive resources (key terms, concepts, links, and meanings) on which the peace engagement discourse later would draw heavily. The Norwegian exceptionalism, the positive assessments of Norway's ability to contribute to the solution of global challenges, the comprehensive notion of security, the compatibility of self interests and altruism, and the link between development and peace are notable in this respect.

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<sup>145</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1992, p. 26, see also pp. 242, 216. Here, it is noted that the government now supports peace initiatives in a growing number of countries, including Guatemala, Ethiopia/ Eritrea, Sri Lanka, and Sudan

<sup>146</sup> See also Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1992, p. 176

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 22, 26, 57

It is also noteworthy that the newest White Paper, published in 1992, is the one that focuses the most on peace promotion. This may be seen as indicating a starting peace engagement. However, peace and peace engagement are far from being privileged signs or concepts around which the discourse is organized. They are rather subsumed under the heading of development aid or humanitarian assistance, and they are thus subordinate concepts in the development aid and foreign policy discourses. Peace promotion is indeed treated as a tool in development aid. In other words: there exists no distinct peace engagement discourse in the period here investigated, that is, before Norway's role in the Middle East peace process between the Israel and Palestine became publicly known.

## **4 The Establishment of a Distinct Peace Engagement Discourse and a Dominant Representation: 1993-1997**

In this chapter, I present and discuss what I view as the emergence and establishment of a distinct discourse centered on the Norwegian peace engagement. I start by analyzing the newspaper coverage's discursive construction of the Middle East peace process. The concepts, links, and meanings that appear as central are outlined, and I argue that the resulting discursive construction is of paramount importance in bringing the Norwegian peace promotion activism to the fore and strengthening it.<sup>148</sup> It should be noted that the media scene appears as an arena for official discourse rather than an autonomous arena; government officials are often the primary sources of information and assessments appearing in newspaper articles.<sup>149</sup> The resulting dominance of the official version of the event may be seen as paving the way for the establishment of a dominant representation of the peace engagement.

The next part of the chapter analyzes this dominant representation and its inscription in official and authoritative discourse. I present its key terms, discursive constructions, and the meanings it establishes, and analyze its reproduction in texts emanating from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finally, I present an emerging alternative representation that criticizes the lack of prioritization of national interests in Norway's foreign policy, and claims that the emphasis on the peace engagement is part of the cause of this neglect.

### **4.1 The Media Coverage of the Oslo Agreement**

Studying the media coverage in its entirety is not possible within the confines of this thesis. I have chosen to focus on newspapers.<sup>150</sup> The extent of the Norwegian

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<sup>148</sup> For similar views on the importance of the Middle East peace process (not grounded on discourse analysis), see Butenschøn, Nils A. 1997, pp. 371, 386; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kristen Alsaker 2003, p. 95; Riste, Olav 2001, pp. 272; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, pp. 444ff

<sup>149</sup> For a related analysis of the lack of media autonomy from the authorities in the areas of development assistance and South policy, see Tvedt, Terje 2003, particularly pp. 199-235

<sup>150</sup> The material includes articles from Norwegian News Agency, two newspapers with nationwide distribution (Verdens Gang, in the following the abbreviation VG is used; and Aftenposten), and two regional newspapers (Bergens Tidende and Nordlys). These are the biggest newspapers whose articles from 1992 and onwards are included Atekst

involvement in the peace process between Israel and PLO, and the secret back channel through which the negotiations had proceeded, became publicly known in Norway 29-30. August, 1993. Also prior to this it was generally known that Norway was involved<sup>151</sup>, but the revelation of the ‘Oslo Back Channel’, the ‘Oslo Agreement’, and Norway’s considerable role in the negotiations nevertheless sparked massive media attention. In the body of texts concerning the ‘Oslo Agreement’ that I have analyzed, certain concepts, links, and meanings stand out and are repeated, thus assuming importance in the discourse. These are presented below.

#### ***4.1.1 Norway has played a decisive role in the successful negotiations***

This discursive construction is articulated explicitly in the vast majority of the articles. The words used differ slightly, but the basic position expressed is the same throughout: Norway’s contribution was important or decisive for the positive outcome of the negotiations.

When revelations about Norwegian contributions to a secret negotiation channel started to leak out, VG stated that Minister of Foreign Affairs Johan Jørgen Holst’s and State Secretary Jan Egeland’s meetings with the parties to the Middle East conflict “confirms the impression that Norway has a central role in the new developments in the peace talks.”<sup>152</sup> Later, Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland<sup>153</sup> and Minister of Foreign Affairs Johan Jørgen Holst<sup>154</sup> gave statements underlining Norway’s role and importance.

What is notable about these articulations is that they all build on and refer directly to official sources. The authority of the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Secretary, and the two latter’s direct participation in the process, strongly supports the legitimacy and authority of the view that Norway has played an important

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<sup>151</sup> See for example Aftenposten Morgen 1992 (28 Jun.); Aftenposten Aften 1993a (20 Aug.); NTBtekst 1992 (18 Aug.)

<sup>152</sup> VG 1993a (29 Aug.)

<sup>153</sup> NTBtekst 1993a (30 Aug.)

<sup>154</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993a (30 Aug.); Aftenposten Morgen 1993c (31 Aug.); VG 1993b (30 Aug.)

role. The majority of the subsequent articles concerning the peace process repeat this position.<sup>155</sup> VG says it this way:

The Norwegian invitation [to meetings in Norway] not only created the historical peace plan between Israel and PLO. Egeland's invitation also created a historical and decisive cooperation between Israel's two leading politicians, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Minister of Foreign Affairs Shimon Peres.<sup>156</sup>

Aftenposten Aften states that "(...) Holst & Co did what Kissinger never accomplished: To create peace in the Middle East powder keg."<sup>157</sup> And an Aftenposten editorial named "Historic" concludes that "Without shyness, we can establish that with Minister of Foreign Affairs Johan Jørgen Holst at the forefront, Norway really has lived up to the role as frontrunner and bridge builder."<sup>158</sup>

Related to this assessment of the Norwegian role is another common discursive element: Norway gets international praise for its efforts.<sup>159</sup> Article headlines like "Clinton praises Norway's effort"<sup>160</sup>, "Jagland gets Israeli praise for Norwegian negotiation efforts"<sup>161</sup>, "Norway praised from all quarters"<sup>162</sup>, and "Norway again praised for its active role"<sup>163</sup> are telling in this respect. Most of the articles cite an international leader praising Norway for its contributions. Bergens Tidende reports that "the world is indebted to Norway, said the American President Bill Clinton"<sup>164</sup>. Also the Palestinian and Israeli parties, and professional peace promoter Jimmy Carter, reportedly value the Norwegian contribution highly: "When Yasser Arafat, Shimon

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<sup>155</sup>For explicit articulations of this position, see Aftenposten Morgen 1993e (10 Sept.); Aftenposten Morgen 1993g (19 Sept.); Bergens Tidende 1993a (11 Sept.); Bergens Tidende 1993b (11 Sept.); Bergens Tidende 1993d (30 Oct.); Bergens Tidende 1993f (31 Dec.); Nordlys 1993a (7 Sept.); Nordlys 1993b (11 Sept.); NTBtekst 1993g (14 Sept.); VG 1993c (1 Sept.); VG 1993d (2 Sept.); VG 1993e (6 Sept.); VG 1993g (13 Sept.), VG 1993h (29 Sept.). I have found only one article expressly arguing for another view; namely that that Norway only has played a supporting role. See Aftenposten Morgen 1993d (1 Sept.). Aftenposten Morgen 1993h (29 Sept.) quotes Jan Egeland saying that we must not exaggerate Norway's role and contribution, but the rest of the article focuses on Norway's comparative advantages in peace promotion.

<sup>156</sup> VG 1993d (2 Sept); see also VG 1993e (6 Sept).

<sup>157</sup> Aftenposten Aften 1994 (25 May); for a similar statement, see Bergens Tidende 1993a (11 Sept.).

<sup>158</sup> Aftenposten 1993e (10 Sept.)

<sup>159</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993f (11 Sept.); Aftenposten Morgen 1993g (19 Sept.) ; Aftenposten Aften 1994 (25 May); Bergens Tidende 1993a (11 Sept.); Bergens Tidende 1993d (30 Oct.); NTBtekst 1994b (19 Apr.); NTBtekst 1994c (19 May); VG 1993e (6 Sept)

<sup>160</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993f (11 Sept.)

<sup>161</sup> NTBtekst 1994b (19 Apr.)

<sup>162</sup> NTBtekst 1994c (19 May)

<sup>163</sup> Aftenposten Aften 1994 (25 May)

<sup>164</sup> Bergens Tidende 1993a (11 Sept.); see also Aftenposten Morgen 1993f (11 Sept.) In a similar vein, in an interview, Terje Rød Larsen states that the Norwegian approach is highly valued by European and American top diplomats. Bergens Tidende 1993d (30 Oct.)

Peres, and Jimmy Carter left Oslo on Thursday, they had all again placed small Norway on top of the list of nations fighting for peace on our planet.”<sup>165</sup>

Supplementing the media’s own evaluations of the Norwegian efforts, these references to international praise have the effect of corroborating and confirming the notion that Norway played an important role. By referring to external sources of authority and legitimacy, it confirms that the positive Norwegian evaluations are not subjective and self-centered.

The above quotes illustrate the importance attached to Norway’s contribution to peace in the Middle East. It is not surprising that Norwegian media focus on Norway’s role and accomplishments in this case. What is interesting is that in doing so, the media constructs and reproduces an assessment of the Norwegian contribution as essential for the positive outcome of the process. Norway is thus invested with considerable agency, power, and ability when it comes to contributing to or creating peace, and discursive links between ‘Norway’, ‘peace promotion’ and ‘success’ are established.

#### ***4.1.2 Explaining the success of the Oslo Back Channel***

Apart from confirming that Norway’s role was decisive, many of the newspaper articles in my material discuss what factors enabled Norway’s contribution.<sup>166</sup> These explanations seem to share a focus on the particularities of the Norwegian approach, implicitly arguing that its differences from other states’ diplomatic approaches paved the way for its success.<sup>167</sup> Certain concepts stand out:

*Secrecy*, and the Norwegian officials’ ability to keep the talks and negotiations between Israel and PLO out of public sight, is the most commonly articulated explanation for the success of the Oslo Back Channel.<sup>168</sup> An article in *Bergens Tidende* outlines the reasoning behind this assertion: “(...) the process illustrates that it

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<sup>165</sup> *Aftenposten Aften* 1994 (25 May)

<sup>166</sup> A lot of the articles also mention what could be termed historical preconditions for the peace agreement. Here, I concentrate on the explanations given for Norway’s role and success as a third party.

<sup>167</sup> For an explicit articulation of the notion that Norway has particular qualifications in peace promotion, see *Aftenposten Morgen* 1993h (29 Sept.). The article quotes Jan Egeland.

<sup>168</sup> For a particularly clear articulation of this theme, see *NTBtekst* 1993e (10 Sept.). See also *Aftenposten Morgen* 1993h (29 Sept.); *Bergens Tidende* 1993b (11 Sept.); *Bergens Tidende* 1993d (30 Oct.); *Bergens Tidende* 1993f (31 Dec.); *NTBtekst* 1993g (14 Sept.); *NTBtekst* 1993i (29 Dec.); *VG* 1993f (10 Sept.)

may be easier to accomplish results when one can carry on with meticulous efforts outside the public's often merciless limelight, where one on an hourly basis are asked about whether things are moving in the right direction."<sup>169</sup>

*Close personal contacts and resulting confidence from and access to the parties* is also a common explanation. FAFO head Terje Rød-Larsen is repeatedly mentioned as the key person.<sup>170</sup> In an early comment to Norway's role, VG says it this way: "To succeed in diplomacy, contacts on the personal level are required, and it is in this respect that FAFO head Terje Rød Larsen and the scholar Marianne Heiberg enter the picture."<sup>171</sup> The importance of close contacts is also underlined by Terje Rød Larsen himself<sup>172</sup>, and by Jan Egeland.<sup>173</sup> In a similar vein, repeated references are made to the importance of confidence from and access to the parties.<sup>174</sup>

The importance of contacts, confidence and access is also articulated with what may be termed a domestic party politics twist: The main Norwegian actors in the peace process were all Labor Party members (the government was a Labor party minority government), and some texts underlined that the Norwegian Labor movement's close contacts with both the parties enabled Norway to play an important role.<sup>175</sup> However, the Oslo Back Channel was never described as a pure Labor Party undertaking, and it was by and large Norway's role that was underlined. As such, it appeared as a national project.

Some articles also focus on the *lack of Norwegian interests except in peace* as a precondition for Norway's role.<sup>176</sup> Jan Egeland articulates this particularly clearly: "We were, in contrast to the great powers, not seen as a state with other purposes than creating peace. Nobody attributed economic or strategic motives to us."<sup>177</sup> The rationale behind this argument seems to be that the lack of self interest in influencing

<sup>169</sup> Bergens Tidende 1993f (31 Dec.)

<sup>170</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993c (31 Aug.); Aftenposten Morgen 1993h (29 Sept.); Bergens Tidende 1993b (11 Sept.); Bergens Tidende 1993d (30 Oct.); VG 1993b (30 Aug.); VG 1993e (6 Sept.); VG 1993f (10 Sept)

<sup>171</sup> VG 1993f (10 Sept)

<sup>172</sup> Bergens Tidende 1993d (30 Oct.)

<sup>173</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993h (29 Sept.)

<sup>174</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993b (30 Aug.); Bergens Tidende 1993d (30 Oct.); NTBtekst 1993g (14 Sept.); NTBtekst 1993i (29 Dec.); VG 1993b (30 Aug.)

<sup>175</sup> NTBtekst 1993a (30 Aug.); NTBtekst 1993b (30 Aug.); VG 1993b (30 Aug.); VG 1993f (10 Sept.)

<sup>176</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993h (29 Sept.); NTBtekst 1992 (18 Aug.); NTBtekst 1993f (14 Sept.)

<sup>177</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993h (29 Sept.); for a similar articulation, see NTBtekst 1992 (18 Aug.)

the outcome of the negotiations in one way or the other made Norway an acceptable third party.

#### ***4.1.3 The Norwegian diplomatic victory as good PR***

The last discursive construction I have identified in my material differs from the others. Drawing heavily on the notion that Norway gets international praise for its efforts, it concerns the positive effects for Norway of the success in the Middle East diplomacy. It may thus be seen as originating from an interest-based perspective.

The link between Norway's efforts and positive effects in terms of self interests are articulated in two principal ways. The first focuses on Norway's success as a third party as a source of good PR or as 'placing Norway on the world map'.<sup>178</sup> Already shortly after the revelation of the Back Channel, article headlines like 'Holst gives us good PR'<sup>179</sup> and 'Middle East peace gives good PR for Norway'<sup>180</sup> appeared. The latter article specifies the position: "Minister of Foreign Affairs Johan Jørgen Holst and Fafo scholar Terje Rød Larsen have given Norway a kind of positive PR that we only could dream of."<sup>181</sup>

The second strand of articulations is more specific and focuses on the positive effect the success may have on the ongoing whaling negotiations. At the time of the revelation of the Oslo Back Channel, Norway was under heavy pressure internationally to stop whaling, and the US considered boycotting Norway. In this context, several newspaper articles articulated the position that Norway's recent diplomatic success may be an asset in the effort to prevent such a boycott.<sup>182</sup> Headlines like 'Does the Middle East peace stop boycott of Norway?'<sup>183</sup>, and 'Rides on a wave of sympathy in the finishing stages of the whaling case'<sup>184</sup> are illustrative. The

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<sup>178</sup> For articulations of the latter notion, see Nordlys 1993a (7 Sept.); NTBtekst 1993c (6 Sept.); NTBtekst 1993i (29 Dec.)

<sup>179</sup> Aftenposten Aften 1993b (6 Sept.)

<sup>180</sup> NTBtekst 1993c (6 Sept.)

<sup>181</sup> Ibid; see also Aftenposten Morgen 1993g (19 Sept.); VG 1993e (6 Sept.)

<sup>182</sup> Bergens Tidende 1993c (15 Sept.); NTBtekst 1993d (8 Sept.); NTBtekst 1993g (14 Sept.); VG 1993g (13 Sept.)

<sup>183</sup> NTBtekst 1993d (8 Sept.)

<sup>184</sup> Bergens Tidende 1993c (15 Sept.)

potential of using the peace effort for other ends is also explicitly mentioned: “There is no doubt that the peace effort has been duly noticed and may be utilized.”<sup>185</sup>

The explicit linking of success in peace promotion and Norwegian self interests, and the notion that the resulting international sympathy may be utilized to Norway’s advantage in international politics, are discursive innovations. In the material that predates the diplomatic breakthrough in the Middle East peace process<sup>186</sup>, the beneficial consequences of peace promotion are related to global security, stability, and development, or ‘global common interests’. The PR theme thus strengthens the self interest perspective; the lofty assumption that peace promotion in the last instance may contribute to Norway’s security is supplemented by much more concrete assumptions about international political benefits, exemplified by the whaling case.

#### ***4.1.4 Norway can play a role also in other peace negotiations***

So far, I have been concerned with the particularities of the discourse about the Middle East peace agreement. However, this discourse arguably has implications beyond this specific case. The discursive establishment of Norway’s contribution as decisive for the positive outcome of the peace process, the investment in Norway of agency and influence, and the explanations of the contribution underlining the particularities and distinctness of the Norwegian approach, may be seen as paving the way for the establishment of a general peace engagement discourse.

What was needed for such a general discourse to come into being was an explicit generalization of the discursive elements and concepts of the Middle East peace process discourse. And such a generalization of the hitherto particularistic discourse, making its concepts and discursive constructions relevant in other settings, was precisely what happened. From a discourse analytic perspective, it was a highly significant innovation.

The assertion that Norway may play an important role in also in other peace processes originates with government officials, but it is articulated and reproduced in the public

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<sup>185</sup> NTBtekst 1993g (14 Sept.)

<sup>186</sup> See the analysis of the foreign policy and development aid discourses in the pre 1993 chapter

realm of media coverage. A few weeks after the revelation of the Oslo Back Channel, an NTB article delivers the following statement: “Minister of Foreign Affairs Johan Jørgen Holst and his associates have underlined that small nations like Norway, having no great power interests, may play an important role also in other conflict areas.”<sup>187</sup> Referring to a lecture held by Jan Egeland on September 28<sup>th</sup>, three other articles articulate a similar position.<sup>188</sup> The NTB article has the headline ‘Egeland about the Oslo process: We can do it again’, which speaks for itself.<sup>189</sup> The article in VG, with the headline ‘The world is waiting for Holst’, focuses on international requests for Norwegian assistance: “From all over the world, requests for aid from the Norwegian peace team that secured the peace agreement between Israel and PLO are received.”<sup>190</sup>

The media also reproduces the view that Norway may play a role in peace processes in general through newspaper articles speculating about new ‘Oslo Channels’.<sup>191</sup> In an article named “‘Norwegian channel’ for peace in Croatia’, Bergens Tidende claims that a secret back channel for negotiations between the parties to the conflict in Croatia has been established.<sup>192</sup> VG similarly states that Norwegian actors have “developed a kind of mini version of the success of the secret Middle East negotiations”.<sup>193</sup> In the same vein, a comment on an academic seminar on Sudan is given the headline ‘No Oslo-peace for Sudan’.<sup>194</sup> Finally, VG states that “Norway has, in large parts of the world, become known as a kind of ”World’s peace office”, a country trying to solve conflicts without one of the parties defeating the other militarily.”<sup>195</sup> Norway is thus firmly established as a country capable of contributing to peace in various conflicts.

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<sup>187</sup> NTBtekst 1993e (10 Sept.)

<sup>188</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1993h (29 Sept.); NTBtekst 1993h (28 Sept.); VG 1993h (29 Sept.). Egeland later heavily underlined that Norway indeed had played an important role in several peace processes. See Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 84

<sup>189</sup> NTBtekst 1993h (28 Sept.)

<sup>190</sup> VG 1993h (29 Sept.). For a similar listing of requests for Norwegian assistance, see Bergens Tidende 1993d (30 Oct.). Terje Rød Larsen is here quoted saying that he thinks that the Norwegian approach may work elsewhere, and that he has received requests from Bosnia, Kashmir, and Ireland.

<sup>191</sup> Aftenposten 1993i (3 Nov.); Bergens Tidende 1993e (3 Nov.); and VG 1993i (3 Nov.) write on negotiations between Serbs and Croats; Aftenposten Morgen 1994a (28 Apr.) writes on Guatemala; Aftenposten Morgen 1994b (2 Jun.) writes on Sudan. All explicitly compare the Norwegian efforts with the Middle East peace process.

<sup>192</sup> Bergens Tidende 1993e (3 Nov.); see also Aftenposten 1993i (3 Nov.)

<sup>193</sup> VG 1993i (3 Nov.)

<sup>194</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1994b (2 Jun.)

<sup>195</sup> VG 1994 (17 Sept.)

## 4.2 The Establishment of a Dominant Representation

As we have just seen, the Norwegian media coverage of the Middle East peace process laid the basis for a distinct discourse centering on Norwegian peace engagement. It also provided discursive resources and paved the way for the emergence of a dominant representation within the discourse. In this section, I analyze this representation's establishment and reproduction in the official texts that comment on the peace engagement<sup>196</sup>, and outline the concepts and meanings it centers on. The clear and consistent discursive patterning of the texts, and their reproduction of notions and concepts, indicate that the discourse is stable and that a dominant representation has emerged.<sup>197</sup> The underlying argument throughout is that the emerging representation's position of discursive dominance is secured precisely as a result of its reproduction in these authoritative texts.

### 4.2.1 *Norway has given important contributions to peace*

The construction of Norway's involvement as important for the success of peace processes, particularly in the Middle East, but also elsewhere, is articulated implicitly or explicitly in all the texts. In his 1993 Foreign Policy Address delivered shortly after the revelation of the Oslo Back Channel, Minister of Foreign Affairs Johan Jørgen Holst confirms that Norway had a central role in securing the breakthrough, thus giving legitimacy to the views expressed in the media.<sup>198</sup> Holst goes on to state that the Norwegian engagement shows that we may contribute constructively to peace and security: "Our efforts in the Middle East peace process are a contribution to creating peace in one of Europe's central neighboring areas. It shows that small countries may play a role."<sup>199</sup> It should also be noted that Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland delivers very similar statements in her 1994 New Year Address.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> This includes newspaper articles emanating from the political leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the 1995 Norwegian Official Report (NOU) on the North-South relationship and development aid policy, the 1995 White Paper on Norwegian policy towards the developing countries, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs' general Foreign Policy Addresses to the Storting.

<sup>197</sup> This should not be taken to imply that all the texts articulate all the major themes, concepts, and notions of the representation. Most texts explicitly articulate some of these, and in doing so, they reproduce the discursive structures of the dominant representation.

<sup>198</sup> Stortingstidende 1993-1994a, pp. 264, 270.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, p. 271

<sup>200</sup> NTBtekst 1994a (1 Jan.)

Johan Jørgen Holst's successor as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bjørn Tore Godal, also repeatedly underlines the importance of Norway's peace efforts.<sup>201</sup> His 1996 Foreign Policy Address establishes Norway as an efficient and sought-after contributor to peace, and states that the present engagement builds on strong traditions:

Through our long-lasting and strong solidarity engagement for peace and democracy, Norway has built up confidence and credibility. Our participation is sought not only in peacekeeping operations, even though such operations still are of great importance. We often receive requests to take part in conflict solving and peace creating initiatives.<sup>202</sup>

The Official Report similarly states that lately, "Norway has made itself conspicuous internationally as a mediator on the international scene."<sup>203</sup> And in the White paper, the Norwegian involvements in the Middle East, Guatemala, Sudan, Sri Lanka, former Yugoslavia, South Africa, Eritrea and Mozambique are all seen as contributing to peace.<sup>204</sup> The clearest articulations of Norway's ability to promote peace are, however, delivered by State Secretary Jan Egeland. In a radio interview, he says it this way:

The Oslo Agreement, the Guatemala Agreements, and our efforts in South Africa, our efforts on Balkan, shows that small Norway *may* play a role that the super powers cannot in a range of different situations, and we have played such a role the last four-five years, clearer than any other small nation, ever, I think, in world history.<sup>205</sup>

Taken together, these statements unequivocally establish Norway's peace engagement as capable of contributing substantially to peace processes in general. They thus confirm the media's view of Norwegian capabilities, inscribing Norway with considerable agency as a third party and perpetuating the link between 'Norway' and 'peace promotion'.

#### ***4.2.2 Peace promotion is an important part of Norway's foreign policy***

In my material, this position is almost as pervasive as the construction of Norway as a contributor to peace. Johan Jørgen Holst articulates it very clearly already a few weeks after the signing of the Oslo Accords: "The continuation of the peace promotion in the

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<sup>201</sup> Stortingstidende 1993-1994c, p. 2154; Godal, Bjørn Tore 1997. In the former Address, Norway's decisive participation in the Middle East is underlined. In the latter, Godal underlines that Norway have made important contributions to the Guatemalan peace process

<sup>202</sup> Godal, Bjørn Tore 1996

<sup>203</sup> Norwegian Official Report 1995, pp. 189f

<sup>204</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, p. 19; see also Norwegian Official Report 1995, pp. 189f

<sup>205</sup> Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 84 (quote from NRK Radio (P1), Ukeslutt, 17.09.1994, italics in original). Also in other interviews, Egeland implicitly stated that Norway's contributions to peace were substantial. See *Aftenposten Morgen* 1995b (31 Mar.); *VG* 1995 (30 Jan.)

Middle East will be the fourth main challenge [out of five challenges] in our foreign policy.”<sup>206</sup> Bjørn Tore Godal follows suit in his first Foreign Policy Address<sup>207</sup>:

The government has strongly emphasized conflict preventing operations as a central goal of our foreign policy(...) Norway has played an active role also in other regional conflicts, for example in Guatemala. The experience from the mediator role in the Middle East negotiations has taught us that this kind of work is very time consuming. The setbacks are numerous, and very few attempts succeed. The results may often seem far away, but when progress is made and peace may be the result, the effort has proved to be well worth it. The government aims at strengthening the effort for peace creating and conflict preventative measures (...)<sup>208</sup>

This piece of text does several things: First, it establishes that Norway is active in peace promotion in several regional conflicts. Then it concludes that these efforts are worthwhile, even when we experience numerous setbacks. This implies that the peace engagement should not be stopped if positive results are not forthcoming; it is in other words a powerful defense of the engagement that makes it difficult to criticize. In line with this reasoning, it is stated that peace promotion and conflict prevention will be strengthened. Similar articulations of the position that peace promotion is an important part of the foreign policy are also to be found in Godal’s 1995, 1996, and 1997 Foreign Policy Addresses.<sup>209</sup>

Adding strength to the impression that peace engagement is considered important, the White Paper and the Official Report also pay substantial attention to issues of peace and conflict.<sup>210</sup> In the White Paper, “peace, conflict resolution, and democracy promotion” is consistently treated as the first point on the agenda.<sup>211</sup> It states that active participation in peace promotion is a major innovation in Norway’s international engagement, and that such efforts will be highly prioritized where Norway may make a difference.<sup>212</sup> The Report similarly underlines peace promotion as one of three main goals of Norwegian South policy, and state that Norway should be prepared to use more resources on peace and conflict resolution measures than

<sup>206</sup> Stortingstidende 1993-1994a, p. 264

<sup>207</sup> This address focuses on global conflict and development issues, and on immigration policy

<sup>208</sup> Stortingstidende 1993-1994c, p. 2154

<sup>209</sup> Stortingstidende 1994-1995a, p. 1930; Godal, Bjørn Tore 1996; Godal, Bjørn Tore 1997

<sup>210</sup> See particularly Norwegian Official Report 1995, pp. 5-8; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, pp. 6f, 11, 16

<sup>211</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, pp. 6f, 11, 16

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, pp. 6, 16; see also Norwegian Official Report 1995, pp. 189f

previously.<sup>213</sup> These texts' focus on peace promotion is distinctly innovative when we compare them to previous White Papers.<sup>214</sup>

Through the authority of the Foreign Policy Addresses and the White Paper, peace promotion is, shortly after the initial success of the involvement in the Middle East peace process, elevated to the position of a primary foreign policy goal. Given the novelty of the practice of peace promotion, the swiftness with which this happened is remarkable. The establishment and dominance of the linking of Norway's contribution in the Middle East peace process on the one hand, and the successful outcome on the other, is very likely an important precondition for this to happen. Without the particular discursive construction of the event of the Oslo Agreement, it would be difficult to elevate peace promotion to such an important position.

#### ***4.2.3 Norway's distinctive approach to peace promotion***

A substantial part of the analyzed texts give partial explanations for Norway's success as a peace promoter. In doing so, they implicitly or explicitly invoke the notion that the Norwegian approach has certain distinguishing features. It should also be noted that they draw on and reproduce the media coverage's focus on close personal contacts, confidence from the parties, and lack of Norwegian interests except in peace.

In his 1993 Foreign Policy Address, Johan Jørgen Holst underlines that Norway could play the third party role in the Middle East due to confidence from the parties, Norway's lack of interests in a specific outcome, and the facilitative approach that was adopted.<sup>215</sup> Holst's successor, Bjørn Tore Godal, focuses on the government's cooperation with NGOs and academic institutions as an important feature of the Norwegian approach.<sup>216</sup> Godal also states that this cooperation will be further developed as a means to strengthen Norway's peace promotion efforts.<sup>217</sup> Previously, the importance of cooperation with non-state actors had only been hinted at through

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<sup>213</sup> Norwegian Official Report 1995, pp. 7f

<sup>214</sup> See previous chapter for an analysis of the 1987, 1989 and 1992 White Papers' treatment of these issues.

<sup>215</sup> Stortingstidende 1993-1994a, pp. 264, 270. Due to Holst, facilitation involved "passing on information, communication, explanation, making suggestions, arranging meetings and travels and, not least, suggesting perspectives." For a similar view, underlining Norway's small state status and lack of interests, see statements by State Secretary Jan Egeland in Aftenposten Morgen 1995b (31 Mar.)

<sup>216</sup> Stortingstidende 1993-1994c, p. 2154

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, p. 2154f

references to FAFOs role Oslo Back Channel. Godal's focus on this is therefore a discursive innovation.

The innovation is, moreover, taken up by other texts and thus soon becomes part of the dominant representation. State Secretary Jan Egeland articulates it clearly:

In our total foreign policy, our small country must utilize all the available resources in a flexible way (...) This involves to further develop the Norwegian model where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperates with a network of voluntary organizations and academic institutions, in UN circles termed "the Norwegian Model".<sup>218</sup>

The White Paper and the Official report eventually go one step further than the other texts, constituting Norway as having certain comparative advantages in peace promotion: "As a small country enjoying great international confidence, Norway may have a comparative advantage precisely in such settings. Our extensive emergency aid efforts create confidence and credibility(...)"<sup>219</sup> The concept of comparative advantages, and the underlining of the importance of the state - NGO cooperation, may be seen as implicitly referring to Jan Egeland's book "Impotent Superpower – Potent Small State", where it is stated that Norway has several potential advantages over the US in human rights promotion.<sup>220</sup> Egeland's argument, although originally not concerning peace promotion, is imported and used in a peace promotion setting. Intertextual and interdiscursive links are thus established.

#### ***4.2.4 Motivation for the engagement: "Self interest and altruism go hand in hand"***

The notion that self interest and altruism 'go hand in hand' or 'pull in the same direction' is borrowed from Liland & Kjerland, who quote the State Secretaries Helga Hernes and Asbjørn Mathisen as its source.<sup>221</sup> It is illustrative of the official position on the motivation behind the peace engagement, as it appears in the analyzed texts. It is emphasized that the peace engagement is grounded on altruism, values, and idealism. However, it is at the same time beneficial in a self interest perspective. Altruism and self interests are in other words linked and seen as compatible.

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<sup>218</sup> VG 1995 (30 Jan.); see also Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, p. 19

<sup>219</sup> Norwegian Official Report 1995, pp. 189f; see also Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, p. 19

<sup>220</sup> For a brief analysis of this book, see the pre 1993 chapter

<sup>221</sup> Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 84

This position is no novelty in Norwegian foreign policy discourse. Also prior to 1993, the White Papers had constructed global engagement of different strands as motivated by self interest, global common interests, and altruism.<sup>222</sup> The security aspect was particularly emphasized; engagement to improve the conditions of the developing countries was seen as enhancing Norway's own security.<sup>223</sup>

The dominant representation of the peace engagement draws on and reproduces this focus on security. In his 1993 Foreign Policy Address, Johan Jørgen Holst states that "(...) it is natural that we concentrate our efforts on the geographical areas where we have the most experience, and the ones that have the greatest influence on our own security."<sup>224</sup> Bjørn Tore Godal follows suit; in his 1995 and 1997 Foreign Policy Addresses, he underlines that Norway's global engagement strengthens our own security.<sup>225</sup> The Official Report and the White Paper also emphasize global common interests, including security and stability, as important motivations for engagement.<sup>226</sup>

Several texts also explicitly state that the peace engagement is grounded on altruism.<sup>227</sup> In 1995, Bjørn Tore Godal emphasizes that solidarity is the basis for the peace engagement<sup>228</sup>, and in 1997, he states that the efforts are motivated by an ethical responsibility.<sup>229</sup> The Official Report discusses the issue quite extensively and concludes that the peace engagement may be considered ethically and morally based action.<sup>230</sup> In the White Paper, solidarity and humanitarian values are mentioned as motivation.<sup>231</sup>

Despite these continuities with previous discourse, innovations also appear. The authoritative sanctioning of the construction of the peace engagement as able to strengthen Norway's international standing and ability to promote its narrow self

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<sup>222</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis, see the section on the period up to 1993

<sup>223</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1989, pp. 9f, 44ff, 49; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1992, pp. 10f, 21, 26, 37

<sup>224</sup> Stortingstidende 1993-1994a, p. 272. In line with this, Holst suggests that we concentrate our efforts on the Middle East, South Africa, and Central America. Stortingstidende 1993-1994a, p. 264

<sup>225</sup> Godal, Bjørn Tore 1997; Stortingstidende 1994-1995a, p. 1930

<sup>226</sup> Norwegian Official Report 1995, pp. 124f, 179; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, pp. 9, 11

<sup>227</sup> Altruism is here used as a generic term encompassing solidarity, values, ethical responsibility, and ethical duty

<sup>228</sup> Stortingstidende 1994-1995a, p. 1930

<sup>229</sup> Godal, Bjørn Tore 1997

<sup>230</sup> Norwegian Official Report 1995, see particularly pp. 124f, 179

<sup>231</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, pp. 9, 11

interests is notable in this respect. State Secretary Jan Egeland stands behind the perhaps clearest articulations of the self interest perspective during this period. In a VG article named ‘Peace success as exchange asset’<sup>232</sup>, he focuses on how Norway’s success in peace promotion may enable it to be heard internationally:

A trump card is Norway’s success as peace mediator in several international conflicts. We can exchange information on the international market if we are perceived as interesting. Our status in for example the Middle East enables us, in other settings, to meet on a higher level and in more comprehensive talks. They are interested in our assessments. This way, we may get information back that is important to Norway.<sup>233</sup>

In another article, Egeland is quoted saying that “Norwegian foreign policy has become one of our best export products” and that it gives Norway “unique PR.”<sup>234</sup> Through these articulations, the self interest perspective articulated in the media coverage<sup>235</sup> is strengthened and invested with legitimacy.

However, the self interest focus was not entirely uncontroversial. When the 1995 White Paper followed Egeland’s lead, emphasizing self interest as motivation<sup>236</sup>, it was met with strong criticism. A quite heated parliamentary debate ensued; several of the speakers underline solidarity and altruistic values, and explicitly attack the Government’s underlining of self interests.<sup>237</sup> This criticism indicates a discursive struggle over the very meaning of the Norwegian engagement for the South. The established and (at least up to this point) hegemonic representation within the development aid discourse, which underlines will to do good and ethical and moral principles embedded in the Norwegian people, is mobilized and defended.<sup>238</sup> However, this representation is no longer dominant; the White Paper’s articulation of self interests as an important additional motivation shows that the discourse is open on this point and that different positions may coexist.

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<sup>232</sup> The original title of the article is ‘Freds-suksess som byttmiddel’. VG 1995 (30 Jan.)

<sup>233</sup> VG 1995 (30 Jan.); for a similar Jan Egeland quote, see Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 86. Bjørn Tore Godal also articulate very similar views in his 1996 Foreign Policy Address. Godal, Bjørn Tore 1996

<sup>234</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1995b (31 Mar.)

<sup>235</sup> See section on the media coverage of the Norwegian contribution to the Middle East peace process

<sup>236</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, p. 11, see also pp. 5, 12

<sup>237</sup> Stortingstidende 1995-1996b, pp. 4003-4039. See particularly the comments from Marit Arnstad (SP), p. 4004; and Kjell Magne Bondevik (KrF) p. 4018. The Recommendation from the parliamentary Foreign Policy Committee also underlines ethical and moral motivations. Recommendation from the Foreign Policy Committee (Innst. S.) no. 229, 1995-1996.

<sup>238</sup> Stokke, Olav 2005, pp. 450ff. For a critical discussion of the emphasis on altruism, see Tvedt, Terje 2003, particularly pp. 22ff, 33ff, 208-214, 218f, 238-244

#### **4.2.5 The relationship between development assistance and peace promotion**

The analysis of the pre 1993 White Papers showed that ‘peace’ was a subordinate category, treated either as a beneficial consequence of development or as a precondition for development to take place. Similarly, peace promotion was seen as a development aid tool. ‘Development’ was the main nodal point of the discourse.<sup>239</sup>

The 1995 Report and White Paper articulate a different relationship in this respect. In line with previous texts, they construct a causal relationship of mutual dependence between peace and development.<sup>240</sup> The innovation lies in the treatment of development aid as a potentially important tool in concrete efforts that have peace promotion as their main goal.<sup>241</sup> Similarly, peace promotion is treated as an important part of Norway’s overall foreign policy, and not only as a tool in the development policy.<sup>242</sup> The importance attached to coordination and integration of development aid, humanitarian assistance, and peace promotion efforts<sup>243</sup> also suggests that these are seen as categories on an equal footing, and that ‘development’ no longer is privileged. In other words, ‘peace’ emerges as a primary goal, alongside ‘development’, of the government’s South-policy.

Corroborating these findings, Minister of Foreign Affairs Bjørn Tore Godal, in his 1995 Foreign Policy Address, states that “Norway will still be active in conflict resolution, prevention of new conflicts, and furthering of democracy and development.”<sup>244</sup> ‘Conflict resolution’ and ‘prevention of new conflicts’ are here categories on an equal footing with ‘furthering of democracy and development’, and the fact that they are mentioned first suggests that they are regarded as important. In discourse analytic terminology, peace is juxtaposed to development as a nodal point and an organizing concept of the discourse. This adds further legitimacy to the claim that a distinct peace engagement discourse now had emerged also in official, authoritative texts.

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<sup>239</sup> See pre 1993 chapter

<sup>240</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, p. 19

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, pp. 16, 18f

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, p. 19

<sup>243</sup> Norwegian Official Report 1995, pp. 7f, 20, 32, 35f, 189; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, pp. 16, 19

<sup>244</sup> Stortingstidende 1994-1995a, p. 1930; see also Godal, Bjørn Tore 1995

### 4.3 Criticism of the Peace Engagement: an Emerging Alternative Representation

Despite the overwhelming discursive dominance of the representation presented above, texts that do not draw on this representation and that articulate criticism of the peace engagement also exist. In this period, the criticism is principally articulated by two actors; MPs from the Conservative Party and Nils Morten Udgaard, Aftenposten's foreign policy editor.

In the parliamentary debate over the 1995 Foreign Policy Address, the Conservative Party MP Kaci Kullmann Five delivers the following statement:

I also ask for a signal from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of greater concentration in Norwegian foreign policy. (...) In the area of peace mediation I have urged a measure of prudence in the future. I have not said that Norway now should withdraw from the peace process in Guatemala. But I have warned against further diffusion. Not because the mediation process in itself necessarily will be a burden, but because the Government always comes back to the Storting with proposals to spend relatively large sums on various efforts in these countries.<sup>245</sup>

Kullmann Five and the other Conservative Party MPs go on to underline the importance of Norway's neighboring areas and suggest that the peace engagement may take attention away from them.<sup>246</sup> Jan Petersen says it this way:

It seems like the Norwegian role in Guatemala is given as much or more attention than our policy towards the Baltic. The result is a lack of focus on what is most important for the nation: What directly concerns Norway (...) <sup>247</sup>

These arguments are repeated in the 1996 and 1997 Parliamentary Debates over Norway's foreign policy.<sup>248</sup>

The Conservative Party's criticism was followed up by Nils Morten Udgaard. He wrote several articles where he criticized the current foreign policy for lack of priorities and for not looking after Norway's real interests. In the first of the articles, he states that there are clear isolationist tendencies in the current foreign policy:

<sup>245</sup> Stortingstidende 1994-1995b, p. 2017, see also pp. 2019f, 2064; VG 1995 (30 Jan.). In the VG article, Kullmann Five gives a very similar statement: "We are too small to act like a mini UN. After the EU referendum, we should put stronger emphasis on our neighboring areas; instead of Libanon and Guatemala, it will be more forward looking to enter into closer bilateral relations with Russia, the Baltic states, and Former Yugoslavia"

<sup>246</sup> Stortingstidende 1994-1995b, pp. 2008 (Anders Talleraas), 2016 (Kaci Kullmann Five), 2053 (Jan Petersen)

<sup>247</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1997 (11 Feb.); see also Dagbladet 1997 (14 Feb.)

<sup>248</sup> Stortingstidende 1995-1996a, p. 2227 (Kaci Kullmann Five); Stortingstidende 1996-1997, pp. 2378f (Jan Petersen), 2401 (Kaci Kullmann Five)

Now, it [Norwegian isolationism] presents itself again, disguised as a global and unlimited Norwegian engagement for emergency aid and peace promotion – without priorities and real binding obligations for the generous Norway.<sup>249</sup>

Udgaard attributes these tendencies to “vagueness at the level of ideas concerning the question of what foreign policy really is” and state that the result is that “Norwegian interests wind up in the background”.<sup>250</sup> Udgaard later repeated this criticism in an article about Norway’s foreign policy standing: “The real prioritization of Norwegian interests is increasingly difficult to see.”<sup>251</sup>

Although rather marginal, the Conservative Party MPs’ and Nils Morten Udgaard’s criticism of the lack of concentration, priorities and attention to real Norwegian interests in Norwegian foreign policy add up to an alternative representation of the peace engagement. This representation draws heavily on what may be termed ‘realist’ notions of national interests<sup>252</sup>, and may thus be termed a ‘realist representation’. ‘Norway’s real interests’, ‘neighboring areas’, and ‘concentration’/ ‘prioritization’ are its key terms or nodal points. On the basis of these concepts, it explicitly challenges the dominant representation’s underlining of the importance of the peace engagement in Norway’s foreign policy. It is also implicitly critical towards the notion that the peace engagement improves Norway’s security and international standing. While not rejecting the peace engagement outright<sup>253</sup>, the representation suggests that Norway should not make peace promotion a crucial part of the foreign policy.

The emergence of this realist representation implies that within the peace engagement discourse, the concepts of ‘peace engagement’, ‘foreign policy’, and ‘Norwegian interests’ become contested. The two representations fill them with radically different meanings, and they thus assume the quality of floating signifiers. The dominant representation links all the concepts together and inscribes them with meaning

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<sup>249</sup> Udgaard, Nils Morten 1995a; see also *Aftenposten Morgen* 1995a (17 Feb.)

<sup>250</sup> Udgaard, Nils Morten 1995a; see also *Aftenposten Morgen* 1995a (17 Feb.) Although Udgaard here talks about emergency aid, he links emergency aid and peace promotion and treats them together.

<sup>251</sup> Udgaard, Nils Morten 1995b

<sup>252</sup> For brief introductions to the International Relations’ realism tradition and theory, laying out the key tenets of anarchy, survival, self help, national interests, and power maximization, see Dunne, Tim & Schmidt, Brian C. 2001; Jackson, Robert & Sørensen, Georg 2003, pp. 67-103; Mearsheimer, John J. 2001, pp. 29-54.

<sup>253</sup> The Conservative Party for example retained a positive attitude to the Norwegian involvement in the Middle East and South Africa, and when pressed, its MPs would not criticize the involvement in Guatemala. See *Stortingstidende* 1993-1994b; *Stortingstidende* 1994-1995b, pp. 2017, 2019, 2020; *Stortingstidende* 1996-1997, p. 2378f, 2394

through linking them to ‘altruism’, ‘duty’, ‘solidarity’, and ‘will to do good’ on the one hand, and ‘self interest’, ‘security’, and ‘international standing’ on the other. The realist representation links ‘peace engagement’ primarily to ‘altruism’; and ‘foreign policy’ and ‘Norwegian interest’ to ‘self interests’ and ‘neighboring areas’. In other words, it constructs no links between ‘peace engagement’ and the other concepts. Rather, peace engagement is constructed as incompatible with foreign policy, which should primarily focus on securing Norway’s (narrow) self interests.

Just as we would expect from a discourse analytic perspective, the criticism of the peace engagement and articulation of the ‘realist representation’ did not go unnoticed. A substantial number of MPs from the Socialist Left Party, the Labor Party and the Christian Democratic Party criticized the Conservative Party and defended the peace engagement.<sup>254</sup> Similarly, Udgaard’s claims were met with heavy counter criticism in the form of newspaper articles written by State Secretary Jan Egeland<sup>255</sup> and Minister of Foreign Affairs Bjørn Tore Godal. Godal’s main argument centers on security and interdependence: by contributing to safeguarding peoples’ security in other countries, we ultimately improve our own security. He also underlines that the peace engagement has led to “positive international attention”, and then warns against “constructing an artificial incompatibility between Norwegian national interests in our neighboring areas and our emergency efforts for vulnerable people in countries ridden by war or conflict.”<sup>256</sup> By explicitly invoking the same self interest perspective that the peace promotion criticism takes as its starting point, Godal mounts a powerful discursive defense of the Norwegian engagement.

#### 4.4 Summary

After the revelation of Norway’s role in the Middle East peace process, a distinct peace engagement discourse emerges. The media coverage of the peace process lays

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<sup>254</sup> Stortingstidende 1994-1995b, pp. 2017f (Hallvard Bakke, A), 2019 (Erik Solheim, SV) 2019f (Hilde Frafjord Johnson, KrF), 2027, 2076 (Kjell Magne Bondevik, KrF), 2061 (Einar Steensnæs, KrF), 2075 (Bjørn Tore Godal, A); Stortingstidende 1995-1996a, p. 2239 (Kjell Magne Bondevik, KrF); Stortingstidende 1996-1997, pp. 2378f, 2385f (Kjell Magne Bondevik, KrF), 2392, 2394 (Bjørn Tore Godal, A), 2395 (Erik Solheim, SV; Hilde Frafjord Johnson, KrF)

<sup>255</sup> For Jan Egeland’s counter critique, which primarily concerns humanitarian aid, see Egeland, Jan 1995a; Egeland, Jan 1995b

<sup>256</sup> Godal, Bjørn Tore 1995

the basis for the discourse. Discursive structures are established, and above all, it is asserted that Norway can play a role in peace processes generally. The subsequent treatment of the peace engagement in official texts reproduces the media coverage's concepts and constructions, and the resulting discourse is structured and stable. This indicates that a dominant representation of the peace engagement has been established; a representation constructing the engagement as very important. In this respect, it should also be noted that 'peace', which previously had been a subordinate category, was discursively juxtaposed to 'development' as a goal of the Norwegian South policy.

The dominant representation does several things. First, it firmly establishes the view that the policy of peace promotion has yielded positive results and that it therefore is worthwhile. Second, and related, it invests Norway with considerable agency and ability to contribute to peace, and constructs the Norwegian approach as distinct. Third, it establishes that the peace engagement not only enables Norway to make the world better, it also is beneficial in a self interest perspective. In doing so, it naturalizes the extensive peace promotion efforts, through which Norway became involved in a number of conflicts literally all over the world, and legitimizes the importance that is accorded to them.

However, and despite this representation's dominance and powerful effects, dissent and criticism of the peace engagement do exist. The 'realist representation' offers a different perspective on the peace engagement, centering on 'realist' concepts of 'real interests' and 'concentration'/'prioritization'. The very existence of an alternative representation also shows that the dominant representation is not hegemonic: the meaning of the discourse's central organizing concepts of 'peace engagement', 'foreign policy', and 'Norwegian interests' are contested, and the concepts may thus be seen as floating signifiers. The extensive peace engagement is, in other words, still not taken for granted or necessary, and it is open to debate.

## 5 Consolidation of Peace Engagement and Discourse: 1997-2003

This chapter is primarily concerned with the consolidation of the Norwegian peace engagement, in terms of both discourse and practice. At the level of practice, the period saw a consolidation, expansion, and institutionalization of the peace engagement under three different governments.<sup>257</sup> Norway continued its engagement in the Middle East and Guatemala; became involved in peace processes in Cyprus, Haiti, Mali, Sudan, Sri Lanka (more heavily than previously), and Colombia; and involved itself strongly in peace promoting work in Europe and Eurasia within the OSCE.<sup>258</sup> In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a new section termed ‘section for peace and reconciliation’ was established in 2002.<sup>259</sup>

The discourse was also consolidated. The dominant and official representation of the Norwegian peace engagement identified in the previous section was continuously rearticulated and thus reproduced and strengthened. I here focus on the innovations: increasing emphasis on the self interest perspective, the discursive establishment of ‘the Norwegian Model’, and the assertion that ‘Norway is a peace nation’.

Despite the continuing preponderance of the dominant representation, two alternative representations of the peace engagement also exist; the realist and idealist representations. I present and analyze them towards the end of the chapter.

The end of the period, inaugurated by stronger criticism, clearer articulation of the alternative representations, and a reflexive discursive turn where ‘Norway as a peace nation’ or ‘humanitarian great power’ is viewed as a self image, is rather open ended. Some of these tendencies emerge before 2003, but I have chosen to treat them in the next chapter.

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<sup>257</sup> Bondevik I (KrF, V, SP); Stoltenberg I (Ap); Bondevik II (H, KrF, V)

<sup>258</sup> The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, previously the CSCE, Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe

<sup>259</sup> See for example Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c

## 5.1 The Dominant Representation: Reproduction and Innovation

The most notable feature of the peace engagement discourse from 1997 to 2003 is the reproduction of the dominant representation as identified in the previous chapter. Due to the limited scope of the thesis, there is no space for analyzing this reproduction in detail. Here, I briefly present the most salient concepts and constructions before turning to the discursive innovations.

### 5.1.1 Norway plays an important role in numerous peace processes

The discursive construction of Norway as playing an important peace promoting role in a lot of conflict areas is continuously rearticulated and reproduced in official texts<sup>260</sup> as well as texts appearing in the news media.<sup>261</sup> The clearest ‘official’ articulation of this construction is to be found in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ report on Norway’s general peace engagement.<sup>262</sup> It is named ‘Norway in the service of peace. Norwegian contributions to peace and reconciliation’, which speaks for itself.<sup>263</sup>

It is also notable that Norway’s important role and ability to contribute were heavily underlined in media reports on diplomatic efforts.<sup>264</sup> Headlines like ‘The parties in the Middle East quarrel, the US and Norway will make peace’<sup>265</sup> and ‘Norway in new key role in the Middle East’<sup>266</sup> are telling in this respect. Although I have identified three newspaper articles that challenge the discursive construction of Norway’s role as decisive<sup>267</sup>, the construction nevertheless maintains a very strong position. It inscribes Norway with considerable agency and ability to create a peaceful solution, and it

<sup>260</sup> Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Johnson, Hilde Frafjord 2002; Petersen, Jan 2002; Petersen, Jan 2003; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b; Vollebæk, Knut 1998. The conflict areas explicitly mentioned here are the Middle East, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Sudan, Ethiopia/ Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Western Africa, and the Great Lakes.

<sup>261</sup> For a particularly clear articulation, see Bergens Tidende 2000 (31 Dec.). See also Aftenposten Aften 1997 (01 Dec.); Aftenposten Morgen 1998a (11 Jan.); Aftenposten Morgen 1998c (24 Jan.); Dagbladet 1998a (03 Jan.); NTBtekst 1998 (08 Jan.); VG 2000b (02 Sept.)

<sup>262</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b

<sup>263</sup> The original title is ‘Norge i fredens tjeneste. Norske bidrag til fred og forsoning’

<sup>264</sup> On Guatemala: Aftenposten Aften 1997 (1 Dec.); VG 2000b (02 Sept.). On Mali: Aftenposten Morgen 1998c (24 Jan.). On Sri Lanka: Aftenposten Morgen 2002c (06 Dec.); Dagsavisen Morgen 2002 (22 Sept.); NTBtekst 2002 (15 Sept.). On Indonesia: Aftenposten Morgen 2002a (02 May)

<sup>265</sup> NTBtekst 1998 (8 Jan.), the original title is ‘Partene i Midtøsten krangler, USA og Norge skal lage fred’. See also Dagbladet 1998a (03 Jan.)

<sup>266</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1998a (11 Jan.), the original title is ‘Norge i ny nøkkelrolle i Midtøsten’

<sup>267</sup> Adresseavisen Morgen 2000 (14 Oct.); VG 1998 (16 Oct.); VG 2002 (20 Sept.). The latter article starts with underlining the hubris that characterizes the Norwegian view of its peace promotion. However, it ends up praising State Secretary Vidar Helgesen’s role in the Sri Lanka peace negotiations, and of his ‘modest’ assessments of Norway’s role.

establishes beyond doubt that the efforts are worthwhile. The result is that Norway's engagement is naturalized.

### ***5.1.2 Norway gets international acclaim for its peace promotion***

This discursive element is closely related to the one presented above, and it corroborates it by lending it legitimacy from external sources of authority. The international acclaim Norway receives is underlined in some official texts<sup>268</sup>, but it is more common in newspaper articles. In an interview, former State Secretary Jan Egeland articulates it this way:

In this period, independent Norwegian initiatives in conflict areas were valued and encouraged by the UN, from human rights groups, and even from the great powers. In Washington, Brussels, Moscow, and New York, more "Oslo diplomacy" was requested as the peace agreements emerged in Central America, Mali, Israel and PLO; and for cooperation over the water resources in the Middle East.<sup>269</sup>

The Norwegian media also duly notes Time Magazine's praise of Norway's efforts: "A mighty trumpet for peace. A master in the art of diplomacy. This is the way Norway is portrayed in the last number of Time Magazine", writes *Aftenposten*, and goes on to state that Norway is praised as a "great power in peace and aid".<sup>270</sup> Similarly, it is repeatedly suggested that Norway is a sought-after peace promoter.<sup>271</sup>

### ***5.1.3 Peace engagement is an important part of Norway's foreign policy***

Between 1993 and 1997, peace engagement was constructed as an important part of Norway's foreign policy. Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik actualized this position through the following statement: "The Government will continue an active Norwegian international engagement in 2000. (...) the work for peace and conflict resolution is central in Norwegian foreign policy."<sup>272</sup> Shortly after assuming office in

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<sup>268</sup> Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2003a. See also *Aftenposten Morgen* 1999 (18 Apr.); *Stortingstidende* 1999-2000, p. 1810 (Elsa Skarbøvik, KrF); *Stortingstidende* 2001-2002, p. 1758 (Jon Lilletun, KrF)

<sup>269</sup> Egeland, Jan 1998. In another article, Egeland stated that a lot of large academic studies discussed why and how Norway has come to play such a prominent role in facilitation of peace processes and humanitarian aid. This implies that Norway's efforts are highly regarded also in international academic circles. See Egeland, Jan 1997

<sup>270</sup> *Aftenposten Morgen* 2002b (7 Jul.). For an almost identical quote, see *Dagsavisen Morgen* 2002 (22 Sept.). A year later, *Dagsavisen* also refers to a *Newsweek* article where Norway is treated as a superpower, due to high quality of life, access to oil, and high diplomatic standing after its success as a peace mediator. *Dagsavisen Morgen* 2003 (5 Dec.). See also Larsen, Torgeir 2002, in which it is stated that "in the world press, it is over and over again written about the peace helper up there towards the North Pole."

<sup>271</sup> *Aftenposten Morgen* 1998a (11 Jan.); *Aftenposten Morgen* 2000 (5 Jan.); *Dagbladet* 1998b (4 Oct.); Egeland, Jan 1997; Larsen, Torgeir 2002; *NTBtekst* 1999 (21 Jan.); *VG* 2000b (2 Sept.)

<sup>272</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1999

2000, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Thorbjørn Jagland similarly stated that “besides the Europe policy and the Northern areas, an active peace promotion policy will be a prioritized task for the government.”<sup>273</sup> It should also be noted that several official texts express a wish to continue and expand the peace promotion efforts, and as such, they may be seen as supporting the position.<sup>274</sup> The few explicit articulations may indeed be seen as suggesting that the importance accorded to peace promotion in the foreign policy seemed self evident or ‘natural’, and that it was therefore not necessary to confirm it discursively.<sup>275</sup> The fact that the peace engagement was widened and strengthened supports this interpretation.

#### ***5.1.4 Motivation: “Idealism and self interest go hand in hand”***

Like in the 1993-1997 period, the motivation behind the Norwegian peace engagement is a major discursive theme. There are clear discursive continuities here; the construction of the peace engagement as motivated both by idealism and self interest, and of the two motivations as compatible, is continuously reproduced in texts emanating from the Government, the Parliament, and the wider media scene.<sup>276</sup>

The self-interest dimension in the discourse may be broken down into two principal parts. First is the notion that the peace engagement contributes to Norway’s security in a long-term perspective. We therefore have an interest in promoting peace, stability, and international order. This perspective was common in the 1993 to 1997 period, and it continues to be so now, particularly in official discourse.<sup>277</sup> Second is the notion that activist peace promotion improves Norway’s international standing and prestige, thus making Norway interesting and giving access to important forums and decision

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<sup>273</sup> NTBtekst 2000 (15 May)

<sup>274</sup> Jagland, Thorbjørn 2001a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002; Vollebæk, Knut 1998; Vollebæk, Knut 2000

<sup>275</sup> The realist representation would challenge this position, but as we will see, this representation was marginalized towards the end of the period. Its criticism would thus not have the power to denaturalize peace promotion as important.

<sup>276</sup> All the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in office during the period articulate it: see Vollebæk, Knut 1998; Jagland, Thorbjørn 2001a; Jagland, Thorbjørn 2001b; Petersen, Jan 2002. The State Secretaries follows suit with several feature articles: Lunde, Leiv 1998; Matlary, Janne Haaland 1999; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2000. It is also commonly articulated in the Parliamentary debates over the foreign policy: see for example Stortingstidende 1997-1998, p. 1624 (Elsa Skarbøvik, KrF); Stortingstidende 1999-2000, pp. 1785 (Johan J. Jacobsen, Sp), 1810 (Elsa Skarbøvik, KrF); Stortingstidende 2001-2002, pp. 1757 (Finn Martin Vallersnes, H), 1758 (Jon Lilletun, KrF). For newspaper articles articulating it, see Egeland, Jan 1997; Aftenposten Morgen 1998b (22 Jan.); Larsen, Torgeir 2002; Lundestad, Geir 2003

<sup>277</sup> For explicit articulations, see Egeland, Jan 1997; Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Jagland, Thorbjørn 2001a; Petersen, Jan 2002; Petersen, Jan 2003; Stortingstidende 1997-1998, p. 1624 (Elsa Skarbøvik, KrF); Stortingstidende 1999-2000 (Kjell Magne Bondevik, KrF); Vollebæk, Knut 2000; Vollebæk, Knut 1998

makers. It may be termed an instrumentalist perspective, underlining the peace engagement's ability to further general Norwegian self interests. What is new is that this perspective comes much more strongly to the fore during this period. Authoritative official texts<sup>278</sup>, other texts emanating from the Government and the Parliament<sup>279</sup>, newspaper articles<sup>280</sup>, and feature articles written by scholars<sup>281</sup> all articulate it explicitly. In an interview, Minister of Foreign Affairs Knut Vollebæk delivers a particularly clear articulation:

(...)Vollebæk underlines that precisely the fact that we have become actors, makes us more interesting for the others. - Our Middle East engagement has made us interesting. When I talk with Kinkel, with van den Broek and Axworthy and Talbott [European leaders], they are very interested in what happened in the Middle East. What did I make out of my visit there? What is my view on that? And then I can slip in some words about salmon and the gas market directive and such things, because I have already given them something.<sup>282</sup>

On a more conceptual level, State Secretary Janne Haaland Matlary's treatment of what she calls 'value based' foreign policy is notable. Matlary states that this kind of policy, focusing on peace promotion, democracy building, development aid, and human rights dialogues, gives Norway a "strong international status" and gives the country "considerable political capital".<sup>283</sup> In a similar vein, Torgeir Larsen state that the peace engagement is "Norway's best foreign policy niche product" and "the Atlantist Jan Petersen's best card as a Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs".<sup>284</sup>

The prominence of the instrumentalist perspective implies that the very focus of the discourse is changing. The meaning of the peace engagement is increasingly tied to furthering of Norwegian interests unrelated to peace. However, there is a tension in the instrumentalist perspective: it is repeatedly suggested that the peace engagement gives us political capital and influence because and only insofar as it is based on idealism or

<sup>278</sup> Most of the Foreign Policy Addresses in this period articulate it. See Vollebæk, Knut 1998; Vollebæk, Knut 2000; Jagland, Thorbjørn 2001a; Petersen, Jan 2002

<sup>279</sup> Jagland, Thorbjørn 2001b; Lunde, Leiv 1998; Matlary, Janne Haaland 1999; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2000; Stortingstidende 1999-2000, pp. 1785 (Johan J. Jacobsen, Sp), 1810 (Elsa Skarbøvik, KrF); Stortingstidende 2001-2002, pp. 1758 (Jon Lilletun, KrF), 1775f (Finn Martin Vallersnes, H)

<sup>280</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1998b (22 Jan.); Dagens Næringsliv 2001 (26 Jan.)

<sup>281</sup> Larsen, Torgeir 2002; Lundestad, Geir 2003

<sup>282</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1998b (22 Jan.)

<sup>283</sup> Matlary, Janne Haaland 1999; see also Matlary, Janne Haaland 2000. Matlary was later criticized for using the terms 'value power' and of legitimizing the Norwegian participation in NATO's military campaign against Serbia with reference to values. See Dagbladet 1999a (4 Jul.); Andresen, Ola Lars 1999; Eggen, Jo 1999

<sup>284</sup> Larsen, Torgeir 2002

values.<sup>285</sup> The peculiar blend of idealism and self interest in the dominant representation of the peace engagement is therefore reproduced.

### ***5.1.5 A distinct and successful Norwegian approach - the Norwegian Model***<sup>286</sup>

This discursive element draws on the constructions of Norway as having particular qualifications in peace promotion, and of the Norwegian approach as distinct. It is thus a composite category, consisting of at least four distinct elements.<sup>287</sup> What is new is that some texts explicitly treat them as part of a systematic and integrated approach to peace promotion, ‘the Norwegian Model’.<sup>288</sup> This has the effect of cementing the approach, and of strengthening the discursive construction of Norway as able to contribute in a unique manner.

The first element in ‘the Norwegian Model’ is the notion that Norway has certain *small state advantages*<sup>289</sup> in peace promotion. Norway has no colonial past<sup>290</sup>, no great power interests<sup>291</sup>, no historical or vested interests<sup>292</sup>, and no muscle to pressure the parties to enter an agreement<sup>293</sup>. These characteristics are in some texts seen as ensuring Norwegian impartiality and neutrality, and thus increasing the parties’ confidence in Norway.<sup>294</sup>

Second, the *close cooperation between Norwegian authorities, NGOs, and academic institutions*, allowing the authorities to draw on the NGOs’ and academic institutions’ flexibility, experience, and contacts in conflict areas when engaging in peace

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<sup>285</sup> For texts underlining the importance of idealistic motivation, see Matlary, Janne Haaland 1999; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2000; Larsen, Torgeir 2002. For a criticism of the use of the peace engagement to promote Norwegian interests, see Adresseavisen Morgen 2000 (14 Oct.)

<sup>286</sup> For academic analyses of the Norwegian Model in peace promotion and humanitarian aid, see for example Bucher-Johannessen, Bernt 1999; Kelleher, Ann & Taulbee, James Larry 2006; Tvedt, Terje 1995; Tvedt, Terje 1998; Tvedt, Terje 2003; Tvedt, Terje 2006.

<sup>287</sup> Not all the texts articulate all the elements. However, they all deal with the nature of the Norwegian approach.

<sup>288</sup> See particularly Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b. See also Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Petersen Jan 2003

<sup>289</sup> This concept is used in Egeland, Jan 1997; Egeland Jan 1998, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b; VG 2000a (26 Feb.) (portrait interview with Jan Egeland)

<sup>290</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b; Lundestad, Geir 2003

<sup>291</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b

<sup>292</sup> Egeland, Jan 1997; Egeland Jan 1998; VG 2000b (2 Sept.); Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Petersen, Jan 2003

<sup>293</sup> Dagsavisen Morgen 2002 (22 Sept.); Egeland, Jan 1998; Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b

<sup>294</sup> Egeland, Jan 1998; Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Lundestad, Geir 2003; Petersen, Jan 2003; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b

promotion, is underlined.<sup>295</sup> This cooperation is often regarded as the lynchpin of the Norwegian approach; the very concept of ‘the Norwegian Model’ is often equated with this cooperation.<sup>296</sup>

Third, the Norwegian approach is seen as emphasizing and drawing on *close contact with and confidence from the parties*. This position is articulated in a large number of texts when explaining apparent Norwegian successes.<sup>297</sup> Close contacts enable Norway to play a facilitative role, passing on information, arranging meetings, and promoting understanding between the parties, rather than mediating.<sup>298</sup> It should also be noted that close contact and confidence is often discursively linked to and seen as relying on the NGOs’ and academic institutions’ network of contacts.<sup>299</sup>

Fourth, a *long-term perspective* on peace building, *including aid and economic support* for reconstruction after peace agreements have been secured, is also often seen as part of the Norwegian approach.<sup>300</sup> Norway’s ability and willingness to support and bolster peace processes by giving substantial economic aid is in several texts constructed as both a reason for Norway’s popularity as a peace promoter, and for its success.<sup>301</sup> Moreover, the long-term perspective is in some texts explained with reference to the stability and consensus that characterize Norwegian foreign policy.<sup>302</sup>

The ‘Norwegian Model’ that is now discursively established, seems to be heavily inspired by Jan Egeland’s “Impotent Superpower – Potent Small State”. The four preconditions for efficient human rights promotion he presents there<sup>303</sup> is very similar

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<sup>295</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1998c (24 Jan.); Egeland, Jan 1998; Helgesen, Vidar 2003, Petersen, Jan 2003; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b; VG 2000a (26 Feb.)

<sup>296</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1998c (24 Jan.); Egeland, Jan 1998; VG 2000a (26 Feb.). For previous articulations, see Aftenposten Morgen 1992 (28 Jun.); Bergens Tidende 1993d (30 Oct.); VG 1995 (30 Jan.)

<sup>297</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1998a (11 Jan.); Dagsavisen Morgen 2002 (22 Sept.); Egeland, Jan 1997; Egeland, Jan 1998; Lundestad, Geir 2003; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b

<sup>298</sup> Egeland, Jan 1998; Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Larsen, Torgeir 2002; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b

<sup>299</sup> Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Petersen, Jan 2003; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b

<sup>300</sup> Egeland, Jan 1997; Jan Egeland 1998; Helgesen, Vidar 2003; Lundestad, Geir 2003; Petersen, Jan 2003; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b

<sup>301</sup> Egeland, Jan 1997; Egeland, Jan 1998; Lundestad, Geir 2003

<sup>302</sup> Egeland, Jan 1997; Petersen, Jan 2003

<sup>303</sup> Egeland lists foreign policy consensus, few conflicting foreign policy interests, substantial funds for foreign assistance, and institutional memory/ domestic resources and expertise as preconditions. Egeland, Jan 1988, p. 185, see also p. 179

to the elements constituting ‘the Norwegian Model’ in peace promotion. This indicates strong intertextual and interdiscursive links.<sup>304</sup>

### ***5.1.6 Norway is a peace nation: a new discursive element***

The most notable discursive development within the dominant representation in this period is the establishment of the notion that ‘Norway is a peace nation’. Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik introduced it, and he remained its primary carrier. Bondevik articulated the notion already at a party conference in April 1999.<sup>305</sup> This was, however, merely a prelude to a much more prominent articulation. In this New Year Address 1 January 2000, when outlining his visions for Norway’s role in the new millennium, the Prime Minister delivered the following statement:

Norway must be a peace nation– an actor for conflict resolution and peace creating efforts. A nation following the strategy of Nordahl Grieg: “If you create human dignity, you create peace.” (...) I wish that our capital will appear as an international peace city. If we are remembered as a peace nation, Norwegians have reason to be proud.<sup>306</sup>

Bondevik also underlined that Norway “must be a nation of charity and solidarity”, and that we should “follow in the footsteps of Fridtjof Nansen through devout efforts for fugitives and suffering people”.<sup>307</sup> Bondevik followed this up in his 2003 New Year Address, making peace one of the main themes of this speech:

As a Christian culture nation, the work for peace has been one of the bases that Norway has built on for centuries. That is perhaps our most well-known hallmark internationally. This work will continue. (...)Norway shall be a peace nation.<sup>308</sup>

The New Year Addresses by the Prime Minister have a very broad reception in the Norwegian public, and from the perspective of this thesis, the sustained focus on the peace engagement is notable. Bondevik here establishes the peace engagement as one of the most important distinguishing characteristics of Norway, and as a significant foreign policy practice. The references to Norway’s Christian culture, Fridtjof Nansen,

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<sup>304</sup> A VG article based on an interview with Jan Egeland indeed states that Egeland “works after the model of his own MA in Political Science, “Impotent Superpower, Potent Small State””. The study is moreover said to concern peace promotion, and not human rights advocacy. VG 2000a (26 Feb.)

<sup>305</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 1999 (18 Apr.)

<sup>306</sup> Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2000.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid. These are two of three visions for Norway’s role, the last one being that Norway must be a technological frontrunner. See also Aftenposten Morgen 1999 (18 Apr.); Aftenposten Morgen 2000a (2 Jan.)

<sup>308</sup> Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2003

and the historic legacies of humanitarianism and peace activism<sup>309</sup>; and the linking of these traditions to the current peace engagement; add to its legitimacy by suggesting that it is not merely a new foreign policy practice. It has to do with the very nature of the Norwegian nation. Peace is thus essentialized as part of Norway's core identity and self image, and tradition and continuity is discursively constructed. The historical references and the construction of continuity may, with references to genealogical theory, be seen as a discursive move working to legitimize the dominant representation and its related practices.<sup>310</sup> If we follow Bondevik's line of reasoning, peace promotion indeed appears as a necessary practice for the reproduction of Norwegian identity.<sup>311</sup>

## 5.2 'Realist' Criticism: Reproduction of an Alternative Representation

In the previous chapter, we saw that an alternative realist representation of the peace engagement emerged. This representation is still present in the 1997 – 2003 period, and its position remains marginal. Its primary carriers are still MPs from the Conservative Party and Nils Morten Udgaard. Towards the end of the period, Progress Party MPs also join in.

The representation remains virtually unchanged; it is still organized around the concepts of 'Norway's real interests', 'neighboring areas', and 'concentration'/ 'prioritization'. Udgaard upholds his claim that humanitarian efforts is the core of the Government's foreign policy, that the Government lacks a proper foreign policy strategy, and that Norway's interests therefore are disregarded.<sup>312</sup> The Conservative Party MPs for their part reproduce the criticism of lack of priorities in Norwegian foreign policy and uphold their demand for increasing attention to the neighboring areas.<sup>313</sup> However, the criticism appears as more muted and indirect than earlier; no mention is made of the peace engagement in direct relation to neither Udgaard's nor the Conservative Party's criticism. This may be taken to indicate that the discursive

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<sup>309</sup> Also Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Petersen refers to Nansen and the tradition of humanitarianism. Petersen, Jan 2002

<sup>310</sup> For a brief introduction to discourse analytic genealogy, see Milliken, Jennifer 1999, pp. 243, 246ff

<sup>311</sup> For a similar analysis of Bondevik's importance as a carrier of the peace engagement discourse, and of Bondevik's New Year Addresses, see Leira, Halvard 2005, pp. 154f

<sup>312</sup> Udgaard, Nils Morten 1997; Udgaard, Nils Morten 1999; see also VG 2000c (14 Oct.)

<sup>313</sup> Godal, Ingvald 1998; Stortingstidende 1997-1998, pp. 1626 (Jan Petersen), 1663 (Ingvald Godal), 1665 (Sonja Irene Sjøli); Stortingstidende 2000-2001(Svein Ludvigsen); Petersen, Jan 1999

constructions of Norway as a successful peace promoter, and of the engagement as beneficial also in a self interest perspective, at this time had become so firmly established that they appeared as natural and thus difficult to challenge.

During the period, the Progress Party MPs also entered the scene as carriers of the realist representation.<sup>314</sup> Nevertheless, the representation lost ground towards the end of the period. After becoming part of a coalition government in 2001, the Conservative Party changed its views on the peace promotion profoundly. Jan Petersen, who had been a prominent carrier of the realist representation, started articulating the dominant representation after he had assumed office as Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>315</sup> Other MPs followed suit; they now underlined the Norwegian competence in peace promotion, and the positive consequences of the engagement in terms of influence and promotion of Norway's interests.<sup>316</sup> At the end of the period, the realist representation therefore appears more marginal than ever.

### **5.3 'Idealist' Criticism: The Emergence of a Second Alternative Representation**

In the course of the period, texts that fit into neither of the two existing representations began to appear. These texts are not critical to the peace engagement per se; they are concerned with lack of idealism. As such, they add up to an emerging alternative representation of the peace engagement. This representation has two principal strands: the first attacks the dominant representation for underlining self interests and for not being idealistic enough; the other constructs Norwegian foreign policy practice as incompatible with the peace nation image.

The first strand is primarily articulated by the scholar Henrik Thune. In a feature article, he discusses the rationale behind and grounds given for the peace engagement.

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<sup>314</sup> For a particularly clear articulation of the realist representation by a Progress Party MP, see *Stortingstidende* 2000-2001, p. 2612 (Hans J. Røsjorde): "The Progress Party is (...) disturbed over Norwegian foreign policy's steadily increasing appetite for involvements around the world. It almost seems like one tries to build a brand name within the areas of conflict handling, peace mediation, and flag planting. It may seem like it is the wish of a small nation to act like a great power that is the driving force, and that this is what brings this kind of policy into being. But it costs (...) We think there are ample reasons to question whether it is in our interest to devote so much resources as is currently done on involving in conflicts in large parts of the world." See also *Stortingstidende* 1999-2000, p. 1796 (Dag Danielsen)

<sup>315</sup> See for example Petersen, Jan 2002; Petersen, Jan 2003

<sup>316</sup> See particularly *Stortingstidende* 2001-2002, pp. 1757, 1776 (Finn Martin Vallersnes)

Thune finds that former Minister of Foreign Affairs Bjørn Tore Godal and former State Secretary Jan Egeland “did not, to a sufficient extent, give moral actions or humanitarian efforts an independent status.”<sup>317</sup> They rather focused on “national interests” and the peace engagement’s beneficial consequences for Norway in terms of security. The result is that Norwegian interests determine where, why, and how Norway engages; and that humanitarian efforts are reduced to a tool in Norway’s interest maximizing policy.<sup>318</sup> Thune thus challenges the dominant representation’s construction of self interests and idealism as compatible, and underlines that the engagement policy should be built on idealism.<sup>319</sup>

The second strand of criticism is more common. Most of its articulations appear towards the end of the period. Focusing on the level of foreign policy practice, they further the view that we may only rightfully use the terms ‘peace nation’ and ‘humanitarian great power’ to characterize ourselves if our foreign policy lives up to the ideals implicit in them. In my material, this kind of foreign policy practice criticism first appears in a commentary article in 1999. The article criticizes the lack of Norwegian humanitarian involvement in Ethiopia and Eritrea, stating that the Prime Minister’s assertion that ‘Norway is a peace nation’ must lead to concrete action.<sup>320</sup> A similar argument is set forth by Sturla J. Stålsett in 2002:

The Bush administration’s increasingly arrogant unilateralism, military rearmament and direct subversion of international law forces Norway to make a choice: Can we still be the US’ best friend and [at the same time] profile ourselves as a frontrunner in human rights issues, a bridge builder for peace and reconciliation, and a “humanitarian great power”?<sup>321</sup>

Stålsett here establishes a negative link between Norway’s image as a frontrunner in human rights issues and bridge builder for peace and reconciliation on the one hand, and support for the American foreign policy on the other.

The idealist criticism of Norwegian foreign policy practice really picks up in relation to the Iraq war. Early in 2003, an American-led invasion seemed imminent, and

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<sup>317</sup> Thune, Henrik 1997

<sup>318</sup> Ibid

<sup>319</sup> Here, it should be noted that Jan Egeland strongly rejected Thune’s views and interpretations. In a feature article, he defends the dominant representation by underlining that Norwegian peace promotion and humanitarian aid was grounded on idealism, and at the same time in line with Norwegian interests. Egeland, Jan 1997

<sup>320</sup> Dagbladet 1999b (14 Jul.)

<sup>321</sup> Stålsett, Sturla J. 2002

Norwegian authorities were criticized for not adopting a clear anti-war stance. Articulations of this view often refer to the Prime Minister's assertion that 'Norway is a peace nation' and state that if this is to be more than empty rhetoric, Norway must reject all actions towards Iraq performed without UN mandate.<sup>322</sup> When Norway later contributed with military personnel to the US-led 'reconstruction' of Iraq after the war, the peace nation image was mobilized in a similar fashion:

We have a self image as a peaceful nation. (...) The government's eagerness to participate militarily in international conflicts stands in contrast to the building up of peace as a Norwegian brand.<sup>323</sup>

In line with this, it is suggested that we (Norway) withdraw from the "US' military operations" and instead "cultivate our image as a peace nation."<sup>324</sup>

Although the 'idealist representation' is a diverse category, we may identify some discursive constructions that set it apart. It is useful to distinguish between ideational constructions (how things should be) and constructions describing the current state of affairs (how things should not be) here. In the first category, we find a positive linkage of 'Norway' and 'foreign policy' to 'peace engagement' and 'humanitarian efforts'. Moreover, the latter two, which are floating signifiers in the peace engagement discourse, are linked to 'altruism', 'values', 'duty' etc. 'Peace engagement' is not linked to 'Norway's interests' at all. The floating signifiers are thus inscribed with a different meaning than in the two other representations.

In the second category (the current state of affairs), 'foreign policy' is linked to 'support for the US' and 'participation in military operations'. A link between 'peace engagement' and 'Norway's interests' is also constructed, and 'Norway's interests' are constructed as partly incompatible with 'altruism', 'values' etc. The statement that 'Norway is a peace nation' is constructed as true only insofar as Norway's primary motivation is altruistic, and as a description of the current state of affairs, it is rejected or regarded with skepticism.

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<sup>322</sup> Garbo, Gunnar 2003; Sørbo, Jan Inge 2003

<sup>323</sup> Nationen 2003 (13 Oct.); for a very similar statement, see Klassekampen Morgen 2003b (17 Sept.)

<sup>324</sup> Nationen 2003 (13 Oct.)

## 5.4 Summary

Viewed in its totality, the peace engagement discourse in the period from 1997 to 2003 is remarkably stable. The dominant representation by and large structures the texts, and its discursive elements and constructions are continuously reproduced. The emphasis on the distinctness of ‘the Norwegian Model’, and the newly introduced notion that ‘Norway is a peace nation’, serve to strengthen the dominant representation. The latter notion also has some distinct effects: it essentializes peace as a pivotal part of Norwegian identity and makes peace promotion a necessary and identity-bearing practice. Together with the other discursive constructions making up the dominant representation, it contributes towards naturalizing the substantial peace engagement, and to inscribe Norway with considerable agency as a peace promoter.

Two alternative representations are also present in the discourse. The realist and idealist representations criticize the dominant representation and the Norwegian foreign policy from radically different perspectives; 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 and idealism should be higher on the agenda, and that Norway’s foreign policy practice is not in line with the peace nation image.

The realist representation is reproduced and remains largely unchanged, but when the Conservative Party embraces the dominant representation in 2001, it appears as more marginalized than ever. The new idealist representation emerges during the period, and in contrast to the realist representation, it gradually gains in strength. Nevertheless, the alternative representations do not threaten the position of the dominant representation, which remains largely intact in face of the criticism. In this respect, it should be noted that two of the dominant representation’s key elements, the discursive construction of ‘the Norwegian Model’ as giving Norway distinct advantages in peace promotion, and of Norway as playing an important role in several peace processes, are not challenged at all.

## 6 The Discourse is Opened, Discursive Struggle Ensues: 2003-2008

After a long period of discursive stability, where the dominant representation of the peace engagement maintained a strong position, the discourse shows signs of change in 2002 and 2003. The notion that ‘Norway is a peace nation’ starts attracting academic attention, and ‘peace nation’ is increasingly seen as denoting a prominent Norwegian self image. The resulting reflexive discursive turn has the effect of heightening the attention to the peace efforts; the number of texts concerned with it rockets. From 2003 and onwards, the dominant representation’s meanings and discursive constructions are also more fiercely and directly challenged than previously, and particularly the realist representation gains in strength.

The result of these developments is discursive struggle. The criticism is countered, and the dominant representation is articulated more clearly and strongly than ever before. The direction of the practical policy is not changed; the peace efforts are in fact strengthened, and more resources are spent.<sup>325</sup> Moreover, the dominant representation linking ‘Norway’ to ‘peace’ is further institutionalized. In 2006, the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights is established,<sup>326</sup> and the government funding for peace research also increases steadily.<sup>327</sup>

In this chapter, I start with tracing the reflexive turn. Thereafter, I turn to the realist and idealist alternative representations, focusing particularly on how the realist representation is strengthened and widened to include new discursive constructions. Finally, I give an overview of the reproduction of the dominant representation and discuss the discursive struggle that marks the period. One caveat needs to be introduced: the scope of the thesis prevents me from including all relevant texts and covering and analyzing all the interesting discursive developments. This chapter thus presents and discusses what I consider to be the most salient discursive phenomena.

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<sup>325</sup> Petersen, Jan 2005c; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2007a

<sup>326</sup> The Oslo Center for Peace and Human rights 2008. This center is an independent NGO where former Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik plays a central role

<sup>327</sup> See for example Petersen, Jan 2005c. The major research project ‘The Norwegian Peace Tradition’ is for example funded (indirectly) by the government.

## 6.1 The Reflexive Turn: “Norway is a Peace Nation” as Self Image

During the period 2003-2008, the attention to and scholarly interest in Norway’s peace engagement and peace tradition rose markedly.<sup>328</sup> Scholars traced the historical roots of the peace tradition and studied the contemporary peace engagement, and to an increasing extent, the notion that ‘Norway is a peace nation’ was regarded as denoting a self image. The resulting reflexivity became part of the general peace engagement discourse through the attention the scholarly works received from the public, particularly through newspaper articles and active participation in the public debate by the scholars themselves.<sup>329</sup> The reflexive discursive turn and establishment of the self image notion in the peace engagement discourse are, in other words, to a large extent driven by scholars and academics. The main focus of this section is thus on their contributions.

While the scope of this study prevents me from studying the moving forces behind the increasing attention to the peace engagement and the resulting reflexivity, some explanations may be suggested. First, and most obvious, the peace engagement was now extensive, and it was regarded as an important part of Norway’s foreign policy. Second, Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik repeatedly asserted that ‘Norway is a peace nation’.<sup>330</sup> Such explicit ontological statements may be seen as inviting criticism and a reflexive approach focusing on self images. Third, Norway’s official centennial anniversary program abroad chose ‘Norway as a partner in peace and development’ as one of three main themes.<sup>331</sup> Moreover, it was suggested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the concepts of ‘peace nation’ and ‘humanitarian great power’ may be

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<sup>328</sup> See for example Leira, Halvard 2002; Leira, Halvard 2004; Leira, Halvard 2005; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007; Steine, Bjørn Arne & Vogt, Carl Emil 2004; Tvedt, Terje 2003; Østerud, Øyvind 2006b. In 2004, a major research project termed ‘The Norwegian Peace Tradition’ (Den norske fredstradisjonen) was launched. Its sub projects and their preliminary findings are presented in *Historisk Tidsskrift* 84(2), 2005.

<sup>329</sup> In this section, I have chosen to focus on explicit articulations of the construction of ‘Norway is a peace nation’ as a self image. A lot of the analyzed texts, particularly towards the end of the period, seem to consider ‘peace nation’ as a self image without explicitly stating so. These texts are not included in the analysis here.

<sup>330</sup> Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2000; Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2003a; Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2005a; see also Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2004a; Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2004b

<sup>331</sup> Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2003b; Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2005b; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003; see also Petersen, Jan 2004c; Widvey, Torhild 2003. Several of the studies of the Norwegian peace tradition explicitly refer to the centennial celebration program’s underlining of ‘Norway as a partner in peace and development’ as evidence of the current strength of the peace promotion policy. See for example Steine, Bjørn Arne & Vogt, Carl Emil 2004, p. 17; Pharo, Helge 2005, p. 239f

used in the international promotion and branding of Norway.<sup>332</sup> Norway's peace engagement was in other words firmly placed in the limelight by the Government, and this may have contributed to the reflexive turn.<sup>333</sup>

According to my research, the first hints of reflexivity appeared in 2002; with Nina Witoszek's article 'If peace is the problem, is Norway the solution?'<sup>334</sup> Witoszek suggests that the emphasis on peace promotion has heavily influenced Norwegians' identity and self image:

In short, Norwegians have advanced from being a nature tribe to becoming a peace tribe, which makes them morally superior to the rest of the world. This is a tasty, if dangerous, fruit to eat [self image to indulge in]. But this is the way the world sees Norway, and it is the way Norwegians – this is my assertion – will look upon themselves in the near future.<sup>335</sup>

She goes on to treat the peace nation image as a mythology with basis in the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize and the 1993 Oslo Agreement. But mythologies do have consequences: "(...) our own - and the world's - wish to see Norway as a peace dove is so strong that the word is made flesh."<sup>336</sup> Witoszek thus establishes 'peace' as the centerpiece of a new national self image or mythology, and states that there is an interplay between this mythology and the level of practice. Her self image notion was at the time innovative, and it was soon followed up. In 2003, the historian Terje Tvedt published a major study of the Norwegian 'South-policy' system.<sup>337</sup> Tvedt here views 'Norway as the world's leading provider of development aid', as 'peace nation', and as 'humanitarian great power' as denoting self images. Furthermore, he devotes substantial attention to the interplay between these and the 'South-political

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<sup>332</sup> Widvey, Torhild 2003; Dagbladet 2005 (5 Feb.)(quotes by State Secretary Sylvi Graham)

<sup>333</sup> Partly in line with my suggestions, Leira finds that the increasing interest in studying the engagement may be seen as a result of the activist peace promotion policy, the anniversary celebrations (the Nobel Peace Prize, Norway as a sovereign state) where peace has been in focus, and the beginning denaturalization of the previously obvious link between Norway and peace. Leira, Halvard 2005, pp. 154f

<sup>334</sup> Witoszek, Nina 2002. The original title is 'Hvis fred er problemet, er Norge løsningen?' Witoszek is an author and was in 2002 Professor in Culture Studies at the University of Oslo

<sup>335</sup> Ibid

<sup>336</sup> Ibid

<sup>337</sup> His study is part of the Norwegian research project 'Power and Democracy', the biggest Norwegian social science research project in contemporary history. It should be noted that Tvedt also published a related analysis of how Norwegians' perceptions about themselves, the world, history, and development are formed by and reproduced in intellectuals' works. The study does not concern the peace engagement, but its reflexive, discourse analytic approach and aim of denaturalizing self images may nevertheless be seen as paving the way for a reflexive turn also in the peace engagement discourse. Tvedt, Terje 2002a; see also Tvedt, Terje 2002b, Tvedt, Terje 2002c, Dagbladet 2002 (9 Jun.)

system'. The self images are seen as results of this system's discourse,<sup>338</sup> but it is underlined that they also have contributed to the development and reproduction of the system's institutional architecture.<sup>339</sup>

The substantial media attention the study received<sup>340</sup>, and the resulting articulations of the self image notion in the Norwegian public sphere<sup>341</sup>, imply that the reflexive discursive turn was strengthened. The final report of the Power and Democracy study<sup>342</sup>, to which Tvedt contributed, pulls in the same direction:

*Since the early 1990s, "Norway" has been built up as an international brand name, as a particularly peace loving country, eager at donating resources and with specific tasks in world politics. The branding takes place through the "engagement policy" – the work for conflict resolution, peace, democracy, and human rights – around the world. The image of Norway as a moral and humanitarian great power has become a new national symbol on line with other symbols shaping Norwegians' national identity.*<sup>343</sup>

This quote unequivocally establishes the practices of conflict resolution and promotion of peace, democracy, and human rights, and the related image of Norway as a moral and humanitarian great power, as adding up to a national symbol with substantial effects for Norwegians' very identity.

In the wake of the publishing of the report, the interest in the Norwegian peace tradition and engagement rose, and the self image notion gained ground. In 2004, a major history research project termed 'The Norwegian Peace Tradition' was launched at the University of Oslo.<sup>344</sup> A VG article with the telling title 'Is Norway a Peace Nation?' describes the project this way:

We hear it all the time; that Norway is a peace nation, about the country's long peace tradition. Or the politicians – and others – talk about the "heritage from Nansen." (...)

<sup>338</sup> Tvedt, Terje 2003, p. 19, 24, 37, 201f, 312; see also Tvedt, Terje 2002b; Tvedt, Terje 2006

<sup>339</sup> Tvedt, Terje 2003, p. 305, 312; see also Tvedt, Terje 2006.

<sup>340</sup> See for example Aftenposten Morgen 2003b (21 Aug.); Bergens Tidende 2005 (26 Aug.); Bistandsaktuelt 07/2003; Bladet Forskning 5/2003; Dag og Tid no. 34, 2003 (23 Aug.); Forskning.no 2003; Klassekampen 2003a (20 Aug.); Nyheter fra Makt- og demokratiutredningen 2003.

<sup>341</sup> Klassekampen 2003a (20 Aug.); Dag og Tid no. 34, 2003 (23 Aug.)

<sup>342</sup> The report summed up all the major findings in the most extensive Norwegian social science research project ever. Its status may be seen as contributing to the influence of its articulation of the self image notion.

<sup>343</sup> Norwegian Official Reports 2003, p. 51 (my translation, italics in original)

<sup>344</sup> The original name of the project is "Den norske fredstradisjonen". At the time of writing, it is still running. See Forskning.no 2004. For a more detailed presentation of the project, and another articulation of the self image notion, see Pharo, Helge 2005

The research project takes as its starting point the common and widespread notion of Norway as a peace nation (...) <sup>345</sup>

Similar statements, underlining that ‘Norway is a peace nation’ is a common and widespread notion, are also to be found in the introduction to scholarly articles focusing on the historical Norwegian peace tradition. <sup>346</sup>

In 2005, it was eventually documented that the peace nation self image retains a very strong position in Norway. The company in charge of Norway’s centennial anniversary celebration carried out a major survey to map Norwegians’ national self images. The results showed that as many as 92 percent of the asked thought that Norway is a humanitarian ‘peace prince’ in world society. A survey in eight European countries about images of Norway was also carried out. The results were clear; very few associated Norway with humanitarian assistance and peace promotion. <sup>347</sup> The evident discrepancy between Norwegians’ own self images and others’ images of us, and the strong position of the ‘peace nation’ self image, was duly noted in the Norwegian press. *Dagbladet* delivered this statement: “The peace nation. The world’s biggest donor. Such is our self image. But the world does not agree.” <sup>348</sup> Although not explicitly stating so, the focus on this discrepancy suggests that Norwegians’ self image may not be entirely ‘realistic’. However, it is also suggested that the ‘peace nation’ self image has been an important and successful part of Norwegian nation building. <sup>349</sup>

The 2005 centennial anniversary survey, and the reaction its results sparked, meant that articulations of the self image notion were presented to the general Norwegian public, and that the reflexive discursive turn became firmly established as part of the wider peace engagement discourse. In the period from 2005 to 2008, the self image

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<sup>345</sup> VG 2005 (20 Jun.). The original title is ‘Er Norge en fredsnasjon?’ See also *Forskning.no* 2004; Pharo, Helge 2005

<sup>346</sup> Leira, Halvard 2004, p. 153; Leira, Halvard 2005, pp. 135, 155; Steine, Bjørn Arne & Vogt, Carl Emil 2004, p. 17

<sup>347</sup> Hundreårsmarkeringen Norge 1905-2005, 2005. The results are referred in *Dagbladet* 2005 (5 Feb.); NTBtekst 2005 (6 Feb.); Leira, Halvard 2005b; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, pp. 11, 15; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005a. A *Dagbladet* article termed ‘Beautiful Cold Expensive Invisible – and Norway is actually not known for peace and development aid’ refers the results from the international survey. *Dagbladet* 2004 (21 Sept.). See also *Bergens Tidende* 2004 (3 Oct.)

<sup>348</sup> *Dagbladet* 2005 (5 Feb.); for similar statements, see *Bergens Tidende* 2004 (3 Oct.); NTBtekst 2005 (6 Feb.)

<sup>349</sup> *Dagbladet* 2005 (5 Feb.). See also *Fædrelandsvennen* 2006 (17 Mar.)

notion was still mainly carried by scholars, but their views were increasingly articulated in the public sphere through newspaper articles.<sup>350</sup>

Within the resulting body of texts, we may distinguish between two principal strands of articulations. The first constructs the self image as unrealistic, and as influencing the Norwegian foreign policy too heavily. The underlying starting point is that we may hold self images up against (an objective) reality, and thus assess the extent to which they correspond to truth.<sup>351</sup> Janne Haaland Matlary, political scientist and former State Secretary, says it this way:

My conclusion is that the doses of peace engagement proscribed by the MFA the later years are OK and useful, but that the image created of “Norway as a peace nation” by politicians, not least by the Christian Democratic Party [KrF] and the Socialist Left Party [SV], is misleading and blurring. One replaces realities by normative statements with resonance in the people, cultivated through the peace rhetoric we find back with Løvland and Bjørnson. (...) the problem today is that it is way too easy to serve “peace” as the main content of Norwegian foreign policy, no questions asked.<sup>352</sup>

In an article with the telling name ‘Narcissus Norwegicus’, the historian Olav Riste follows up: “Peace nation and “humanitarian great power”. Norway’s self image has become one of the areas highest on the priority list of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”<sup>353</sup> He goes on to characterize the Norwegian peace nation self image as ‘narcissistic’.<sup>354</sup> Both Matlary’s and Riste’s statements construct the peace nation self image as diverting attention from realities, and as resulting in a foreign policy which places excessive importance on peace promotion.

The dominant representation’s construction of Norway as an important peace promoter internationally is also challenged. Terje Tvedt articulates this particularly clearly, stating that he wants to “shatter the myth about Norway’s great position as a national peace mediator abroad”, and that “Norway has neither enough competence nor enough

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<sup>350</sup> For articles written by or based on interviews with academics, and that articulate the self image notion, see *Aftenposten Morgen* 2007a (22 Mar.); *Bistandsaktuelt* 09/2007a; *Bistandsaktuelt* 09/2007b; *Bergens Tidende* 2007(26 Apr.); Leira, Halvard 2005b, Leira, Halvard 2006; Leira, Halvard 2007; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005a; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005b; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005c; Riste, Olav 2007; Ryggvik, Helge 2006; *Stavanger Aftenblad Aftenbladet* 2006 (18 Feb.); *Stavanger Aftenblad Aftenbladet* 2007 (26 Apr.); von der Lippe, Berit 2007

<sup>351</sup> This starting point thus violates social constructivist and discourse analytic ontology, which underlines that reality is socially constructed and claims that there is no unmediated objective reality that humans may grasp directly. See chapter on theory and methodology.

<sup>352</sup> Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005c; see also Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005b

<sup>353</sup> Riste, Olav 2007

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.* See also *Aftenposten Morgen* 2007a (22 Mar.); Toje, Asle 2008. The former article’s headline is ‘Norway has an unrealistic self image’, and the article is built on statements by the scholars Geir Lundestad and Asle Toje.

power to be termed a substantial peace factor.”<sup>355</sup> As we have already seen, the concept ‘myth’ may be taken to mean different things<sup>356</sup>, but in the texts in question here, it seems to be used in the sense that the self image is false (out of touch with reality).<sup>357</sup> The articulations thus imply a rejection of the peace nation self image.

The second strand of articulations is not critical to the self image per se. The texts articulating it may be seen as trying to denaturalize the peace nation self image by showing that it is not given, obvious, or natural. This project is in other words similar to this thesis’ project, and it is carried out through holding the self image up against foreign policy practice. Iver B. Neumann’s 2004 feature article termed ‘It is typically Norwegian to engage in war’<sup>358</sup> is innovative in this respect:

How could it be that Norway, which under the Cold War often was spoken of as best in the NATO class, which has a blooming organization life of so-called friends of the defense, which because of American construction work in Northern Norway must have more militarily planned airports per 100 inhabitants than any other country, which is slower at abandoning general conscription than any other European country, which has a small, but stable arms industry etc. etc., at the same time may maintain a self image as peace friendly?<sup>359</sup>

Neumann states that we, in addition to what he perceives as an exaggerated peace tradition, have the potential for constructing a national war tradition.<sup>360</sup> He thus denaturalizes the peace nation self image by suggesting that self images are constructed, that a lot of practices are not in line with the peace nation self image, and that Norwegian history and practice could support also other, and radically different, self images.

Halvard Leira later follows in Neumann’s footsteps when he focuses on the use of the peace nation self image to legitimize Norwegian participation in military operations:

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<sup>355</sup> Bergens Tidende 2005 (26 Aug.); for similar statements, see Aftenposten Morgen 02.04.2005 (2 Apr.) (interview with film maker Erling Borgen); Bergens Tidende Magasinet 2006 (9 Dec.) Jagland, Thorbjørn 2008; Klassekampen 2004 (10 May); Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005a; Toje, Asle 2008. It should be noted that Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre expressly addressed and rejected the claim that the peace nation self image is a myth. Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b

<sup>356</sup> See for example Nina Witoszek’s statement that myths are didactic, value-laden histories about what we want to become. Witoszek, Nina 2002

<sup>357</sup> This stands in stark contrast to the discourse analytic approach to myths and self images as heavily influencing the reality we live in and the definition of self interests. What is perceived as national interests depends on self images, and self images are thus crucial guides in our relations with the outside world. Moreover, self images are built on intersubjective meanings and knowledge, and we therefore have no objective basis for judging them as more or less realistic. Friis, Karsten 2007; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. Xvi (preface), 1, 5f; Leira, Halvard 2007; Leira, Halvard (ed.)2007, pp. 7-10

<sup>358</sup> The original title is ‘Det er typisk norsk å krige’

<sup>359</sup> Neumann, Iver B. 2004a, p. 5; Neumann, Iver B. 2004b

<sup>360</sup> Neumann, Iver B. 2004a, p. 6f; Neumann, Iver B. 2004b

“The self image of Norway as a peace nation may make it easier to send Norwegian soldiers to war (...)”<sup>361</sup> Later, in the most extensive study of Norwegian foreign policy self images so far<sup>362</sup>, he underlines that “during the 1990s, also military practices were to a steadily increasing extent incorporated into the self image as peace nation.”<sup>363</sup> He also state that the inscription of military practices into the peace tradition may create tensions, but that “so far, the self image has been adjusted and widened, not rejected.”<sup>364</sup> Berit von der Lippe, in an analysis of peace rhetoric and defense policy, comes to a similar conclusion:

The almost taken-for-granted idea of Norway as synonymous with peace nation lives on, but it does not appear with the same crystal clear sheen that we can be said to have lived with and in for long. The symptoms of this are clear – partly because Norway the last years have taken part in war, partly because Norway actually participates in the US’/ NATO’s war on/ for terror, and because the once obvious therefore again and again must be expressed. The idea about the almost genuinely peaceful Norway is challenged.<sup>365</sup>

This statement may also serve as a bridge to a general conclusion about what the reflexive discursive turn and the self image notion do. Their principal effect is to question and draw in doubt the notion that Norway is a peace nation. The result is that the previously obvious link between Norway and peace is denaturalized. The reflexive turn thus opens up for criticism of the peace engagement and the dominant representation. And just like von der Lippe suggests, the ‘obvious’ (the link between ‘Norway’ and ‘peace’, and the dominant representation of the peace engagement), is articulated again and again in response.<sup>366</sup> The peace engagement discourse is thus opened up and polarized.

## 5.2 The Idealist Representation

In the previous chapter, we saw that the criticism grounded on the idealist representation of the peace engagement picked up in relation to the Norwegian

<sup>361</sup> Stavanger Aftenblad Aftenbladet 2006 (18 Feb.) (quote by Halvard Leira). See also Leira, Halvard 2005, pp. 156f

<sup>362</sup> The report ‘Norwegian self images and Norwegian Foreign Policy’ (original title: ‘Norske selvbilder og norsk utenrikspolitikk’) is reflexive in its approach, and it treats ‘Norway is a peace nation’ as one out of seven principal Norwegian foreign policy self images. Moreover, the peace nation self image is seen as dominant. The report was commented in several newspaper articles. See for example Bergens Tidende 2007 (26 Apr.); Bistandsaktuell 09/2007; Leira, Halvard 2007; Stavanger Aftenblad Aftenbladet 2007 (26 Apr.); Støre, Jonas Gahr 2007b

<sup>363</sup> Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, p. 14. Leira exemplifies this with the depicting of military operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq as peace operations.

<sup>364</sup> Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, p. 15; see also Bergens Tidende 2007 (26 Apr.)

<sup>365</sup> von der Lippe, Berit 2007

<sup>366</sup> For similar views, see Leira, Halvard 2005, pp. 155f; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, p. 16

military contribution to Iraq. From 2003 to 2008, the idealist representation and criticism remains largely unchanged. It does not challenge Norway's peace promotion per se; it rather constructs Norwegian foreign policy as not being idealistic enough. Like earlier, two principal strands of criticism are discernible.

The first concentrates on the motivation behind the peace engagement.<sup>367</sup> It comes more strongly to the fore than in the previous period, and though not as common as the criticism of Norwegian foreign policy practice, it is articulated by several texts. The historian and PRIO director Stein Tønnesson is its most prominent carrier; he for example states that "Norwegian profile may hurt peace efforts."<sup>368</sup> The peace promotion should, in Tønneson's view, be delinked from promotion of Norway:

If the political leadership's need for attention on TV guides what one does, it is unfavorable. We have seen such tendencies earlier. (...) It is embarrassing when Norway uses its engagement to promote its own role. We must not become excessively focused on image building, and impatient for visible success.<sup>369</sup>

These statements construct a link between Norwegian self interests and peace promotion and state that it takes the focus away from the goals of promoting peace and human welfare. Self interest considerations are thus discursively linked to adverse consequences.

The second strand of idealist criticism is mainly concerned with what is seen as a discrepancy between Norway's peace nation image and Norway's foreign policy practice. The most commonly articulated criticism of this strand focuses on Norway's participation in offensive military operations abroad. In line with the criticism appearing in 2003<sup>370</sup>, this is constructed as incompatible with the peace nation image.<sup>371</sup> What is new is that military engagement is also constituted as a potential threat to Norway's ability to play a third party role in peace processes:

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<sup>367</sup> This criticism is not entirely new, it was articulated by Thune, Henrik 1997

<sup>368</sup> Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007a

<sup>369</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2007 (13 Oct.); see Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007a for a very similar statement. Tønnesson here also criticizes the use of the concept 'The Norwegian Model' and states that Norway is not better suited for peace promotion than many other counties. Atle Fretheim, then President in Medecines Sans Frontieres Norway, articulates a very similar criticism of the Norwegian use of humanitarian assistance and peace promotion as "strategic tools to achieve political gains" and states that this practice stands "in sharp contrast (...) to humanitarian principles and values". Fretheim, Atle 2003

<sup>370</sup> Nationen 2003 (13 Oct.); Klassekampen Morgen 2003b (17 Sept.)

<sup>371</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005e (2 Apr.); Bergens Tidende Morgen 2004 (3 Oct.); Klassekampen Morgen 2004 (10 May).

The peace mediator Petter Skauen in Norwegian Church Aid warns that Norwegian military engagement abroad may weaken Norway's credibility as a peace mediator. The entire peace engagement is based on confidence, and it is therefore important not to be identified with warring countries or countries exploiting the Third World economically, says Skauen.<sup>372</sup>

Torkel Brekke similarly sees a contradiction between Norwegian security thinking, which underline the relationship to the US and participation in NATO operations; and the peace nation role. Because the latter presupposes political and moral integrity, participation in military operations may compromise Norway's work for peace and reconciliation.<sup>373</sup> These texts thus construct a negative discursive link between Norway's ability to promote peace and Norway's credibility as a third party on the one hand, and participation in military operations on the other. Although not explicitly referred to, the scholarly examination of the seeming discrepancy between the peace nation self image and the practice of Norwegian participation in offensive military operations<sup>374</sup> may plausibly be seen as lending legitimacy to this construction.

A negative link between 'weapons export' and 'peace nation'/'peace promotion' is also constructed. Several texts focus on tensions in the peace nation image created by Norway's weapons export and investment in the arms industry.<sup>375</sup> A Dagbladet article delivers this statement: "The Socialist Left Party's foreign policy spokesperson Bjørn Jacobsen says that the extensive Norwegian weapons export weakens the image of Norway as a peace nation."<sup>376</sup> The newspaper Vårt Land similarly asks whether it is possible to combine the self image as peace nation with our blooming export of weapons, and sees a potential conflict.<sup>377</sup> Weapons export is thus, like participation in military operations abroad, constructed as a practice that may weaken Norway's credibility as a peace promoter.

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<sup>372</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005d (5 Feb.)

<sup>373</sup> Brekke, Torkel 2005; see also Larsen, Torgeir 2004

<sup>374</sup> Leira, Halvard 2005; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007; Leira, Halvard 2007; Neumann, Iver B. 2004a; Neumann, Iver B. 2004b; von der Lippe, Berit 2007; see also section on reflexive turn

<sup>375</sup> It may also be noted that Norway's interest based policies in the High North (Fædrelandsvennen 2006 (17 Mar.)), and the lack of economic support for the domestic peace movement (Kopreitan, Ole 2005), are criticized for being incompatible with the peace nation image.

<sup>376</sup> Dagbladet 2006 (21 Oct.); see also Aftenposten Morgen 2005e (2 Apr.); Klassekampen Morgen 2004 (10 May) for similar statements

<sup>377</sup> Vårt Land 2007 (8 Dec.)

To sum up; the idealist representation, and the basic discursive structure of the criticism it levels at Norwegian policy, remain largely unchanged. Nevertheless, new discursive constructions and links appear. Norway's weapons export and the danger of undermining Norway's peace engagement through confidence-wrecking participation in military operations are emphasized, and negative links between peace promotion and these practices are explicitly articulated. The idealist criticism of the Norwegian self interest motivation is in other words rearticulated and gains strength. It is nevertheless overshadowed by the realist representation, which is truly revived.

### **6.3 The Revival of the Realist Representation**

Towards the end of the previous period, the realist representation appeared as more marginalized than ever. This state of affairs would not last long, however: the reflexive discursive turn, and the critical potential therein, led to its revival. New strands of criticism emerging and coming to the fore from 2005 and onwards were incorporated in it, and as a result, it was considerably widened.

Before these changes took hold, the realist representation remained largely unchanged; it was primarily carried by Progress Party MPs, who drew on the familiar realist concepts of 'concentration'/'prioritization and 'neighboring areas'. In parliamentary debates, the MPs repeatedly constructed Norwegian foreign policy as having too wide a focus, as focusing too much on faraway conflicts, and as de-emphasizing Norwegian interests, particularly in the High North. They also implicitly questioned the beneficial consequences of the peace engagement in terms of self interests.<sup>378</sup>

Starting in 2003, new lines of criticism of the peace engagement and its dominant representation gradually come to the fore. Taken together, they challenge most of the dominant representation's discursive constructions and meanings. The majority of the articulations do not draw explicitly on the realist representation's key concepts, but they are nevertheless compatible with realist criticism.

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<sup>378</sup> Stortingstidende 2003-2004, pp. 1651, 1663 (Morten Høglund), 1665, 1673 (Christopher Stensaker); Stortingstidende 2004-2005a, pp. 1588f, 1607 (Morten Høglund). It should, however, be noted that in the Parliamentary Debates in 2006 and 2007, the Progress Party MPs do not criticize the peace engagement. In 2006, MP Morten Høglund eventually de-emphasizes his criticism and gives full support for the Norwegian peace efforts at Sri Lanka. Stortingstidende 2005-2006, p. 1269

The first strand of criticism constructs *the Norwegian Model*<sup>379</sup> as problematic, thus suggesting that it may not be an advantage at all. Terje Tvedt is this criticism's most prominent carrier. In his study of the 'South-political system', he finds that the Norwegian Model, with its close ties between government, NGOs, and academic institutions, results in an undemocratic, monolithic system that is marked by elite circulation, has corporative features, and that therefore hinders pluralism and debate. Moreover, the actors in this system have strong vested interests in the continuation and expansion of the Norwegian engagement, and pragmatic evaluation is, as a consequence, lacking.<sup>380</sup>

Tvedt's criticism of the Norwegian Model, underlining its negative consequences, is referred to and rearticulated in a large number of texts.<sup>381</sup> It challenges the dominant representation's inscription of meaning in the concept of 'The Norwegian Model'. Rather than linking it to positively laden concepts such as flexibility, competence, confidence, and efficiency; links to negatively laden concepts are established, and new meaning is created. The criticism implies that a discursive struggle about the meaning of 'The Norwegian Model' ensues. The concept thus assumes the quality of a floating signifier, open to different inscriptions of meaning, and the position of the dominant representation is weakened.

The second strand of criticism is that the *Norwegian peace promotion efforts have brought little peace* and have been inefficient. The basis for this criticism is the seemingly negative development in several of the peace processes Norway was involved in. The publishing of two major studies that suggest that Norway's involvement in the Middle East peace process benefited Israel, and that the peace

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<sup>379</sup> The Norwegian Model is here defined as the cooperation between the government, Norwegian humanitarian NGOs, and academic institutions. In the dominant representation, the Norwegian Model is, in contrast, a composite category consisting of the notions of small state advantages; close cooperation between Norwegian authorities, NGOs, and academic institutions; close contact with and confidence from the parties; and long-term perspective on peace building, including aid and economic support. See 1997-2003 Chapter. See also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' own presentation of the model. Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a

<sup>380</sup> Tvedt, Terje 2003, see particularly pp. 26-31, 43-46, 53-197, 303-310; Tvedt, Terje 2006, pp. 70-78, 84f

<sup>381</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2003a (21 Aug.); Aftenposten Morgen 2005b (4 Feb.); Bistandsaktuelt 07/2003; Bladet Forskning 5/2003; Dagens Næringsliv 2007a (31 Mar.); Dagens Næringsliv Morgen 2007b (13 Apr.); Dag og Tid no. 34 2003 (23 Aug.); Forskning.no 2003; Klassekampen 2003a (20 Aug.); Nyheter fra Makt- og demokratiutredningen 2003; Toje, Asle 2007; Udgaard, Nils Morten 2006; Østerud, Øyvind 2006a; Østerud, Øyvind 2006b, p. 313; Østerud, Øyvind 2006c.

accords that resulted were no sound basis for lasting peace, supported this view.<sup>382</sup> A more general criticism of the lack of efficiency in Norwegian peace promotion is explicitly articulated by political scientist Øyvind Østerud: "Norway wants to be an important peace creating nation, but there are very few documented positive effects of our international engagement."<sup>383</sup> Østerud also states that we lack knowledge of the effects of Norwegian peace engagement, and that our involvement in conflicts in fact may have adverse consequences, prolonging hostilities and leading to renewed violence.<sup>384</sup> Østerud's criticism are referred to and rearticulated in a number of texts<sup>385</sup>, and it is used as an argument in explicit articulations of the realist representation.<sup>386</sup> The criticism directly challenges one of the lynchpins of the dominant representation; the discursive construction of Norway's efforts as contributing substantially and effectively to peace in a number of former conflict areas.

The third strand is related to the first and second, and concerns the alleged Norwegian advantages in peace promotion. It *questions the notion that Norway has particular small state advantages*. An Aftenposten article says it this way: "Innocence means ignorance. Our lack of knowledge about the world makes us, in many ways, badly suited to conducting the peace promotion (...)"<sup>387</sup> Similarly, in a journal on development aid it is stated that "several researchers question the idea that Norway may achieve more because it is a small country."<sup>388</sup> Finally, a recent Dagens Næringsliv article with the telling title 'Retired Peace Nation'<sup>389</sup> states that an "unsentimental assessment" is needed of the argument that "Norway has special

<sup>382</sup> Waage, Hilde Henriksen 2004; Ørum, Arne 2004; see also Ny Tid 2004 (22 May); Aftenposten Morgen 2005b (4 Feb.). The former article reviews the studies; in the latter Arne Ørum himself "warns against the mistakes from the Oslo Agreement" and states that Norway should learn of its mistakes before extending its engagement in peace processes.

<sup>383</sup> Østerud, Øyvind 2006c; see also Østerud, Øyvind 2006b; Østerud, Øyvind 2006a. For a similar criticism of Norwegians' belief that we may accomplish a lot through our involvements in peace processes on the international scene, see Klassekampen 2005 (25 Aug.)

<sup>384</sup> Østerud, Øyvind 2006b, pp. 309-313; Østerud, Øyvind 2006c

<sup>385</sup> See for example Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007a; Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007b; Dagens Næringsliv 2006 (7 Dec.); Dagens Næringsliv 2007a (31 Mar.); Dagens Næringsliv Morgen 2007b (13 Apr.); Jagland, Thorbjørn 2008; Udgaard, Nils Morten 2006. It should also be noted that Østerud's criticism, which also concerns aid, sparked a heated debate about Norwegian development assistance. For a discourse analysis of the debate, see Fretheim, Kjetil 2007. For an overview of the contributions, see Rorg.no 2007

<sup>386</sup> Udgaard, Nils Morten 2006; Toje, Asle 2008

<sup>387</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005c (5 Feb.); see also Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007a (quotes by Helge Pharo and Stein Tønnesson)

<sup>388</sup> Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007b. Øyvind Østerud here states that Norway lacks power resources to pressure the parties, and Helge Pharo questions the Norwegian political and academic expertise. See also Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007a; Dagens Næringsliv 2007a (31 Mar.)

<sup>389</sup> The original title is 'Pensjonert fredsnasjon'

qualifications for conducting facilitation and mediation in peace processes, because of our history and because we, as an outside country in Europe, are particularly neutral and credible.”<sup>390</sup>

The ‘small state advantages’ of confidence from the parties, neutrality, and lack of colonial past, great power ambitions, and hidden agendas, are thus explicitly questioned.<sup>391</sup> Important parts of the rationale for and legitimization of the substantial Norwegian engagement; the assertions that Norway may contribute to peace where other third parties fail, and that our involvement has ‘added value’; are thus challenged. However, we should not overestimate this effect; the criticism is articulated in a small number of texts and remains marginal.

The fourth strand underlines that *Norway has not benefited much in terms of self interest*. Dagens Næringsliv writes that

(...) there are little concrete evidence of what Norwegians have ‘got back’ for their efforts, apart from the honor of being invited to meetings with the American Secretary of State or British Minister of Foreign Affairs. –Yes, we experience that our engagement gives access, but we are not good enough at utilizing it, says Helgesen [former State Secretary].<sup>392</sup>

The same newspaper follows up with a very similar statement ten months later.<sup>393</sup> The construction of the peace engagement as enabling the government to further Norwegian interests in unrelated areas is thus criticized; the improved access does not pay in terms of self interests. It should be noted, however, that this criticism also remains marginal; the two Dagens Næringsliv articles are the only texts in my material that articulate it.

The fifth new line of criticism draws on the reflexive discursive turn, and states that the *‘peace nation’ self image diverts attention from Norway’s ‘real national interests’*. Janne Haaland Matlary delivers this statement:

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<sup>390</sup> Dagens Næringsliv 2008 (9 Jan.); see also Jagland, Thorbjørn 2008 for a similar questioning of the advantages of being a small ‘outsider country’.

<sup>391</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005c (5 Feb.); Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007a; Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007b; Dagens Næringsliv 2008 (9 Jan.)

<sup>392</sup> Dagens Næringsliv 2007a (31 Mar.)

<sup>393</sup> Dagens Næringsliv 2008a (9 Jan.). The Progress Party MP Morten Høglund hints at similar criticism in the 2005 Storting Foreign Policy debate. Høglund states that he doubts that image building, in which peace promotion is an important part, is the best way of taking care of Norway’s foreign policy interests. Stortingstidende 2004-2005, p. 1588

In the real world, Norway's peace diplomacy is insignificant. (...) Nevertheless, this peace role is cultivated as unique and extremely important in the domestic political rhetoric. This blurs, prevents rational interest- and power analysis, and contributes to making one look at Norway with unrealistic eyes.<sup>394</sup>

Nils Morten Udgaard follows suit; he suggests that “the Norwegian self image is twisted when we see our political mission in good deeds towards other countries” and claims that this weakens the understanding of Norwegian interests.<sup>395</sup> These statements thus explicitly link the ‘self image notion’ to the concepts of lack of ‘realism’ and attention to ‘national interests’, stating that the unrealistic self image is a liability hindering the adoption of a proper foreign policy.<sup>396</sup>

Several other concepts and links are also introduced to the ‘realist representation’. The new strands of articulations tend to use the very *concepts of ‘realism’ and ‘realistic’/ ‘unrealistic’* extensively.<sup>397</sup> These concepts are discursively linked to ‘national interests’:

The Storting must give Norway a real-politically founded foreign policy again, if we are to be able to look after Norwegian interests in the international society. (...) We need serious politicians, not overambitious peace mediators who have forgotten the realpolitical challenges in our neighboring areas.<sup>398</sup>

‘National interests’ are thus linked to ‘realism’ and specified in opposition to an expansive peace engagement. Moreover, and in line with the ‘traditional’ realist representation, they are in some texts specified as lying mainly in our neighboring areas, and in the High North.<sup>399</sup>

The familiar realist linkage of the Norwegian foreign policy and peace engagement to the concepts of ‘lack of prioritization’/ ‘lack of focus’ and ‘lack of strategic analysis’

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<sup>394</sup> Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005c; see also Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005a; Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005b; Riste, Olav 2007; Steiro, Øystein 2005. For related quotes, see section on the reflexive turn. Matlary thus went from being a staunch supporter of the peace engagement as State Secretary, to becoming one of its most outspoken critics.

<sup>395</sup> Udgaard, Nils Morten 2006; see Riste, Olav 2007; Aftenposten Morgen 2007a (22 Mar.) (builds on statements by Asle Toje and Geir Lundestad) for very similar statements

<sup>396</sup> Again, this runs counter to the discourse analytic view of self images and identities as constitutive of self interests, and of self images as impossible to judge on an objective basis. Friis, Karsten 2007; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. xvi (preface), 1, 5f; Leira, Halvard 2007; Leira, Halvard (ed.)2007, pp. 7-10. See also section on the reflexive turn.

<sup>397</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2007a (22 Mar.); Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005a, Matlary, Janne 2005c; Steiro, Øystein 2005; Solberg, Erna 2006 (Solberg does not criticize the peace engagement outright, but she states that it has to be based on ‘realistic premises’); Toje, Asle 2008

<sup>398</sup> Steiro, Øystein 2005; see also Aftenposten Morgen 2007a (22 Mar.); Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005a; Toje, Asle 2008

<sup>399</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2007a (22 Mar.); Steiro, Øystein 2005. Toje gives this a twist: he state that we must concentrate on our relation to the ones that “actually matters to us: Russia, the US, and the EU.” Toje, Asle 2008. See Udgaard, Nils Morten 2006 for a similar view.

also comes strongly to the fore.<sup>400</sup> The Progress Party shows that this link may also be articulated as part of harsh criticism of the peace engagement:

The Progress Party thinks Norway has taken on way too many peace and democracy missions. Therefore, the Progress Party makes major cuts in the budget [the Party's alternative budget proposal]. - In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, peace mediation has been cultivated almost as a sport. It has gone way too far (...) -Norway may take on missions from time to time, but it must be in prioritized areas. Now we are involved in too much.<sup>401</sup>

Taken together, these discursive developments strengthen the realist representation substantially. Its criticism is sharpened; where the focus previously was on criticizing the lack of prioritization of Norwegian self interests, the dominant representation and the peace engagement are now to an increasing extent explicitly attacked. Moreover, the criticism is much more broad-based than earlier; it now challenges most of the key discursive constructions and organizing concepts of the dominant representation. The number of articulations also rises, and the realist representation may thus be seen as mounting a real challenge to the preponderance of the dominant representation.

## **6.4 Reproduction of the Dominant Representation**

As we have now seen, the peace engagement and its dominant representation face criticism on a larger scale, on a broader array of issues, and from more actors than in earlier periods. Here, I analyze how the dominant representation is reproduced in face of the challenges, and how the criticism is countered. The dominant representation has been presented in detail in previous chapters, and when analyzing it here, I mainly focus on the strength and clarity of the reproduction of its main concepts and discursive constructions, and on the minor changes that appear.

### **6.4.1 Norway is a peace nation**

Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik remained this discursive construction's most prominent carrier during his time in office.<sup>402</sup> Through his many articulations, it

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<sup>400</sup> Aftenposten 2007a (22 Mar.); Solberg, Erna 2006; Steiro, Øystein 2005; Toje, Asle 2008. For an explicit articulation of the link between lack of strategic analysis and the Norwegian emphasis on humanitarian assistance and peace promotion, see Matlary, Janne Haaland 2005a

<sup>401</sup> Dagbladet 2006c (6 Dec.) (built on statements by MP Morten Høglund)

<sup>402</sup> Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2004a; Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2004b; Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2005a; Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2005b

gradually became rooted, and the new coalition government<sup>403</sup> that assumed office in 2005 adopted it. It is articulated in the government declaration<sup>404</sup>, at the official web pages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>405</sup>, by MPs belonging to the parties in position<sup>406</sup>, and by the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre.<sup>407</sup> In one of his speeches, Støre underlines Norway's systematic international peace policy, this policy's broad public support, the traditions of solidarity and compassion, and the Norwegian NGOs' expertise in and commitment to peace promotion, as supporting the view that Norway is a peace nation.<sup>408</sup> However, he rejects as a myth the view that the Norwegian people is particularly peaceful or peace-loving.<sup>409</sup> This may be seen as suggesting that it is mainly the practice of substantial peace engagement that makes Norway a peace nation.<sup>410</sup> Our identity as a peace nation is thus discursively constructed as dependent on confirmation through active efforts. If the peace nation identity is seen as worth holding on to, this discursive construction amounts to a powerful defense of an activist peace promotion policy.

#### ***6.4.2 The peace engagement is an important part of the foreign policy***

Closely related to the peace nation concept are the discursive constructions of Norway's peace engagement as extensive, and as an important and prioritized part of Norway's foreign policy. These constructions are continuously reproduced. The Government generally treats peace promotion as one of the major tracks of Norway's foreign policy, and it is repeatedly underlined that the efforts have been and will be

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<sup>403</sup> The new government consisted of the Labor Party, the Socialist Left Party, and the Centre Party

<sup>404</sup> Arnstad, Marit; Djupedal, Øystein; Haga, Åslaug; Halvorsen, Kristin; Solberg, Hill-Marta; Stoltenberg, Jens 2005, p. 5, see also p. 4. The Government declaration (usually referred to as the Soria Moria Declaration) is the general framework for the Government's policies, and is the most authoritative description of what the Government wants to focus on. Here, it is also noteworthy that the Socialist Left Party in the 2005 election campaign repeatedly expressed a wish to cultivate Norway's role as a peace nation. See Halvorsen, Kristin 2005; NTBtekst 2004 (31 Oct.) ('The Socialist Left Party wants to cultivate Norway's role as peace nation'); Stortingstidende 2004-2005b, p. 1591; Solhjell, Bård Vegar 2004

<sup>405</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a

<sup>406</sup> Stortingstidende 2005-2006, pp. 1290f; Stortingstidende 2006-2007, pp. 1964f

<sup>407</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2007a

<sup>408</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b. This may be seen as a rejection of the allegations that the peace nation self image amounts to a myth, as articulated in Aftenposten Morgen 2005e (2 Apr.); Bergens Tidende 2005 (26 Aug.); Klassekampen 2004 (10 May)

<sup>409</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b

<sup>410</sup> The Government's wish to strengthen the Norwegian efforts may be seen as pointing in the same direction. Arnstad, Marit; Djupedal, Øystein; Haga, Åslaug; Halvorsen, Kristin; Solberg, Hill-Marta; Stoltenberg, Jens 2005, p. 5

intensified.<sup>411</sup> The Parliament, with the partly exception of the Progress Party MPs<sup>412</sup>, throughout the period actively supported the activist peace engagement.<sup>413</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' presentation of a strategic framework for Norway's role in peace building<sup>414</sup>, and the choice of 'Norway as a partner in peace and development' as one of three main themes of the official international program of Norway's Centennial Anniversary<sup>415</sup>, are also interesting in this respect; they add strength to the discursive construction of the peace engagement as extensive and important, and as something Norway wishes to emphasize and communicate to the world.

#### **6.4.3 The Norwegian Model: the Norwegian approach and its advantages**

Although relatively few texts use the concept 'the Norwegian Model' explicitly<sup>416</sup>, the construction of the Norwegian approach to peace and reconciliation as distinct is a commonly articulated discursive element.<sup>417</sup> It is also repeatedly asserted that Norway is well qualified or in a particularly good position to give contributions to conflict resolution and peace in many conflicts.<sup>418</sup> The established discursive construction of the Norwegian approach is by and large reproduced, and due to the large number of clear articulations, it indeed appears as strengthened.

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<sup>411</sup> Arnstad, Marit; Djupedal, Øystein; Haga, Åslaug; Halvorsen, Kristin; Solberg, Hill-Marta; Stoltenberg, Jens 2005, p. 6; Petersen, Jan 2005b; Petersen, Jan 2005c; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004a, Introduction; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006a; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2007a

<sup>412</sup> See section on the 'realist representation'

<sup>413</sup> Recommendation from the Foreign Policy Committee (Innst. S) no. 93, 2004-2005, p. 13; Stortingstidende 2003-2004; Stortingstidende 2004-2005b; Stortingstidende 2005-2006; Stortingstidende 2006-2007; see also Stortingstidende 2004-2005a. It should be noted that despite its stated importance, peace promotion is no major theme in the parliamentary foreign policy debates. This may be taken to suggest that the policy have so broad support that it is uncontroversial, and that it therefore are not subject to political debate.

<sup>414</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004a. ('Strategic framework: the development policy's contribution to peace building – Norway's role'). Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004b (White Paper no. 35, 2003-2004) which concerns the fight against poverty, builds on and refers to this strategic framework in its treatment of war, conflict, and peace building.

<sup>415</sup> Bondevik, Kjell Magne 2003b; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003; Petersen, Jan 2004c; Petersen, Jan 2005a; Widvey, Torhild 2003.

<sup>416</sup> Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c; Aftenposten Morgen 2007b (13 Oct.); Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a. These texts use the concept to denote the total Norwegian approach, not only the Government – NGO cooperation.

<sup>417</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); Aftenposten Morgen 2007b (13 Oct.); Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c; Petersen, Jan 2004b, Petersen, Jan 2005b; Petersen, Jan 2005c; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b; NTBtekst 2004 (31 Oct.); Solhjell, Bård Vegar 2004, Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006c; Widvey, Torhild 2003

<sup>418</sup> Solhjell, Bård Vegar 2004, Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006a; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2007a; Støre, Jonas Gahr & Solheim, Erik 2007

*Small state advantages*, such as Norway's lack of colonial past<sup>419</sup>, vested interests/hidden agendas<sup>420</sup>, and power to pressure the parties into compliance<sup>421</sup>; and the country's alleged neutrality or impartiality<sup>422</sup>; are all seen as enabling the peace engagement and increasing the parties' confidence in Norway as a third party. So is the *close cooperation between Norwegian authorities and humanitarian NGOs*. The NGOs' networks, experience, and long-term presence are constructed as giving goodwill and access to parties.<sup>423</sup> Some texts also construct Norway's role as a third party as a continuation of its efforts in humanitarian assistance and development aid.<sup>424</sup>

Norway's *long-term perspective* and the *consistency* of the Norwegian policy, based on wide domestic political consensus, are also presented as distinguishing features of the Norwegian approach.<sup>425</sup> The resulting Norwegian strategy of *supporting peace efforts with development aid and humanitarian assistance* is seen as key both to success and to Norway's popularity as a third party.<sup>426</sup> The nature of the Norwegian role is similarly underlined. Some texts emphasize the willingness to establish *dialogue* with all parties.<sup>427</sup> It is also heavily underlined that Norway is a *facilitator*, not a mediator; a 'peace helper' rather than a peace maker. The responsibility for making peace thus rests with the parties, not with Norway.<sup>428</sup> This concept may be seen as a defense against criticism of lacking results in the Norwegian peace efforts; Norway can not be blamed if the parties do not want peace.

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<sup>419</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); Aftenposten Morgen 2007b (13 Oct.); Petersen, Jan 2004b; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b (Støre here expresses mild skepticism towards this notion)

<sup>420</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); Petersen, Jan 2004b; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a ; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b

<sup>421</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b

<sup>422</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b (Støre here underlines that we are impartial, not neutral; we uphold our values)

<sup>423</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); Aftenposten Morgen 2007b (13 Oct.); Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c; Petersen, Jan 2004b; Petersen, Jan 2005b; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a ; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b

<sup>424</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); Aftenposten Morgen 2007b (13 Oct.); Petersen, Jan 2004b; Petersen, Jan 2005b; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b; Solhjell, Bård Vegar 2004

<sup>425</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2007b (13 Oct.); Petersen, Jan 2005b; Petersen, Jan 2005c; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b

<sup>426</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); NTBtekst 2004 (31 Oct.); Petersen, Jan 2004b; Petersen, Jan 2005b; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Solhjell, Bård Vegar 2004; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b

<sup>427</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2007b (13 Oct.); Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006c

<sup>428</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005a (3 Feb.); Aftenposten Morgen 2007b (13 Oct.); Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c; Petersen, Jan 2005b; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b

The only innovation in the specification of ‘the Norwegian Model’ seems to be the emphasis on *Norway’s good relationship to central international actors* such as the US and the EU. It is heavily underlined that *cooperation and coordination with other international actors* are important in the Norwegian approach, and that Norway often supports the efforts of another lead actor.<sup>429</sup> This may again be interpreted as a discursive defense against potential criticism; it suggests that the Norwegian efforts are pragmatically geared towards achieving results, and that they are not exclusively motivated by a wish to profile and promote Norway internationally.

#### **6.4.4 The relationship between peace promotion and development aid**

This link is no major theme in the articulations of the dominant representation; it is included because it is subject to interesting discursive developments. After the 1993-1997 period’s discursive upgrading of the concepts of ‘peace’ and ‘peace promotion’, the relationship between ‘peace promotion’ and ‘development aid’ was not explicitly laid out. This changed in 2004, with the presentation of the Government’s strategic framework for the development policy’s contribution to peace building:

The goal of participation in international conflict management is not only to prevent and stop acts of war and to help victims. *The overriding goal is to contribute to lasting and stable peace in and between states.* When the peace efforts succeed, it is often a result of a linking of political means/ instruments, humanitarian aid, and long-term economic development cooperation. This suggests that our foreign policy towards conflict-torn countries and regions should be holistic – with the development policy as an important and integrated means.<sup>430</sup>

Here, the development policy is explicitly treated as a means in peace promotion. It is also stated that ‘contribution to peace’ should be the ultimate goal. This may be interpreted as a considerable discursive innovation, establishing ‘peace’ alone as the privileged sign around which the discourse is organized, and relegating ‘development’ to the subordinate category of means. However, the privileging of peace over development is not consistent throughout the text; the conventional treatment of the

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<sup>429</sup> Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c; Petersen, Jan 2004b; Petersen, Jan 2005b; Petersen, Jan 2005c; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006c.

<sup>430</sup> Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004a, p. 11 (italics in original)

two categories as mutually dependent and equally important goals is rearticulated.<sup>431</sup> This also holds for the White Paper on development policy presented in 2004.<sup>432</sup>

Despite the return to the conventional discursive juxtaposition of ‘peace promotion’ and ‘development aid’, the strategic framework left an imprint. Development aid was increasingly treated as a tool to be actively used in a holistic approach to peace promotion, and coordination of the two policy areas was considered important.<sup>433</sup> Kristin Halvorsen, the Socialist Left Party leader, is for example quoted saying that Norwegian aid efforts should be geared towards prevention of war and conflict.<sup>434</sup> Moreover, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre and Minister of International Development Erik Solheim underline that “Norwegian efforts for peace and reconciliation are a strategic basic investment to create conditions that make the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals possible.”<sup>435</sup> The necessity of peace and security for development to take place is stressed, and it is argued that Norway may contribute more to development by strengthening its peace efforts than by focusing on traditional development assistance.<sup>436</sup> These statements suggest that peace promotion is regarded as even more important than previously.

#### ***6.4.5 The motivation for the engagement***

During the period in question here, the existing discursive construction of motivation is by and large reproduced, and no major discursive innovations appear. Nevertheless, the emphasis seems to change somewhat; towards the end of the period, the instrumentalist perspective apparently loses ground.

In the first part of the period, the beneficial consequences of the peace engagement, in terms of Norwegian self interests, were heavily underlined. The instrumentalist

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<sup>431</sup> Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004a, p. 10

<sup>432</sup> Ibid, pp. 17,177

<sup>433</sup> Ibid; Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004b, pp. 17, 177; Recommendation from the Foreign Policy Committee (Innst. S) no. 93, 2004-2005, pp. 2, 13

<sup>434</sup> NTBtekst 2004 (31 Oct.)

<sup>435</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr & Solheim, Erik 2007

<sup>436</sup> Ibid; see also Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b

perspective is articulated in newspaper articles<sup>437</sup> and in texts expressing the Government's views alike.<sup>438</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre says it this way:

Norwegian governments find – yes, I find myself – that our involvement in peace processes can be a ticket to gain political attention for other issues. We must not waste the opportunities this offers.<sup>439</sup>

However, Støre is ambivalent to self interested motivations; he for example states that this approach “must be handled with great care” and that “we should not, we cannot use our participation in peace efforts to sell Norwegian salmon.”<sup>440</sup> Towards the end of the period, this ambivalence comes to the fore. In an interview in 2007, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Section for Peace and Reconciliation states that “Norway’s work [for peace] has made us a more interesting partner for a lot of countries, but for us, this is a side effect and not a motivation.”<sup>441</sup> Similarly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs delivers this statement:

Norway uses more than NOK 800 million per year on peace efforts. These funds must never be seen as important in promoting our reputation and winning international prestige.<sup>442</sup>

Viewed together with the fact that few clear articulations of the instrumentalist perspective appears towards the end of the period<sup>443</sup>, these statements suggest that pure self interested considerations now have lost some of their legitimacy as a motivational factor.

Morale, values, duty to help, and the wish to do good are still heavily underlined as motivation for the peace engagement, particularly in the parliamentary debates,<sup>444</sup> and

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<sup>437</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005b (4 Feb.) (built on statements by scholar Sverre Lodgaard); Larsen, Torgeir 2004. The former article states that the peace engagement is necessary for Norway’s reputation, the latter underline that it is a way for Norway to make itself relevant and strategically interesting

<sup>438</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2005b (4 Feb.); Dagens Næringsliv Morgen 2004 (20 Apr.); Dagbladet 2004a (28 Jul.); Petersen, Jan 2004a; Parliamentary Proceedings 2003-2004, p. 1662 (statement by Jan Petersen); Petersen, Jan 2005a; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b.

<sup>439</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid. See Petersen, Jan 2005c for a similar underlining of the peace efforts as too important to be regarded a ‘symbol-political promotion drive’. Støre’s statement seems to refer to Minister of Foreign Affairs Knut Vollebæk’s assertion that the peace engagement enabled him to talk about Norwegian interests such as the gas directive and Norwegian salmon in talks with prominent international leaders. Aftenposten Morgen 1998b (22 Feb.)

<sup>441</sup> Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c

<sup>442</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr 2008

<sup>443</sup> I have found but one: Aftenposten Morgen 2008 (5 Jan.) (statement by Labor Party MP Olav Akselsen)

<sup>444</sup> Stortingstidende 2003-2004, pp. 1654f (Jon Lilletun, KrF), 1658 (Trine Skei Grande, V), 1665 (Kjetil Bjørklund, SV); Stortingstidende 2005-2006, p. 1265 (Olav Akselsen, A), 1280 (Hill-Marta Solberg, A), 1290f (Signe Øye, A); see also

altruism thus remains an important part of the dominant representation. However, in terms of discursive developments, another motivational factor is more interesting. Security comes even more strongly to the fore than previously, particularly in texts emanating from the Government<sup>445</sup>, but also in the parliamentary debates.<sup>446</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre says it this way:

Our peace policy is becoming part of our security policy. The security aspect alone is sufficient justification for our peace policy. It is also the most important justification.<sup>447</sup>

The prominence of security considerations is here clearly established. Like the instrumentalist perspective, such considerations are ultimately about beneficial consequences for Norway. The difference between the two lies in the view of security as indivisible: by improving others' security, we improve our own and vice versa. This is not the case with other self interests: improving our international standing and influence, and furthering commercial interests, are beneficial only to ourselves.

Finally, from a discourse analytic perspective it is interesting that the motivation behind the peace engagement continues to be an important theme in the dominant representation. This may be taken to mean that the peace engagement has to be explicitly legitimized, and that it is therefore not firmly established as a natural or taken-for-granted part of Norwegian foreign policy. The opening of the discourse, and the mounting challenges to the peace engagement, support this interpretation.

#### ***6.4.6 Direct countering of criticism***

The dominant representation in itself amounts to a powerful discursive defense of Norway's peace engagement. It discursively constructs Norway as a peace nation that has particular qualifications in peace promotion and a moral duty to assist. Norway's approach is constructed as distinct, effective, and strategic; and the peace engagement is established as an integral part of the foreign policy that is beneficial when viewed

Recommendation from the Foreign Policy Committee (Innst. S) no. 93, 2004-2005, p. 2; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004b, p. 6.

<sup>445</sup> Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004b, p. 178; Petersen, Jan 2004b; Petersen, Jan 2005b; Petersen, Jan 2005c; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006a; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2007a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b

<sup>446</sup> Stortingstidende 2003-2004, p. 1666 (Lars Rise, KrF); Innst. S. nr. 93, 2004-2005, p. 2; Stortingstidende 2005-2006, p. 1267 (Olav Akselsen, A); Stortingstidende 2006-2007, p. 1965 (Signe Øye, A)

<sup>447</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; see also Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006a; Dagbladet 2006b (6 Dec.). In the latter text, Støre claims that the Progress Party's proposed cuts in the peace promotion efforts "makes the world a more dangerous place"

from a self interest perspective. If these constructions are accepted, the peace engagement appears as natural and necessary.

Nevertheless, we have seen that criticism of the peace engagement and its dominant representation now come more strongly to the fore. Some of this criticism is explicitly countered by carriers of the dominant representation. This may be taken as an indication of discursive struggle, and as suggesting that the position of the dominant representation appeared as threatened. Here, I briefly present the counter criticism.

In the wake of Øyvind Østerud's criticism of the Norwegian efforts in development aid and peace promotion<sup>448</sup>, several texts appeared asserting that *the engagement indeed gives results*. In a feature article simply termed 'The engagement helps'<sup>449</sup>, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre and Minister of International Development Erik Solheim deliver this statement: "For us, it is clear: Norwegian and international efforts have given results (...)"<sup>450</sup> Also actors outside the political leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs articulate a similar defense of the peace engagement. When former Minister of Foreign Affairs Thorbjørn Jagland in January 2008 stated that "close to all the peace processes we have been involved in, now lie in ruins"<sup>451</sup>, he was met with quite massive criticism. Former State Secretary Jan Egeland is quoted in Bergens Tidende:

He lists a lot of peace processes around the globe where both he and other Norwegians can be given the credit for concrete peace agreements that has saved tens of thousands of human lives.<sup>452</sup>

All the above mentioned articulations defend the peace engagement quite straightforwardly by stating that it works and that it has given results. They may thus be seen as aiming at reestablishing the positive link between 'Norwegian peace promotion' and 'peace'.

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<sup>448</sup> Østerud, Øyvind 2006a; Østerud, Øyvind 2006b; Østerud, Øyvind 2006c

<sup>449</sup> The original name of the article is 'Engasjementet hjelper'

<sup>450</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr & Solheim, Erik 2006; for very similar statements, see Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c (interview with Johan Vibe, leader in the Section for Peace and Reconciliation in the MFA); Dagbladet 2006b (6. Dec.); Johansen, Raymond 2007

<sup>451</sup> Jagland, Thorbjørn 2008. Jagland here also hints that viewing ourselves as a 'peace nation' is self deception and reification of a myth

<sup>452</sup> Bergens Tidende 2008 (13 Jan.); see also Aftenposten Morgen 2008 (5 Jan.) (statements by Labor Party MP Olav Akselsen). Egeland mentions Guatemala, South Sudan, Mali, and the Middle East as peace processes where Norway has contributed to peace efforts with clear results. In the same Bergens Tidende article, scholar Kjetil Skogrand is referred saying that hardly any of the Norwegian peace initiatives may be summed up as fiascos.

Another line of defense is more subtle: it underlines that peace promotion is difficult, and that the obvious successes may be far between. It may nevertheless save human lives or contribute positively, and it must therefore be continued.<sup>453</sup> Scholar Kjetil Skogrand says it this way:

It is far between the spectacular successes, but we cannot disregard the fact that the conditions in the relevant areas could have been far worse without Norwegian efforts. We can therefore not afford to let be [discontinue our involvement].<sup>454</sup>

By asserting that the engagement may have major but non-measurable positive consequences in terms of human welfare, the criticism against the engagement is delegitimized and effectively countered.

Carriers of the dominant representation also attempt at *countering the criticism leveled at The Norwegian Model* for being undemocratic and stifling debate and critical evaluation.<sup>455</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Development articulate this defense:

In Norway, the competence and knowledge level is high as a result of our engagement, and it is distributed among the authorities, organizations, research institutes, and others. Criticism and analysis exist; that is positive, and we get a stream of feedback precisely from these organizations.<sup>456</sup>

Moreover, it is repeatedly underlined that the Norwegian efforts are continuously assessed to make them better and more efficient. Good intentions are not enough; it is necessary to focus on efficiency in the peace efforts.<sup>457</sup> It is also conceded that critical perspectives, pluralism and debate are necessary.<sup>458</sup> This suggests that critical evaluations are already carried out, and that the system indeed is open.

Finally, the Progress Party view that the peace engagement is too expensive, and that the funding therefore should be reduced<sup>459</sup>, are explicitly countered in several texts. Former State Secretary Jan Egeland criticizes the Progress Party's view of the costs,

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<sup>453</sup> Aftenposten Morgen 2008 (5 Jan.); Bergens Tidende 2008 (13 Jan.); Johansen, Raymond 2007; Støre, Jonas Gahr & Solheim, Erik 2006

<sup>454</sup> Bergens Tidende 2008 (13 Jan.)

<sup>455</sup> The counter criticism is mainly directed at Østerud, Øyvind 2006a; Østerud, Øyvind 2006b

<sup>456</sup> Støre, Jonas Gahr & Solheim, Erik 2006

<sup>457</sup> Ibid

<sup>458</sup> Ibid; see also Johansen, Raymond 2007; Bistandsaktuelt 09/2007c

<sup>459</sup> Dagbladet 2006c (6 Dec.) (the article is built on statements by Progress Party MP Morten Høglund)

stating that the peace engagement has been relatively cheap.<sup>460</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre mounts a more comprehensive defense of the engagement. In a *Dagbladet* article termed ‘Progress Party cuts make the world more dangerous’<sup>461</sup>, he is cited saying that the proposed budget cuts “give a dramatic signal of a break with Norway’s role as peace nation”, and that they “do something with our reputation.”<sup>462</sup> Moreover, he also states that the peace engagement gives results, and that if the cuts are carried out, it would lead to weakened security for Norway.<sup>463</sup>

These statements amount to a powerful discursive defense of the peace engagement. They draw on the notion of ‘peace nation’, constructing it as being dependent on an active international role and relatively large budget allocations. Cuts in these would, in other words, threaten the very image and identity of the nation. The articulation of the security perspective, linking international peace promotion to increased security for Norway, also works to defend the engagement. In line with this, budget cuts would not only damage our reputation, it would also be dangerously counterproductive in terms of vital self interests.

## 6.5 Summary: Discursive Opening, Discursive Struggle?

The analysis shows that the peace engagement discourse is opened in the period from 2003 to 2008. The reflexive turn, through which the ‘peace nation’ concept becomes established as a self image, paves the way for a different view of the Norwegian peace efforts and leads to increased attention. There are two principal strands of reflexivity; the first argues that the self image is a myth, out of touch with reality, the other attempts at denaturalizing the self image and investigating its relation to practice. Taken together, they have the effect of opening the discourse. In their wake, new strands of criticism that challenge the dominant representation are thus articulated. As a result, the alternative realist representation, criticizing the peace engagement for taking away attention from Norway’s ‘real interests’, is widened and strengthened.

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<sup>460</sup> *Bergens Tidende* 2008 (13 Jan.). Egeland also compare the costs of the engagement with the Norwegian military involvement in Afghanistan, which he claims is more controversial and much more expensive.

<sup>461</sup> The original title of the article is ‘FrP-kutt gjør verden farligere’

<sup>462</sup> *Dagbladet* 2006b (6 Dec.) (statements by Jonas Gahr Støre); see also Støre, Jonas Gahr 2006b; Støre, Jonas Gahr 2007b

<sup>463</sup> *Dagbladet* 2006b (6 Dec.) (statements by Jonas Gahr Støre)

The idealist representation, which asserts that the dominant representation focuses too much on self interests and too little on the ideals implicit in Norway's role as peace nation, is also present, but it remains largely unchanged.

Despite the increasing criticism, the dominant representation is by no means dethroned from its position of prominence. It appears as stable; its main discursive elements are the same as in earlier periods, and only minor innovations and changes appear. The number of texts reproducing it is very high compared to the number of 'critical' texts. The dominant representation is also laid out in explicit detail; the clarity of many of the articulations of its main elements is notable in this respect. It should also be kept in mind that the peace engagement has very broad political support. The Progress Party is the only major political party that is critical; the other actors actively support it and articulate the dominant representation. The dominant representation therefore continues to be the main provider of the lenses through which Norwegians view the Norwegian peace engagement; its organization of reality is preponderant.<sup>464</sup>

However, the massive scale on which the dominant representation is reproduced may also, from a discourse analytic point of view, be interpreted as a sign of weakness. The repeated articulations of its main elements and constructions mean that these are not completely naturalized or taken for granted; they must be reproduced to be confirmed. Moreover, the criticism leveled at the peace engagement is apparently not entirely negligible. The number of texts articulating alternative representations and criticism is not very large, but the texts get a lot of public attention and cause a lot of 'noise'.<sup>465</sup> Particularly towards the end of the period, the criticism is fiercely countered. This suggests that the criticism is a threat to the dominant representation's position, and that an element of discursive struggle has made its entry. In line with this, it is plausible to view the discourse as more open now than earlier, and the peace engagement as more open to different inscriptions of meaning.

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<sup>464</sup> For a related theoretical treatment of the effects of dominant representations, see Neumann, Iver B. 2001, pp. 60f, 177f

<sup>465</sup> Ibid, p. 52

## **7 Conclusion: Discourse as an Important Precondition for the Peace Engagement.**

In this thesis, I have presented a broad, empirically based analysis of the Norwegian peace engagement discourse from the early 1990s and up to 2008. The thesis revolves around the basic research questions: *How has the Norwegian peace engagement policy been made possible? And how has it been constructed as a natural and important part of Norwegian foreign policy?* My analysis is based on discourse analytic theory and methodology, and it is geared towards uncovering structures of specific, discursively constructed intersubjective understandings and meanings. The goal has in other words been to study the peace engagement discourse, its evolution, and its effects, and to investigate whether the discourse has been an important precondition for the activist Norwegian peace promotion policy.

### **7.1 Empirical Findings**

The first analysis chapter concerns the period prior to 1993. It presents the historical Norwegian peace tradition, and then briefly analyses the position of peace and peace promotion in the relevant Government White Papers that were presented in the years prior to 1993. Jan Egeland's study "Impotent Superpower – Potent Small State" is also analyzed.

The main finding here is that 'peace' is a concept with a particular resonance in Norwegian foreign policy thinking, and that the existing foreign policy and development aid discourses articulated concepts and links that may be seen as conducive to the adoption of a more activist peace promotion policy. The Norwegian exceptionalism, the positive assessments of Norway's ability to contribute to the solution of global challenges, the comprehensive notion of security, the compatibility of self interests and altruism, and the link between development and peace, may all be seen as discursive resources that influenced Norwegians' view of the event of the Middle East peace process, and that could be drawn upon in the construction of a distinct peace engagement discourse.

However, the White Papers do not regard peace engagement as an area where Norway has any particular competence, and no explicit strategy for peace promotion is devised. Peace and peace promotion is generally subsumed under the heading of development aid and humanitarian assistance, and as concepts, they assume a subordinate position within the discourse. Peace thus remained more of a utopian goal than a practical goal, although this seemed to change gradually towards the end of the period.

Chapter two details and analyzes the profound discursive changes in the wake of the revelation of Norway's participation in the Middle East peace process. The newspaper coverage of the Norwegian efforts is detailed before I turn to texts emanating from the Government. My main argument here is that the event of the Middle East peace process and its discursive construction were very important in the adoption of the activist peace engagement, and in the establishment of a distinct peace engagement discourse.

The media coverage<sup>466</sup> discursively constructed the 'Oslo Accords' as a major success for Norway's peace diplomacy. Norway's contribution in the peace process was stated to be decisive, and Norway was thereby invested with considerable agency as a third party. It was also established that the Norwegian approach to peace promotion was distinct, and that Norway benefited, in terms of self interests, from the positive attention it got. The most significant discursive innovation was nevertheless the generalization of the notion that Norway may be an efficient third party in peace processes. This construction of Norway as able to contribute effectively and decisively may plausibly be seen as a *sine qua non* for the subsequent activist peace efforts. Together with the other concepts and constructions, it made up the basic discursive preconditions for the adoption of the Norwegian peace engagement.

I also argue that the newspaper coverage brought a distinct peace engagement discourse into being. This discourse drew on discursive resources from the historical peace tradition or peace discourse, the foreign policy discourse, and the development aid discourse, but its main object was different; it concerned Norway's active and

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<sup>466</sup> It should be kept in mind that the newspaper frequently referred to official sources, and that official discourse and media discourse therefore were closely intertwined.

concrete efforts to further peace in conflict areas. The importance that was attributed to this new foreign policy practice is apparent in the upgrading of ‘peace’ to a concrete foreign policy goal discursively juxtaposed to ‘development’.<sup>467</sup> Moreover, the new discourse’s nodal points were different from the existing discourses’. The peace engagement discourse centered on the concepts of ‘peace’, ‘peace promotion’, ‘foreign policy’, and ‘Norway’s interests’. The latter three of these may be seen as the discourse’s floating signifiers; its representations<sup>468</sup> all tried to inscribe them with different meanings and create different links between them. Implying that the representations shared a set of basic concepts, the existence of such floating signifiers supports the interpretation that a new, distinct discourse had come into being.

The new discourse appears as highly structured and stable. The analysis of official texts shows that the concepts and discursive elements established in the newspaper coverage were by and large reproduced, officially sanctioned, and thus invested with legitimacy. The constructions of Norway’s efforts as important contributions to peace; of the peace promotion as an important part of the foreign policy; of the Norwegian approach as distinct and efficient; and of the peace engagement as motivated by both altruism and self interests<sup>469</sup>, were continuously reproduced. Together, they added up to a dominant representation; a particular organization of reality and a predominant set of lenses through which the peace engagement was viewed. This dominant representation implied a very positive view of Norway’s peace efforts, and it defended, naturalized and legitimized them as an important and necessary part of Norway’s foreign policy, worth spending substantial resources on. The strong position of this representation may therefore be seen as a precondition for the adoption and continuation of the engagement.

The dominant representation and the meanings it inscribed the peace engagement with were, despite their preponderance, not hegemonic. Towards the end of the period, an alternative representation of the Norwegian peace engagement, which I have termed

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<sup>467</sup> As we have seen, ‘peace’ and ‘peace promotion’ were previously concepts discursively subordinated to ‘development’ and ‘development aid’

<sup>468</sup> The dominant representation, the realist representation, and the idealist representation; see below for presentation.

<sup>469</sup> Terje Tvedt similarly finds that the combination of altruistic and self interested motivations is one of the distinguishing features of the Norwegian ‘south-political system’. Tvedt, Terje 2003, pp. 34, 61ff. See also Leira et al. 2007, p. 9

the realist representation, emerged. It was organized around the concepts of ‘real interests’, ‘neighboring areas’, and ‘concentration’/ ‘prioritization’, and it constructed the peace engagement as taking attention away from what ought to be the foreign policy’s most important task: taking care of national interests, predominantly in the neighboring areas. As such, it promoted criticism of the peace efforts.

While the years from 1993 to 1997 were marked by major discursive innovations, the 1997 to 2003 period mainly saw consolidation and stability. The dominant representation was continuously reproduced, its position remained strong, and it thus laid the basis for the peace engagement’s expansion and systematization. Its nodal points and discursive constructions remained largely unchanged, with some minor modifications: The features of the Norwegian approach to peace promotion were elaborated on, and the concept of ‘the Norwegian Model’ gained ground. Moreover, the instrumentalist perspective, focusing on the beneficial consequences in terms of Norwegian self interest of the peace engagement, was strengthened.

The only true innovation within the dominant representation was Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik’s repeated assertion that ‘Norway is a peace nation’. Explicitly linking the peace engagement to Norwegian national identity, it had the effect of essentializing the peace promotion – making it a defining feature of Norwegian identity. It follows that the peace engagement is a natural and necessary part of Norway’s foreign relations. Moreover, Bondevik stated that the peace engagement is a century-old historic legacy with roots in Norway’s Christian culture and Fridtjof Nansen’s humanitarian efforts. He thus constructed continuity, linking the current engagement to Norway’s history. Taken together, these discursive constructions amounted to a powerful discursive defense of the peace promotion efforts.<sup>470</sup>

Alternative representations nevertheless existed. The realist representation changed little; it continued to challenge the dominant representation and criticize the peace engagement on basis of the discursive constructions identified above. However, it was

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<sup>470</sup> Discourse analytic theories of the genealogical strand underlines that construction of continuity is a very common discursive mechanism, having the effect of legitimizing the current state of affairs. See for example Milliken, Jennifer 1999, pp. 243, 246ff. For a similar analysis of Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik’s statements, see Leira, Halvard 2005, pp. 154f

weakened towards the end of the period. The Conservative Party, which had been one of the realist representation's most important carriers, changed its position and started to articulate the dominant representation when it became part of the Government in 2001.

The period also saw the emergence of a second alternative representation. This was essentially positive towards the peace engagement, but it wanted it to be more idealistic. Hence the name: the idealist representation. It supported two strands of criticism; the first constructed the goal of peace promotion as incompatible with the dominant representation's focus on Norwegian self interests, the other constructed Norway's foreign policy practice as out of line with the peace nation image. This representation gradually gained ground, particularly in relation to the Iraq war in 2003.

Stability and consolidation were succeeded by considerable discursive change in the years from 2003 to 2008. The peace engagement discourse took a reflexive turn; the notion that 'Norway is a peace nation' was increasingly constructed as a self image and treated as such. In itself, this meant that the previously obvious link between 'peace engagement' and 'Norway' was gradually denaturalized. It also led to increased attention to the peace engagement, and the number of texts concerned with it rose considerably.

In the wake of these discursive developments, the realist representation made a remarkable comeback. It was widened to include a broad array of criticism. The peace nation self image was seen as out of touch with reality, preventing us from seeing the world with realistic eyes; the peace promotion was regarded as inefficient or counterproductive; Norway's alleged advantages in peace promotion were questioned; 'the Norwegian Model' was seen as undemocratic and corporative in nature, hindering critical evaluation; and finally, the construction of the engagement as beneficial from a self interest perspective was called into question. Together with the assertion that the peace engagement takes attention away from Norway's 'real interests', and thus prevents the adoption of a 'realist' foreign policy, these criticisms challenged most of the dominant representation's basic discursive constructions.

The idealist representation, as opposed to the realist representation, remained largely unchanged. Its carriers articulated the same kind of criticism as earlier, viewing the peace nation self image as incommensurable with self interested motivations and foreign policy practices of weapons export and participation in military operations. The only minor innovation seemed to be the construction of negative links between Norway's ability to contribute constructively in peace processes on the one hand, and weapons export, military engagement, and the use of the peace engagement to improve Norway's international standing on the other.

In face of the mounting challenges, and the opening of the discourse, the dominant representation was by and large upheld and reproduced. Only minor modifications appeared. What is notable is that some of the realist criticism of the peace engagement was directly countered. It was repeatedly stated that the engagement indeed give results, that the Norwegian Model does not hinder critical evaluations, and that reducing the funding for the peace engagement will have grave consequences.

In many ways, the dominant representation of the peace engagement appeared stronger than ever. The number of texts articulating it was far larger than the number articulating the alternative representations, many of the articulations were very clear, and the peace engagement had broad political support<sup>471</sup>. The dominant representation thus continued to be the main provider of the lenses through which Norwegians saw the peace engagement. However, this representation's massive reproduction, and the direct countering of criticism, may also be interpreted as signs of discursive struggle; the peace engagement was open to different inscriptions of meaning, the dominant representation's organization of reality was contested, and it was therefore necessary to continuously rearticulate and actualize its basic discursive structures.<sup>472</sup>

The analysis of the empirical material has given a broad overview of the peace engagement discourse and its evolution. It has also showed that the dominant representation of the peace efforts has had distinct effects. It has provided a positive view of the activist Norwegian policy. It has inscribed Norway with considerable

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<sup>471</sup> Only the Progress Party explicitly articulated criticism of the peace engagement during this period.

<sup>472</sup> For very similar analyses, see Leira, Halvard 2005, p. 156; Leira, Halvard (ed.) 2007, pp. 15f

agency and ability to contribute to peace. It has established the view that Norway, by utilizing ‘the Norwegian Model’, may contribute in a unique way. It has given a rationale for the engagement; in addition to helping others, we help ourselves. And it has linked the peace engagement to the very Norwegian national identity. In other words; if we accept the dominant representation, the peace engagement appears as a natural and necessary part of Norway’s foreign policy, and using substantial resources on it seems entirely sensible.

On the basis of these findings, we may give an answer to the basic research questions. The activist Norwegian peace promotion has been made possible by the particular discursive construction we find in its dominant representation, and by this representation’s continuous reproduction and dominance. This representation has also naturalized and in periods depoliticized the peace engagement. Without the effects of the representation, we have reason to doubt that it would be possible to sustain and expand the peace efforts. This is not to say that the dominant representation was both necessary and sufficient for this to happen; other factors may also be seen as necessary.<sup>473</sup>

This study is theoretically and methodologically designed to analyze the discourse only, and despite the theoretical claim that everything, including material factors, are discursively mediated and therefore may be studied using discourse analysis<sup>474</sup>, I make no attempt at studying such other factors here. What I do show is that the dominant representation was an important precondition for the Norwegian peace engagement. This conclusion has a close affinity with the conclusions of the studies I have been inspired by, namely Leira, Halvard 2005 and Leira et al. 2007. The latter treats ‘Norway is a peace nation’ as one of the most prominent self images in Norwegian foreign policy discourse. Although I have not emphasized the identity dimension of

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<sup>473</sup> Previous studies for example point at Norway’s considerable economic strength, changes at the international scene (such as the end of the Cold War), Norway’s long-standing engagement in humanitarian relief and development aid, the close relations to the strong Norwegian NGO sector, the ‘victory’ of the Middle East peace process, the presence of actors with vested interests in sustained engagement, and ambitious and skilled individuals wishing to make Norway a peace promotion activist. See for example Bucher-Johannessen, Bernt 1999; Kelleher, Ann & Taulbee, James Larry 2006; Liland, Frode & Kjerland, Kirsten Alsaker 2003, p. 81-87, 248-251; Tamnes, Rolf 1997, p. 342-345, 443f

<sup>474</sup> See for example Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 1,18, 213; Neumann, Iver B. 2001, p. 23

the peace engagement discourse very heavily, my study corroborates this finding and gives it a firmer empirical fundament.

## **7.2 Speculations about the Future of the Peace Engagement**

The findings of my study underline the dominant representation's importance not only for the adoption of the peace engagement policy, but also for its continuation. The policy indeed draws much of its legitimacy from the dominant representation's discursive construction of it. In other words; if this representation and the meanings established therein are seriously weakened, the extent of the peace promotion practice will likely be reduced accordingly. The increasing criticism directed against the peace engagement, its beginning denaturalization, and the opening of the peace engagement discourse between 2003 and 2008, may be taken to mean that the dominant representation is already losing ground.

These tendencies may well be strengthened in the near future, but I think there is little reason to expect rapid changes. Discursive change usually takes a lot of time; discourses have considerable inertia and resilience. The dominant representation of the peace engagement has also been firmly institutionalized, and the practice of peace promotion is routinized.<sup>475</sup> These theoretical considerations, taken together with the continuing strength of the dominant representation, suggest that peace engagement will be an important part of Norway's foreign policy for quite some time to come.

## **7.3 Directions for Further Research**

This thesis has not aimed at theory testing. It has taken discourse analytic theories as its starting point and employed these to analyze and understand a specific case: the Norwegian peace engagement. Nevertheless, the thesis has implications beyond this case. It has shown that a discourse analytic framework may be fruitfully employed in the study of foreign policy, and that it yields non-trivial findings that other theoretical and methodological frameworks are unable to provide. Discourse analytic studies

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<sup>475</sup> Neumann, Iver 2001, p. 133, see also pp. 60, 102, 143; Jørgensen, Marianne Winter & Phillips, Louise 1999, pp. 14, 22, 67-71; Hansen, Lene 2006, pp. 128-131, 145ff, 214.

therefore have great potential for improving our understanding of foreign policy. Moreover, foreign policy discourse is, at least in the case of Norway, a rather neglected object of study, and there is thus no lack of issues that awaits analysis.

Here, I will point at some possible directions for further studies within the case of the Norwegian peace engagement. The limited scope of this thesis made it necessary to chose but one of a host of possible approaches to the discourse. I chose to conduct what may be termed a macro-level analysis, drawing on a large number of texts and outlining the general tendencies and developments within the discourse. This leaves a host of issues unexplored, and our understanding of the peace engagement discourse may thus be profoundly improved by further studies.

First, the level of practice should be studied in detail. Such a study, analyzing what practices have been imbricated in the peace engagement discourse, and how this have influenced discursive developments, will give us a much more comprehensive picture of the discourse and its effects. Second, an in-depth, micro level analysis of some of the central texts within the discourse may yield insights about the productive aspect of the discourse; how it works and what it does. It may also give a better basis for exploring the discourse's role in constituting Norwegian identities and self images. Third, the peace engagement discourse's links to and imbrication in other discourses, such as the general foreign policy discourse, the security discourse, the development aid discourse, and the humanitarian assistance discourse, should be studied more extensively. Such studies will improve our understanding of the interdiscursive aspect of the peace engagement discourse, and the role and influence of the discourse in Norway's foreign policy. Fourth, introducing a comparative perspective, studying the Norwegian discourse in relation to other countries' discourses, may give us an improved basis for assessing the discourse's influence on the adoption of the activist Norwegian peace promotion policy. It may also improve our understanding or the discourse's roots, and the extent to which international influences has been important.

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