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Practicing nuclear disarmament: the humanitarian challenge to Norwegian nuclear politics

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Declaration

I, Abby Brobakken, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

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Abstract

The belief that nuclear weapons provide states with security has for a long time dominated the nuclear conversation. The so-called ‘humanitarian initiative’ to nuclear weapons disarmament challenged this assumption. With the acknowledgement of the humanitarian harm that would result from a nuclear weapons detonation, the initiative quickly became a rationale to provide a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, following the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2010. Norway, a small nuclear-umbrella state hosted the first conference with a focus on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in March 2013. The conference’s aim was to provide an arena for a fact-based discussion about the humanitarian and developmental consequences that would result from a nuclear weapons detonation. However, when a demand for a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons became the expressed goal of the humanitarian initiative from 2014 and onwards, Norway suddenly abstained from the process. What happened to Norway, and what knowledge was this policy decision based on? Inspired by critical practice theorists focus on politics as “competent performances”, this study seeks to understand the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament.

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Bibliography

1.0 Introduction

The belief that nuclear weapons provide states with security, has for a long time dominated the nuclear conversation. The so-called ‘humanitarian initiative’ to nuclear weapons challenged this assumption, seeing nuclear weapons potential for harm as the greatest argument against their existence and legitimacy for deterrence purposes (Borrie, 2014; Freedman, 2013; Kmenett, 2021). The humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons disarmament thus represented a momentum in in the international diplomatic debate about nuclear weapons and disarmament. It challenged the validity of nuclear weapons as moral means of security.

Norway, a small nuclear-umbrella state¹, hosted the first conference with a focus on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in March 2013. The conference’s aim was to “provide an arena for a fact-based discussion about the humanitarian and developmental consequences of a nuclear weapons detonation” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). With the acknowledgement of the humanitarian harm that would result from a nuclear weapons detonation, the initiative quickly became a rationale for banning nuclear weapons, similarly to the humanitarian processes of banning land mines (1999)² and cluster munitions (2010)³ (Borrie, 2014; Freedman, 2013; ICAN, 2021d; Kmenett, 2021). However, when a demand for a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons became the expressed goal of the humanitarian initiative from 2014 and onwards⁴, Norway suddenly abstained from the process (Egeland, 2019; ICAN, 2021d; Lennane, 2015).

Norway’s policy change has evoked some, but few, attempts from scholars and policymakers to explain or justify Norway’s current nuclear politics. Most attempts, however, tend to focus on how the humanitarian initiative quickly escalated into an unwanted demand from Mexico and Austria to start a process of legally banning nuclear weapons⁵. Such a ban, it is argued, was never Norway’s intention. Moreover, it is argued, a legal prohibition is not strategically wise from a Western security perspective or socially compatible with Norway’s commitments

¹ Nuclear-umbrella states can be defined as states that enjoy security guarantees from nuclear-armed states (Borrie, 2014)

² Under the *Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty* or «Ottawa Convention», which entered into force 1 March 1999 (ICAN, 2021d; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2021a)

³ Under the *Convention on Cluster Munitions*, which entered into force 1 August 2010 (ICAN, 2021d; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2021b).

⁴ The humanitarian conferences that started with the Oslo-Conference, eventually led to a demand for a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, in 2014, at the humanitarian conferences in Nayarit, Mexico and Vienna, Austria (ICAN, 2021d).

⁵ Which succeeded in 2017 with the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear weapons* (‘TPNW’).

in NATO and to the United States. From this perspective, there has not been a shift in Norway's policy, on the contrary, the nuclear policy represents a continuity of Norway's defence and security priorities for decades.

Existing literature has primarily focused on the role of NATO and the United States, as well as other 'structural' circumstances as the most influential factors in shaping Norway's current policy on nuclear disarmament (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). As a result, little is known about the domestic context, including other decision-making actors in this policy domain, that are not states, or a member of NATO. Moreover, it has been few scholarly attempts so far to investigate the knowledge, not just the actors, that inform the decisions in Norwegian nuclear politics. Due to the lack of research on the knowledge generation about nuclear weapons and disarmament, there is also a gap in the critical literature that challenges the 'knowns' of mainstream scholarship and the current policy position. Consequently, there have been few attempts to challenge the mainstream assumption that nuclear weapons are the most important means of survival, security, and inter-state peace for and between states since the end of the World War II⁶. According to this perspective, nuclear weapons' potential for harm is the best argument for its existence and credibility for deterrence purposes (See for example Høiback, 2020; Waltz, 1990).

In current academic literature on Norwegian nuclear politics, there are few scholars that problematize the assumption that nuclear weapons provide states with security, with important exceptions, such as Kjølsv Egeland⁷ and Sverre Lodgaard⁸. There are, however, many such critics in civil society, most notably partner organizations in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons ('ICAN')⁹.

Inspired by these critics, and Christian Bueger's (2015) notion that there is a knowledge gap in IR on how knowledge about international policy issues is generated, I argue that one of the solutions to the problem is to study *practices* (Bueger, 2015). Unlike Bueger, whose study is of 'epistemic' practices, and practical sites for knowledge production, lending theoretical insights from science and technology studies (STS) (Bueger, 2015), I will focus on practices as 'competent performances', or 'social acts of know-how', following the definitions of

⁶ Inter-state peace here only means the absence of the outbreak of a third world war.

⁷ Egeland challenges the legitimacy of the current international regimes of nuclear disarmament (Egeland, 2017a, 2017b, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021),

⁸ Lodgaard challenges the credibility of nuclear deterrence and the so-called nuclear umbrella. He has been a critical voice of the Norwegian nuclear debate for decades (See Lodgaard, 2010, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

⁹ Such as International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War ('IPPNW') Norway, No to Nuclear Weapons, Norwegian People's Aid, and the Norwegian Peace Council.

Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (Adler & Pouliot, 2011), Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Vincent Pouliot (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014), and Iver Neumann (Neumann, 2016, 2019).

Moreover, I will borrow the insights from Kjølsv Egeland's 'ideology critique', to critically assess whether the Norwegian practices adhere to the *ideology of nuclear order* (Egeland, 2021). (Egeland, 2021, p. 3). Egeland's definition of ideology is the "imaginary maps people rely on to make sense of, and act in, the world" (Egeland, 2021, p. 3). The task of ideology critique, is thus to uncover and analyse how certain imaginary maps reproduce certain social arrangements, and not others (Egeland, 2021, p. 3)¹⁰. Egeland makes the case for why nuclear-armed states and its allies are adhering to 'the ideology of nuclear order'. The ideology of nuclear order, he argues, are reproducing *status quo-arrangements* of nuclear politics that are obstructing nuclear disarmament in practice. Despite being a fierce critique of how the current ideology is an obstacle for nuclear disarmament, Egeland simultaneously argue that the primacy task of ideology critique is *not* to "compare normative systems" (Egeland, 2021, p. 3). In this paper, I take my own normative bias for granted and argue that normativity is a strength in critical scholarship. Consequently, I suggest a *critical practice approach*, and make the case for replacing the ideology of nuclear order with an agency-oriented humanitarian order and make the case for why that is a normatively better ideology.

The humanitarian initiative to nuclear weapons and Norway's sudden abstention from this initiative from 2014 and onwards, represents an interesting case in global nuclear politics. Firstly, it is an interesting case because it illustrates the ongoing *competence contestation* over the meaning of 'moral' and 'security' in nuclear weapons and disarmament politics (See for example Egeland, 2020a; Høiback, 2020). Secondly, there is a lack of literature on the nuclear politics of non-nuclear armed states, due to a predominance of nuclear-armed, great power literature in IR. The Norwegian case represents the politics of a NATO umbrella-state. Thirdly, the Norwegian case is a noteworthy case of competence contestation, because of Norway's role and "image" in international diplomacy as a humanitarian 'good and moral state' (Egeland, 2017a). With the humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons, Norway putted itself in a pickle. The humanitarian initiative and the TPNW made it difficult to maintain an image as a 'humanitarian' state while simultaneously insisting on being under NATOs nuclear umbrella.

¹⁰ As such, Egeland's ideology is a substitute for what some practice theorists call 'tacit knowledge'. See chapter 3.

A study of the *Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament* allows for a bottom-up perspective that focuses on the nuclear practitioners “social acts of know-how” about nuclear weapons and disarmament. This practice study based on interviews with nuclear practitioners is firstly (1) aimed at *understanding* the socially competent practices of nuclear disarmament and the ongoing competence contestations. Secondly (2) it is aimed at *critically* assessing whether the practices adhere to the ‘ideology of nuclear order’, and finally, (3) *normatively* assessing their validity and usefulness for nuclear disarmament in practice. The study will thus be a contribution to the current academic literature and Norwegian and global nuclear politics that problematize the assumption that nuclear weapons provide states with security.

1.1 Research questions

With this background, I pose the following Research Questions (RQs):

- *RQ1: What are the competent performances of nuclear practitioners in Norway?*
- *RQ2: Was the Norwegian abstention from the humanitarian initiative a ‘policy shift’?*
- *RQ3: How do the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament adhere to ‘the ideology of nuclear order’ cf. Egeland (2021), and what are the destabilizations of that order?*

1.2 Outline of thesis

The Norwegian “puzzle” represents an interesting case that is very illustrative of the current competence contestation over nuclear weapons in global politics. Relevant IR literature and case-relevant material will be provided in *chapter 2* [literature review]. Then, a more proper introduction and explanation of the methodological framework will be given in *chapter 3*. This chapter will present how ‘practices’ will be conceptualized, the critical framework of ‘ideology critique’, as this is described by Kjølsv Egeland (2021), and ‘the critical practice approach’. The critical and reflexive practice approach is the overarching analytical approach used for interpreting the findings of this study. In *chapter 4*, the findings about the Norwegian ‘puzzle’ will be outlined, and an answer to RQ2, on whether Norway’s abstention from the humanitarian initiative should be understood as a policy shift or continuity. In

chapter 5, I will outline the five practices of Norwegian nuclear disarmament politics. Chapter 5 will therefore give the most detailed answer to RQ1. In *chapter 6*, I have used the five criteria that make up Egeland's 'ideology of nuclear order' as a framework for analysing the Norwegian practices. Chapter 6 will therefore answer RQ3, on how the Norwegian practices adhere to this order, with an emphasis of the destabilizing factors to this order, with the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW as the most obvious examples. Finally, in *chapter 7*, I will present my concluding remarks.

2.0 The humanitarian challenge to nuclear knowledge and practice

In IR and security studies, there is an ongoing debate about the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and various doctrines of 'nuclear deterrence'¹¹. The debate is a competence contestation over what role nuclear weapons and deterrence's should have in *explaining* and *practicing* nuclear politics. The dominant, mainstream position to nuclear politics maintains the necessity of nuclear weapons and deterrence, seeing it as the most important means of security and inter-state peace (Høiback, 2020; Waltz, 1990).

There are at least three interrelated points of contention in this scholarly debate. Critical scholars¹² challenge the mainstream position on at least three grounds. The first (1) *critique is over nuclear deterrence as an 'analytical category' is useful for explaining the behaviour of states and non-state actors*. The critique is that nuclear deterrence is not useful because it overemphasises the role of structures over agency, seeing nuclear deterrence as a 'known quantity', states 'as' actors with fixed preferences, which tends to overlook diverging ideas, interests and actors (Pelopidas, 2016; Wilson, 2008). The second (2) interrelated critique is *that nuclear weapons are not credible for deterrence purposes* (Lodgaard, 2020a) or *morally acceptable means of deterrence* (Burke, 2016). The lack of credibility of nuclear weapons, it is argued, is related to the moral constraints' states have for using them, which have created a taboo, or a norm of non-use (Tannenwald, 2005, 2007). The norm of non-use is

¹¹ Nuclear deterrence is, broadly speaking, the idea that the possession of, or threat to use, nuclear weapons, will prevent an adversary from taking an undesirable action they would otherwise take (Greitens, 2014, p. 375).

¹² Critical scholars here are understood as an umbrella term for scholars that are not adhering to a positivist (scientific) explanatory model which will be elaborated in chapter 3.

contributing to nuclear deterrence' lack of credibility (Lodgaard, 2020a)¹³. A third critique (3) is how the *mainstream position have de-politicised the fact that practical nuclear disarmament is usually discussed within the scope of various doctrines of nuclear deterrence* (Lodgaard, 2010). For nuclear disarmament, the continued efforts to sustain the credibility of nuclear deterrence contradicts any argument of removing nuclear war heads (Lodgaard, 2010; Wilson, 2008). The reason is simple: if the utility of nuclear weapons is the security (of states), then why remove them?¹⁴ The problem with “efforts to sustain the credibility of nuclear deterrence is that they have kept telling others how important nuclear weapons are” (Lodgaard, 2010, p. 173). Given the problems of the mainstream approach to nuclear disarmament, these scholars challenge the role nuclear weapons and deterrence can and should play, if any, in the nuclear conversation, whether in academia or in policy making¹⁵ (Pelopidas, 2016).

In 2017, this academic debate was brought up to date when 122 states adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2020)¹⁶. The TPNW prohibited state parties under the treaty from possessing, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons, or assist, encourage or induce such activity (United Nations General Assembly, 2017). As such, the TPNW prohibited nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence under international law¹⁷ – for all state parties to it. The TPNW can be said to be an ‘operationalization’ of many of the post-positivist arguments about nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence in international politics.

¹³ Lodgaard’s critique is also related to the lack of credibility of the so-called ‘nuclear umbrella’, which I will discuss later in relation to the Norwegian case.

¹⁴ The same issue applies to the agenda on non-proliferation, which is about reducing the spread of nuclear weapons to states and actors that do not already possess them. With the emphasis on non-spread (of nuclear weapons), in the NPT, one has permitted some nuclear-armed states (the ‘P5’) to legitimately possess nuclear weapons. The P5 is the UK, US, France, Russia and China (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2021c)

¹⁵ Two interrelated domains, that influence each other.

¹⁶ The academic and political/diplomatic debate is however closely interconnected. It has for example been argued that the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a central NGO in the process of making the TPNW, have consciously *applied* critical IR theory to diplomatic practice (See Bolton & Minor, 2016)

¹⁷ From its entry into force (after 50 states have ratified it), which for the TPNW was 22nd of January 2021 (ICAN, 2021e).

There are currently 138 states that are supporting the TPNW, 17 undecided, and 42 opposing the treaty¹⁸ according to the ‘Nuclear Ban Monitor’ (Norwegian People's Aid, 2021). The 42 opposing states includes the nine nuclear-armed states¹⁹, the 30 ‘nuclear umbrella-states’²⁰, and three others²¹. Following the prohibitions of the treaty, one would perhaps think that all the opposing states maintain that credible deterrence is *dependent on nuclear weapons*. Although this is probably the dominant position in most of the nuclear-armed states²², and explicitly articulated in NATO's strategic concept (NATO, 2010), it is not necessarily the case for some of the umbrella-states.

2.1 Norway and the humanitarian initiative

In fact, the legitimacy of nuclear deterrence in scholarship and in politics is *increasingly questioned in Norway*, a small umbrella-state (Egeland, 2020a; Lodgaard, 2020a; Mood, 2019). As illustrated above, some Norwegian IR-scholars question the credibility of nuclear deterrence in practice (Lodgaard, 2020a), while others criticize how nuclear deterrence is contributing to upholding certain perspectives of world politics, that reinforces ‘status quo’ politics (Egeland, 2021). A central topic of the public debate is also the moral acceptance of nuclear weapons as part of state’s security strategies, given the unacceptable humanitarian consequences that would result from their use (Løvold, 2020; Mood, 2019). The ‘humanitarian’ framing of the issue, the so-called ‘humanitarian initiative’ was also the primary argument for the TPNW (United Nations General Assembly, 2017; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2020). It is often argued that Norway was one of the co-founders of the humanitarian initiative in the UN, with the hosting of the Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in March 2013 (Norwegian Ministry of

¹⁸ Opposed here means that the state’s most recent vote in the UN on the TPNW (either on the adoption of the treaty in 2017, or on the subsequent annual UN General Assembly resolutions on the TPNW) was ‘no’ (Norwegian People's Aid, 2021).

¹⁹ China, France, India, Israel, North-Korea, Pakistan, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States (Norwegian People's Aid, 2021)

²⁰ Nuclear-umbrella states can be defined as states that enjoy security guarantees from nuclear-armed states, or in other words; states with extended nuclear deterrence with a nuclear-armed state (Borrie, 2014). There are 30 TPNW-opposing umbrella-states with extended nuclear deterrence with the United States; Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, and Turkey (Norwegian People's Aid, 2021)

²¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Micronesia, and Monaco (Norwegian People's Aid, 2021).

²² See for example Sverre Lodgaard (2010), on the ‘arch-realist’ French nuclear politics (Lodgaard, 2010, p. 120), or *Maiika* Skjønsberg (2017) on the nuclear-armed NATO-states’ (Skjønsberg, 2017)

Foreign Affairs, 2013). A year or so later, Norway suddenly left and opposed the humanitarian initiative due to the initiative's demand for a legal framework for banning nuclear weapons (Egeland, 2017b; Norsk Folkehjelp, 2016).

2.2 The literature gap

Norway's behavioural change has evoked some, but few, attempts from scholars and policymakers to explain Norway's current policy. Most attempts, however, tend to have a realist framing²³. From this perspective, the humanitarian initiative quickly escalated into an unwanted demand to legally ban nuclear weapons, which is not strategically wise from a Western security perspective, nor socially compatible with Norway's commitments to NATO and to the United States (Brende, 2017; Søreide, 2020; Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). From this perspective, there has not been a shift in Norway's policy, as these two considerations has been the primary pillar of Norway's defence- and security policy for decades (Braut-Hegghammer, 2019, 2020; Tetzschner, 2020). One consequence of the prevalence of this approach is that it has constructed a wrongful assessment of a "consensus" about the current policy. The prevalence of the consensus culture (that will be explained more in 5.1), has in fact inhibited the perceived need for a debate about the TPNW, that be in parliament, the media, or academia. Consequently, it might have also increased the threshold for obtaining knowledge about the TPNW, due to how a debate is considered to challenge national interest and a "widely shared defence-and security platform" (Sjursen, 2015).

Furthermore, the literature has primarily focused on the influence of other states, most notably in NATO, and other 'structural' circumstances as the decisive factors in shaping Norway's current policy (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). As a result, little is known about domestic politics, and other decision-making actors in this policy domain, that are not states, or a member of NATO. The consequence of the dominance of realist, more specifically neorealist literature on nuclear politics, is also that the literature is preoccupied with states, or 'great powers', and how they seek and balance power in an inevitable quest for security or

²³ Realist here does not mean more realistic, but realist as adhering to the realist IR theory's interests and focus, which is sometimes referred to as the 3 s'es: statism (state-centrism), survival and self-help (Dunne & Schmidt, 2014).

more power²⁴, and the utility of nuclear weapons in such endeavours. Consequently, the legitimacy and role of nuclear deterrence is sometimes taken for granted (Egeland, 2021). Moreover, the literature often overemphasises the role of structures over agency, seeing states ‘as’ actors with fixed preferences, which tends to overlook diverging ideas, interests and actors. Existing literature also tend to overlook “profound moral and ethical questions that go beyond debates about the legality of nuclear weapons” (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria, 2014a)

2.3 Bridging the gap with a critical practice approach

With this background, I suggest a critical practice approach that is aimed at *understanding* the socially competent practices of Norwegian nuclear practitioners. The study starts out from a “bottom-up” perspective that focuses on the nuclear practitioners “social acts of know-how” about nuclear weapons and disarmament, based on interviews with such practitioners. Secondly, it is aimed at *critically* assessing whether the Norwegian practices adhere to the ‘ideology of nuclear order’, as this is described by Egeland (2021). Finally, it is aimed at *normatively* assessing the Norwegian practices’ validity and usefulness for nuclear disarmament in practice.

I argue that this approach is filling important literature gaps. Firstly, in terms of how it re-focuses the study of actors, and agency away from states ‘as’ actors, and thus opening the possibility for a variety of decision-makers, such as politicians, NGO-workers, diplomats, scholars to have a voice, by studying practices. Secondly, the focus on the nuclear politics of Norway, as a small, non-nuclear armed state is also much needed in the literature, that is dominated by ‘great power politics. Moreover, the Norwegian case represents a particularly interesting case, because of Norway’s many ‘humanitarian’ efforts in international disarmament diplomacy (Egeland, 2017a). In only a few years, Norway went from being a leader of the humanitarian initiative to an opponent, which caused several reactions in international diplomacy (Lennane, 2015). It also putted Norway in an uncomfortable pickle: the humanitarian rationale for banning nuclear weapons and the TPNW has made it difficult for Norway to maintain an image as a “good, humanitarian state” while simultaneously

²⁴ How much power great powers would want to have given the ‘logic’ of the anarchic system, is what separates defensive neo-realism from offensive neo-realism, see Waltz (2000) and Mearsheimer (2001) respectively for the differences between the perspectives (Waltz, 2000)

insisting on being under NATO's nuclear umbrella. In that sense, The Norwegian “puzzle” represents an interesting case that illustrates the current competence contestation over ‘moral’ and ‘security’ over nuclear weapons that exists in global politics. Finally, the critical practice approach is a contribution to the literature that problematize the assumptions of mainstream nuclear scholarship on methodological *and* normative grounds (Lodgaard, 2020a; Wilson, 2008). I argue that the latter is much needed in security studies, where moral considerations is often dismissed as idealism.

3.0 Methodology and method

A theory is sometimes described as the lens or pair of glasses, through which we view the world, which allows us to see things in particular ways (Nygaard, 2017, p. 629). This chapter intends to clarify which type of glasses I have “put on” for the purpose of this study, and why. Moreover, theory, and its methodological assumptions, are often associated with certain methods. I will therefore present my choices of methodology, methods, and empirical materials all together in this section, and make the case for practices, or ‘critical practice theory’ as the most suitable framework *for analysing the Norwegian politics of nuclear disarmament* empirically.

In social sciences, there are various methodological approaches to research, such as positivist, interpretivist, and critical approaches (Nygaard, 2017, pp. 26-27). Practice theory in IR, has various outlooks, but is often both interpretive and critical (Cornut, 2017). The interpretive and critical approaches is closely related, and have in common that reject the idea that social sciences, contrary to natural sciences, can be described or objectively understood through general theories or hypothesis about the world, which is the assumption of positivist approaches (Nygaard, 2017). The social world, it is argued, requires a different approach to research than natural science, that reflects the distinctiveness of humans (Bryman, 2016, p. 26). Contrary to the positivist approach, interpretive and critical research designs are not aimed at hypothesis-testing, or to produce knowledge that can be generalized to a larger population or used for prediction of world politics. The interpretivist and critical methodological approaches aim at knowledge generation, where theories can be useful as lenses or tools for interpreting and structuring empirical findings.

I argue that the main difference between the interpretivist and the critical approach to the social world, is that while the interpretivist approach emphasize how meaning, through language, is socially constructed, the critical approach also stresses the role “power” has for our perception of what is socially meaningful in the first place. The dominant knowledges in each context, is a result of power, and not necessarily “true”, but one out of many ways to perceive the world. However, some, critical approaches take this criticalness a step further, and see it their *objective* to shed light on underprivileged knowledge to generate social change (Duvall & Chowdhury, 2011; Nygaard, 2017). Among practice theorists, this objective of social change is sometimes categorized as a “normative” practice approach (Cornut, 2017).

In the following, I will introduce practice theory in IR and then conceptualize practice based on this type of work in IR, and then make an argument for why social change *should* be the ambition of practice theorists in some cases, and that the Norwegian politics of nuclear disarmament illustrate as an example for why.

3.1 Practice theory in IR

The acknowledgment of the relationship between knowledge and power, is also a preoccupation of practice theorists in International Relations (IR) (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014). Following the ‘linguistic turn’ or post-positivist turn in social sciences the last generation, more literature has been dedicated to the power of language; “discourse” in particular, but also “practice”, which is sometimes referred to as “language games” (Gadinger, 2018; Neumann, 2016). Discourse and practice, as concepts, are closely interlinked, but they differ in important aspects. Discourse is, firstly, a precondition for practice. It is “a system for the production of statements, and [...] the preconditions for what you can say, what truth claims you may make, and be taken seriously” (Neumann 2019: p. 7). For that reason, the practices are the effects of discourse (Neumann 2019: p. 7-8). Discourse, is the impersonal preconditions for social action, and practice is the study of social action itself, on a physical and habitual level (Neumann, 2016, pp. 627-628).

Moreover, one can conceptualize practices as ‘socially recognized forms of activity’ (Neumann, 2016) or “competent performances” (Adler & Pouliot, 2011). For example, if one is studying the practices of decision-makers in a specific policy domain, as is the endeavour

of this research project, one is interested in the tacit “know-how” that disposes people to act the way they do, as competent players of this particular domain (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014; Neumann, 2016). As such, one might say that the preoccupation of practice theorists is not only the knowledge-power nexus, but the “know-how”-power nexus, in terms of its focus on how inherited knowledge and experience influence practices, as social acts, that are connected to *knowing* what is socially expected to do or to say in a given context (Neumann, 2016). This is also the reason why some scholars focus on the role of “expertise”, or “experts” in practice studies, for example in studies of diplomats, or the focus on “epistemic communities” (Haas, 1992; Sending, 2015).

3.2 Practices and social change

Even though there are experts, or “practitioners” in different policy domains, competence is never recognized for good in practice, and is subject to endless contestation (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014, p. 895) As a result, practices are both the vehicle for reproduction but also from where social change originates (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014; Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 16; Duvall & Chowdhury, 2011; Neumann, 2016; Schindler & Wille, 2015). However, as argued by Schindler & Wille, the problem of most practice approaches, is that they struggle with the problem of change. These difficulties are due to the dominance of practice theory that stresses “the patterned and repetitive nature of practice and emphasizes the unconscious reproduction of social order” (Schindler & Wille, 2015, p. 331). These practice approaches, it can be argued, is often neglecting the instability of practice. Moreover, they also indirectly contribute to the (re)production of the practices they study. I argue, from the perspective of a “normative” practice approach, that scholars responsibility is to engage with the world in a critical way, which not only means against the alienation of the dominated at all costs (Cornut, 2017, p. 19), but from a perspective of reflection, where it should be possible to argue that some perspectives are relatively better, or more valid, than others²⁵.

²⁵ Berling and Bueger (2017) argue in such terms in their article “Expertise in the age of post-factual politics: An outline of reflexive strategies” (Berling & Bueger, 2017)

3.3 The critical practice approach

With this background, I suggest a critical practice approach that (1); lends insights from *practice theorists* in IR, in terms of ethnographically analysing the:

‘competent performances’, and *‘social acts of know-how’ of nuclear practitioners*,

following the definitions of Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (Adler & Pouliot, 2011), Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Vincent Pouliot (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014), and Iver Neumann (Neumann, 2016). This definition was the starting point for the interviews with nuclear practitioners.

In the analysis I will use (2) *the critical framework of ideology critique* (Egeland, 2021) that provides a critical framework for analysing such practices. Egeland (2021) argues that discourse and practices of nuclear-armed states and its allies, can be conceptualized as an ideology (of nuclear order). Ideology is conceptualized as [...] “the “imaginary maps” people rely on to make sense of, and act in, the world» (Egeland, 2021, p. 3). The task of ideology critique, is to uncover and analyse how these imaginary maps reproduce certain social arrangements, and not others (Egeland, 2021, p. 3). Ideology here, is thus similar to what some practice theorists call “*tacit knowledge*”, or “*epistemic*” practice, which can be defined as practices of making generalizable claims about certain objects by drawing particulars together (data, facts, claims), to manipulate these objects (Bueger, 2015, p. 7). The mainstream argument in the nuclear debate that “nuclear weapons reduce the likelihood of war”, is an example of a heuristic shortcut that manipulate the object of nuclear disarmament (Egeland, 2021)

As argued by Egeland, the current ideology of nuclear order is formally wedded to the pursuit of a “sublime object” of a world without nuclear weapons, but its underlying assumptions contradicts the logic of nuclear abolishment (Egeland, 2021, p. 1).

The ideology of nuclear order is maintained by discourse and practice that promote the following:

1. The ambition to move nuclear war heads to zero, but in the “long-term”

2. Nuclear deterrence is an essential and objective precondition for international security and stability;
3. To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to dangerous hands;
4. The idea that the world is on the precipice of a new and dangerous era;
5. Being optimistic about undertaking “practical” and “pragmatic” diplomatic steps of nuclear disarmament, that simultaneously maintains nuclear deterrence as a leading principle

I have applied these five criteria to my debate about the Norwegian debate for it to be more relevant within existing debates about global nuclear politics. The criteria are used as a point of reference in my analysis of the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament in chapter 6.

Finally (3) I argue that a study of the *Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament needs to be supplemented with a normative component to be critical.*

«In nuclear politics, critical work has two main features: first is a political and normative challenge to the existence of nuclear weapons and the acceptability of deterrence, and a desire to explain why non-proliferation has occurred and why – along with disarmament – it would be beneficial to world order» (Burke, 2016, p. 3)

Despite how Egeland’s ideology critique is *critical* in arguing that the ideology of nuclear order is an obstacle for nuclear disarmament, Egeland simultaneously holds that the primacy task of ideology critique is *not* to “compare normative systems” (Egeland, 2021, p. 3). My approach on the other hand, take scholars’ normative bias for granted and argue that normativity is a strength in critical scholarship. Consequently, the critical practice approach that I suggest make the case for replacing the ideology of nuclear order with an agency-oriented humanitarian order. The methodology of the critical practice approach will be a contribution to the current academic literature on Norwegian nuclear politics that problematize the assumption that nuclear weapons provide states with security.

3.4 Method and materials

The data about practices in this study is based on several data that can be sorted into two categories. The first category is publicly available *documents*, including newspaper articles

and op-eds, academic research, and documents about Norwegian nuclear politics. The second category is in-depth *interviews* with Norwegian “nuclear practitioners”. Nuclear practitioners here are an umbrella term for senior researchers, NGO-representatives and bureaucrats and diplomats from the MFA, that all have in common that they work or have worked with nuclear weapons and disarmament related questions in or behalf of Norway (see full list of interviewees in appendix 1).

In-dept interviews is useful if one wants to study opinions, attitudes, and experiences (Tjora, 2017, p. 114). In this study, I have used in-depth interviews to understand the practitioner’s “lifeworld” and experiences, especially how the practitioners reflected upon *their own* practices of nuclear disarmament, as well as the *Norwegian* practices of nuclear disarmament. In this study, I interviewed 12 nuclear practitioners. I strived for a sample of practitioners from various backgrounds and with various opinions in my selection of the interviewees, to make it representative of the variety of opinions that exist in the Norwegian debate about nuclear disarmament and the TPNW. The sample selection approach of the 12 interviewees can thus be characterized as a purposive sample (Nygaard, 2017, p. 145). Most of the participants were selected based on their own, or their organization’s appearance in a public document the MFA published in 2018 “*Utredning om Traktaten om forbud mot kjernevåpen (Forbudsstraktaten)*” about the TPNW, where various scholars and research institutes and NGOs were listed as “experts” and/or of relevance for this particular topic (See Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). However, I have not solely relied on this document. Some of the interviewees were recruited using the snowball sampling approach, in other words, with the help or recommendation of the people I have already interviewed (Bryman, 2016). It is hard to determine the size of the ‘universe of units’ that would fit the description ‘nuclear practitioner’. But as several of the interviewees argued: “*it is a field where most people know (of) each other*” (Interview 12, 2021). In this study, however, all participants have participated *anonymously*.

In the interviews, I wanted the nuclear practitioners’ opinions about the following topics:

- (1) *The history of the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW-processes* and the claim about a Norwegian “policy shift”.
- (2) *Norway’s policy of nuclear disarmament from 2013-2021*, with the focus on what knowledge and actors that influence this policy, and their reflections about it

3.5 Research ethics

There are many methodological ways for studying practices, and there is no theory, or no unified ‘practice approach’ (Cornut, 2017; Gadinger, 2018). My method is therefore one out of many ways to study practices in IR. A weakness of my approach, when it comes to the collection of data, is that ethnographic “observation” might have been a better approach to study practices. Drawing from lessons of sociology, some practice scholars suggest that the study of practices should involve “going native”, in terms of observing the practices as they are “acted out” by competent practitioners (Cornut, 2017; Neumann, 2016). However, due to the limitations of writing a master’s thesis during a pandemic, digital and phone-interviews with practitioners seemed like the next best approach. On the other hand, being an intern at the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has in certain ways brought me closer to the ambition of “going native”, in terms of experiencing how the politics of nuclear disarmament in Norway works. It also led me to have certain biases, for example about *the history about Norway and the humanitarian initiative*, prior to the interviews²⁶. However a critical practice approach take for granted the subjectivity of the researcher, and that the findings from the interviews are part of the “struggles of the field”, not necessarily facts (Cornut, 2017). Moreover, the position at ICAN, helped framed the research agenda. It has been argued that ICAN International’s strategy [...] “marked the direct application of critical, post-positivist IR theory to practical multilateral diplomacy” (Argued in Bolton & Minor (2014). See also Ritchie & Egeland, 2018, p. 133). So the choice to do an interpretivist and critical framework focused on “language”, might have been influenced by conversation with my colleagues at ICAN, that work a lot with “de-bunking” nuclear deterrence as a legitimate category in the debate about nuclear disarmament (ICAN Norge, 2020). Kjølvi Egeland, is also a researcher a type of researcher that are concerned with the knowledge-power nexus, and I was first introduced to his work at ICAN. This not, however, influence the validity of his work.

3.6 Summary of the critical practice approach

In this chapter, I have presented my choices of methodological lens and methods, which is inspired by “practice theory” in IR. The data about the Norwegian practices is collected from

²⁶ As will be described in Chapter 4, this history has more nuances to it than I first realized.

in-depth interviews, as well as from publicly available documents. The findings has been analysed according to *Egeland's ideology critique* (Egeland, 2021) and a *critical practice approach*. The former suggests that the mainstream nuclear politics constitutes an “ideology” that are obstructing nuclear disarmament in practice (Egeland, 2021). The latter is an approach to practices that are inspired by conceptualizations of practices as “competent performances” and “social acts of know-how” (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014; Adler & Pouliot, 2011; Neumann, 2016), but with a more normative agenda. As a normative approach, the critical practice approach takes for granted the moral “superiority”, or fairness, of the humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons, compared to the mainstream approach. The critical practice approach that I will apply in this study, is thus a supplement to the academic literature that contest the competence of mainstream nuclear politics, *including* on normative grounds (See for example Burke, 2016; Pelopidas, 2016; Wilson, 2008).

4.0 The history about the humanitarian initiative in Norway

In the following chapter, I will present the findings about the history about the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW in Norway. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there is an ongoing the debate about whether Norway’s abstention from the humanitarian initiative to nuclear weapons in the UN (from approximately 2014 and onwards), should be understood as a policy shift or continuity, cf. RQ2. The mainstream position holds that the opposition to the TPNW is in accordance with Norway’s broadly shared foreign policy platform, with the relationship and commitments to NATO and Unites States as the most important consideration in foreign policy (Interview 2, 2021; Interview 5, 2021; Interview 6, 2021; Tetzschner, 2020). The supporters of a policy shift, on the other hand, argue that the Norwegian abstention from the humanitarian initiative was a sudden policy shift after years of commitment to a humanitarian agenda in the realm of disarmament, including to nuclear disarmament (Interview 1, 2021; Interview 7, 2021; Interview 9, 2021). In the following chapter, I will present these, and other disagreements in the debate, and the most important findings derived from my interviews with nuclear practitioners and relevant literature. This section will provide background information and a context for chapter 5, that presents the key practices of Norway’s current nuclear disarmament policy.

4.1 The ‘humanitarian initiative’

The humanitarian initiative, or ‘approach’, to nuclear weapons is a *facts-based* approach to nuclear weapons (Interview 2, 2021). A facts-based approach in this context, means an approach that hold scientific facts and documentation of the humanitarian consequences that have resulted, or may result from the use of nuclear weapons should be the starting point, and primary consideration of international nuclear disarmament (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria, 2014a). Moreover, the humanitarian approach is emphasizing the unacceptable harm that victims of nuclear explosions and nuclear testing have experienced. It also recognizes that no state or international response will have the capacity to circumvent the humanitarian harm that would result from a future nuclear explosion (Interview 2, 2021; Løvold, 2020). Moreover, it is the realization that nuclear weapons, if used, have the potential to make irreversible harm to the global environment, food security, and the global economy, which is ultimately a threat to the survival of humanity. Finally, the humanitarian approach reaffirms that ‘human security’ is for *all states* (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria, 2014a; Interview 2, 2021).

The focus on human security, is also a move away from the traditional focus on the security of *nation-states*, with the recognition that the humanitarian impacts of a nuclear explosion will not be constrained by national borders (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria, 2014a; Interview 7, 2021; Interview 9, 2021; Interview 11, 2021). Moreover, the humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons started out from a growing scepticism about the notion that nuclear weapons provide nations with ‘security’ to begin with, which have been the common assumption about nuclear weapons since the end of World War 2 (WW2). The humanitarian approach rejects the notion that a weapon of mass destruction can *ever* bring about security (Borrie, 2014; Interview 7, 2021; See also Løvold, 2020).

The facts-based, humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons as part of the global agenda on nuclear disarmament, was initiated in the mid-2000s. It was inspired by the facts-based and humanitarian approach of the processes of banning land mines in the 1990s, and cluster munitions in the mid-2000s²⁷ (Interview 9, 2021; Interview 11, 2021). In addition to having a

²⁷ That entered into force in 2011, but was adopted by the UN in 2008 (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2021b).

facts-based and humanitarian justification, these two processes were *different* from previous ban-processes in terms of how they were diplomatically carried out (Interview 11, 2021; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2021c). The key to their successes was allegedly that the processes were *carried out by a small group of states, 'outside' the formal and institutionalized systems*, which gave more freedom to engage relevant actors, including from civil society, but also the freedom to exclude others²⁸ (Interview 11, 2021).

Drawing on the experience from the processes of banning land mines and cluster munitions, Norway was among the first countries to announce its support of a humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons disarmament. For Norway, the ambition of a 'nuclear weapons free world' was shared by a unanimous *Storting* (parliament) in 2008 (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008). This expressed ambition was, at the time, shared by nuclear-armed and non-nuclear armed states alike, including the United States, whose president [Obama] expressed his country's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons in April 2009 (Freedman, 2013). In 2010, the NPT Review Conference final document also expressed the concern for nuclear weapons *humanitarian consequences*, that gave the impetus to future statements and initiatives, that eventually would lead to the TPNW in 2017 (ICAN, 2021d)²⁹.

Based on the positive trends in the international cooperation on disarmament, with the recent success of the ban on cluster munitions in 2010, Norway made several efforts to enable a similar, humanitarian process to nuclear weapons (Interview 11, 2021). The key to the successes of the former processes, was, as mentioned above, that the diplomatic processes were carried out 'outside' the institutionalized diplomatic arenas, and by few states and NGOs. The latter was key in order to mobilize the necessary support the states would need to justify a ban on the national level (Interview 11, 2021). The International Campaign to

²⁸ This observation was made from of MFA-diplomat that I have interviewed in this study, that partook in the "Ottawa-process" (the ban on land mines process) and the process of banning cluster munitions in the 2000s. This MFA-representative was also involved in the Oslo-Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in 2013, the first conference of the humanitarian initiative to nuclear disarmament. This particular individual's insights into the history of the diplomatic processes (and practices) of Norwegian nuclear disarmament politics is therefore "first-hand", drawing from his own experience from within the ban-processes itself (Interview 11, 2021).

²⁹ Key initiatives in this respect was the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) resolution appealing to nation-states to negotiate a legally binding international agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons (2011), the humanitarian statement [following the NPT review Conference] (2012), and the humanitarian conferences (ICAN, 2021d; Interview 2, 2021).

Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) fitted this description, according to the MFA-diplomat. As a ‘partner organization’ consisting of NGOs with a shared ambition of banning nuclear weapons, it quickly rallied large support for a humanitarian reframing of nuclear weapons, and the logic of legally banning them. The facts-based, humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons thus quickly created a new dynamic in the conversation about nuclear disarmament (Interview 11, 2021). In this period, the Norwegian MFA was one of the key financial contributors to ICAN. By 2013, while simultaneously working with the ICAN-movement, Austria, Mexico, and Norway, had formed a small, ‘working group’, that were going to look at nuclear disarmament from a humanitarian perspective (Interview 11, 2021). Norway held the first humanitarian conference, *the Oslo-Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons* in March 2013 (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

The humanitarian conferences that started with the Oslo-Conference, eventually led to a demand for a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons in 2014, at the Conferences in Nayarit, Mexico and Vienna, Austria (ICAN, 2021d). However, at the time a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons was ‘on the table’ in Mexico and then in Austria with the ‘humanitarian pledge’, Norway had withdrawn from the process³⁰ (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria, 2014b). For ICAN, as well as for many other nuclear practitioners, the Norwegian withdrawal from the humanitarian initiative led too much confusion (Lennane, 2015). In 2015, Norway also abstained from voting to a UN resolution about the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons [L.37], as well as reduced its financial support to ICAN and its partner organizations (Rønneberg, 2017; United Nations, 2015)

In the following years, Norway also increasingly announced its dissatisfaction with the demand of the humanitarian conferences, and was among the first states to announce after the United States that it would not partake in the UN conferences to negotiate a legal ban on nuclear weapons (Egeland, 2017b). This diplomatic ‘turn’, or behaviour, caused some scholars and NGOs to question whether the Norwegian governmental change in October 2013, from a labour-led government to a conservative-right government, had impacted Norway’s interests in nuclear disarmament. The abstention from the humanitarian initiative, thus led to the argument of a *policy shift* (Egeland, 2017a; Erstad, 2017).

³⁰ Here, “withdrawn from the process” means that Norway did not vote in favour of the Austrian Pledge (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria, 2014b)

Many of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study, argue that a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons never was Norway's intention with the leading role in the humanitarian initiative, and with hosting the Oslo-Conference (Interview 5, 2021). Given the many similarities between the humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons and previous ban-processes, as well as statements of the need for a ban on nuclear weapons, it seems plausible to argue that a ban was not on the agenda for *some* of the Norwegian decision-makers (see for example MFA-representative Jan Petersen's statement at the NPT Conference in 2012, where Norway announced that it would arrange the Oslo-Conference (Reaching Critical Will, 2012). However, if a ban was on the agenda of the MFA, it was not publicly communicated at the time of the Oslo-Conference (Interview 2, 2021; Interview 12, 2021). For one of the MFA-representatives interviewed in this study, there was never a doubt that the humanitarian initiative's aim was to eventually produce a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons, similarly to the previous bans (Interview 11, 2021). Moreover, a ban was discussed in the corridors of the MFA at the time of the Oslo-Conference, but it was too early to discuss it outside the MFA (Interview 11, 2021). The same representative however, said that it is possible that some of the involved political actors, for example from *Arbeiderpartiet*, assumed that a legal ban on nuclear weapons was so unlikely that they thought the humanitarian initiative would be an 'easy' initiative to support to gain political votes. In other words, a case that would be an easy win, without lots of sacrifices in practice (Interview 11, 2021)

When Norway abstained from the humanitarian initiative from around 2014-2015, the initiative lost key competence, but more importantly, most of its financial support to continue the process outside the UN system, which had been the key to the former successes (Interview 11, 2021). For the same MFA-representative, another problem with Norway's withdrawal from the humanitarian initiative was that Austria and Mexico were left alone to run the process, which impacted the ability to discuss the 'security-dimension' of a possible ban on nuclear weapons (Interview 11, 2021):

«The humanitarian «track» has its limits, because at some point, you need to have the discussion about security politics, and security political realities. The problem is, we never got that far, because we [Norway] were already out of the process» (Interview 11, 2021).

The Norwegian withdrawal from the process was thus problematic, because Austria and Mexico were “not considered to have a lot of security political knowledge in the diplomatic community”. So, when Norway disappeared out of the process, something happened, according to the MFA-representative (Interview 11, 2021). The most severe thing that happened to the process, was however, that the funding stopped. Consequently, Austria had no other option but to ‘bring the process back in’ to the UN system due to financial reasons. This was detrimental for the necessary diplomatic process, that had led to previous successes of banning land mines and cluster munitions according to the MFA-representative:

We do not know what would have happened if Norway had stayed in the process, but the treaty might have been different, and the dynamic of the process might have been broader, which would have made it more difficult for allied [in NATO] to simply dismiss it (Interview 11, 2021)

4.2 Policy shift or continuity?

Although the abstention from the humanitarian initiative represents a change of policy, most nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study, disagree with the claim of a ‘policy shift’, in terms of a drastic change in Norway’s policy position on nuclear disarmament (Interview 6, 2021; Interview 12, 2021). While it is no doubt that Norway took a leading role in the humanitarian initiative, and later abandoned the same initiative few years later (Rønneberg, 2017), there are several reasons why a ‘policy shift’ might not be the right description of this change.

Firstly, one can argue that a passive and submissive position in security politics is the norm of Norwegian policy. Several of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study was in fact dissatisfied with Norway’s current position, and uncritical acceptance of the will of NATO and the United States (Interview 1, 2021; Interview 7, 2021; Interview 8, 2021; Interview 9, 2021; Interview 11, 2021; Interview 12, 2021). Consequently, when Norway took a leading position to a process that eventually led to a ban on nuclear weapons, *the* strategic weapon of its own alliance [NATO], this was ultimately outside the norm, and outside the Norwegian foreign policy platform. The NATO-membership and the relationship with the United States is a shared pillar, or policy platform, which is often called the ‘Norwegian consensus’ in

foreign policy³¹. The most used argument for Norway's policy change is therefore that it was pressured to do so, especially from pressure from the United States (Interview 1, 2021; Interview 9, 2021).

Some authors have argued that the current government (from 2013-) sees loyalty to the NATO-alliance as more important "image" priority than its predecessor, that was more concerned about maintaining a 'humanitarian image' (Egeland, 2017a). I, however, argue that both Arbeiderpartiet and Høyre, seem to agree that the former is more important³². Based on the interviews with nuclear practitioners, it seems that while the arguments about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use is well-understood, it comes second if 'national security' is perceived to be at stake. One practitioner argued that the Norwegian abstention from the humanitarian initiative is not a lack of understanding of (or disagreement with) the humanitarian consequence-argument, but a lack of political will to challenge the United States and NATO (Interview 1, 2021). The "speech acts" on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are, however, downplayed due to the close link between the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW.

Consequently, the Norwegian withdrawal from the humanitarian initiative can be described as a shift 'back' to its normal position, "safely anchored within NATO's nuclear policy" (Interview 11, 2021; Interview 12, 2021). In these terms, nuclear practitioners that argue that Norway have abandoned the humanitarian initiative in the nuclear disarmament agenda are right, but wrong to believe that these efforts were more important than nuclear weapons and Norway's NATO-relations, in the first place. The humanitarian reframing of nuclear weapons with the intent of a ban, was therefore more an exception than the rule of Norway's efforts of nuclear disarmament.

An argument that is often used to supplement the necessity of the Norwegian abstention from the ban-process is how *Norway's external security environment changed in this period*, making a ban nuclear weapons much more unrealistic (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018):

³¹ Whether it is a consensus, or the idea of a consensus is a socially constructed practice in Norwegian foreign policy that delegitimizes political debate, will be discussed below (see 5.1)

³² In the parliamentary debate the TPNW in 2018 Arbeiderpartiet's representative and leader of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence [*Utenriks- og forsvarskomiteen*], Anniken Huitfeldt, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ine Eriksen Søreide, seem to agree that the NATO-arguments triumphs the arguments of the TPNW (Stortinget, 2018)

“The Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons resulted in two follow-up conferences on the same topic in Mexico and Austria during 2014. These last two conferences took place during a period marked by a tightening of relations between Russia and Western countries following Russia’s unlawful annexation of Crimea”
(Utenriksdepartementet, 2018)

Although the argument a hostile environment for drafting a new international law make a lot of sense, most of the interviewed nuclear practitioners disagree that this was the primary reason for the Norwegian change of policy. It was allied pressure (Interview 1, 2021; Interview 7, 2021; Interview 9, 2021)

4.3 Summary of the histories of the humanitarian initiative

Based on my findings about the history of the humanitarian initiative and TPNW, I argue that the Norwegian opposition to the TPNW was not a ‘policy shift’, but a return to (the new) ‘normal’³³. *The humanitarian initiative*, including the goal of a legal instrument to ban nuclear weapons, was the intention for some, but not all the Norwegian-decision makers that participated in the process. If it was the goal, few believed that it would happen in practice (Egeland, 2019; Interview 11, 2021). The humanitarian initiative to nuclear weapons was inspired by the diplomatic ‘success formula’ of banning land mines and cluster munitions. In that sense, it was a very deliberate process resting on a set of diplomatic practices, involving few actors, such as the working group of Austria, Mexico and Norway, and civil society organizations such as ICAN, with a plan to work outside the UN system. However, Norway gave up to this initiative due to allied pressure, a position that seems to be the current norm in security politics. Interestingly, most of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study was *dissatisfied* with Norway’s current position of uncritical acceptance of the will of NATO and the United States (Interview 1, 2021; Interview 7, 2021; Interview 8, 2021; Interview 9, 2021; Interview 11, 2021; Interview 12, 2021). Within this context, the humanitarian initiative seems to be more of the exception than the rule in Norwegian nuclear policy in recent years. Most nuclear practitioners agree that Norway abandoned its humanitarian principles in the domain of nuclear disarmament, but that these efforts was never more important than nuclear

³³ Several of the nuclear practitioners argued that Norway’s nuclear politics in the first decades after WW2 was more critical. As argued by Skjønsberg (2015), Norway’s announced that it would not host nuclear weapons in times of peace and thus “stood up” against the majority in NATO. One of the MFA-representatives also argued that it was more “critical thinking” about nuclear politics in the 1970s (Interview 11, 2021).

weapons and Norway's NATO-commitments. The NATO-membership and the close relationship with the United States is a "shared pillar", or policy platform of Norway's defence and security policy, which is often justified as the "Norwegian consensus". In the following, I will present the current practices of Norwegian nuclear politics and make an argument for why they contribute to manipulate the "object" of nuclear disarmament. The practices make up a narrative about how the TPNW will not remove nuclear warheads, only enhance insecurity in world politics.

5.0. The practices of Norwegian nuclear disarmament

What are the competent performances of nuclear disarmament according to Norwegian nuclear practitioners? In this section, I will present the most important findings about the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament from 2013-2021. 'Norwegian practices' refer to the practices of the current political administration that have governed the foreign policy since October 2013. The policy position of the current administration has been opposed to a ban on nuclear weapons since this was suggested at the Humanitarian Conferences in Mexico and Austria in 2014. As such, the five practices I will present in this section are the practices that are considered 'competent' for the nuclear practitioners that opposes a legal ban on nuclear weapons and the TPNW. I argue that being competent for this administration (and other nuclear practitioners that opposes the TPNW), primarily means doing what is perceived to be the most useful to maintain *social relations* with the United States and other NATO-states, and '*national security*'. Consequently, the five practices have in common the perception that nuclear weapons remain essential to maintain this.

Because a study of practices both stresses the repetitive nature of practice and emphasize the (un)conscious reproduction of social order, as well as running the risk of doing exactly that (Schindler & Wille, 2015), I want to again emphasize again this project's critical practice approach. This section is both about presenting my findings, but also about problematizing how some of the current practices contribute to delegitimizing the humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons and the TPNW. This is problematic because the humanitarian approach is a *normatively* better framing of nuclear disarmament and world "order".

The first finding about the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament (1) is *the practices of consensus*, which is the practice of constructing a (linguistic) consensus or broad agreement, about Norway's current disarmament policy against the TPNW. The second (2)

finding is the *practices of constructing (linguistic) dichotomies*, or irreconcilable differences, between the TPNW and Norway's national interests. The TPNW is 'idealist(ic)', as compared to 'realistic', is in favour of 'one-sided disarmament', instead of to 'mutual disarmament', rely on 'political' arguments, as compared to apolitical 'technical' expertise of the current regime. The third (3) finding is *the practices of nuclear deterrence*. The latter is closely related to practices of obedience (conformity) – to the interests of NATO in general, and of the United States in particular. The fourth finding (4) is *the practices of the 'differentness' of the nuclear-armed states and its allies as well as of nuclear weapons*, compared to other states (and actors), and weapons. The practices of differentness have resulted in a practice of "exceptionality" and the idea that norms of nuclear disarmament do not apply to nuclear-armed states and its allies. The fifth finding (5) is *the practices of perceiving alternative imaginaries of nuclear weapons and disarmament uncomfortable and dangerous*. This practice has resulted in reduced funding to institutes and NGOs that support the TPNW.

5.1 The practices of constructing consensus

The first practice is the construction of consensus, or broad agreement, about Norway's current disarmament policy against the TPNW, and in favour of status quo politics. The practices of consensus here primarily refer to the 'speech acts' that signify a broad agreement about the current policy position, without necessarily referring to the word consensus.

According to the speech acts of the current decision-makers, there is a broad agreement:

(1) within the Norwegian parliament about not supporting the TPNW

(2) between NATO-states about nuclear weapons role in the alliance, and consequently a consensus about not supporting the TPNW

(3) between the nuclear-armed states, and therefore its allies, to oppose the TPNW

5.1.1 The consensus within parliament and across political divisions

The speech acts of consensus within parliament, is the speech acts that signify, or proclaims that the Norwegian opposition to the TPNW is the result of a broadly shared foreign policy platform, and thus widely shared across political divisions (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018).

One of the practices is to frequently repeat the common goal of Norway and other NATO-states is a nuclear weapons free world, but that “*the NPT is the cornerstone of the Norwegian nuclear disarmament policy, and remains “the most credible means to reach that goal”*”, not the TPNW (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). As I will argue in 5.2., this practice of construction a dichotomy between the NPT and TPNW works to delegitimize the latter.

Moreover, Norway’s NATO-membership and close relationship with the United States as the “*widely shared defence- and security platform*” is frequently repeated as arguments against the TPNW, that are accused of violating this consensus (Tetzschner, 2020). This argument is frequently repeated, even though two independent reports, including the government’s own report³⁴ has concluded that there are no juridical obstacles between The North Atlantic Treaty³⁵ and signing the TPNW (Nystuen et al., 2018; Utenriksdepartementet, 2018).

In parliament, it seems to also have increased the threshold for obtaining knowledge about the TPNW. For example, in February 2018, the Storting had a debate about whether to make a report about the possible implications on Norway’s NATO-membership if it were to adopt the TPNW³⁶. Several of the parliamentarians argued against making such a report because it could lead to confusion in NATO. In fact, the parliamentary debate illustrate how the consensus-argument is so well-established that to challenge led to arguments about opposing the national interest (Stortinget, 2018).

The speech acts of consensus in the Norwegian context, are mostly justified the bureaucratic practice of referring to long reports or resolutions, to back up ones claims. I argue that this is a strategy for (1) justifying one’s competence on the matter, but also (2) to make counter arguments more difficult. For example, the consensus about the current policy position, is often backed up by the report to the Storting (white paper) *Meld. St. 27 (2007-2008)* and the “*unanimous*” resolution to the Storting 623 [*Vedtak 623*] in 2016 (Interview 2, 2021; Utenriksdepartementet, 2018):

“In 2016, there was a parliamentary debate, where you had a unanimous vote in favour of having a balanced, mutual, irreversible, and verifiable approach to nuclear disarmament, as the foundation for the long-term work for a possible legal framework. This has been the

³⁴ *Utredningen* about the possible implications the TPNW were likely to have for Norway’s NATO-membership (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018)

³⁵ The North Atlantic Treaty, or Washington Treaty, form the legal basis for NATO, and therefore also for the membership of states (Nystuen, Egeland, & Hugo, 2018)

³⁶ A report they eventually agreed to make and that later resulted in the *Utredning*, as mentioned above

official nuclear policy of the red-green government, and is also the foundation for this government” (Interview 2, 2021; Stortinget, 2016)

While it is true that the NPT is considered a key treaty to nuclear disarmament, the United States an important ally, and the NATO-membership a key “pillar” of Norwegian defence- and security policy, one consequence of the prevalence of the consensus is that it has also constructed a narrative about a Norwegian consensus against the TPNW.

The argument of a consensus culture in Norwegian foreign policy is not new (see for example (Leira et al., 2017 ; Lodgaard, 2007; Sjursen, 2015). Helene Sjursen (2015) argues however, that the claim of a political consensus in parliament is not only wrongful, but more a result of a political culture where consensus is considered a virtue. Sjursen thus criticize the Norwegian political culture for considering disagreement as “burdensome”. Especially disagreements in foreign policy. As a result, parties with opposing views is likely to silently accept a political outcome they disagree with³⁷ (Sjursen, 2015). Several of the interviewed nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study, seem to agree with this observation. In a recent op-ed, two Norwegian parliamentarians also wrote that “*there is a tendency [in the Parliament] to look at obtaining knowledge and debate [about nuclear politics] as burdensome*” (Marthinsen & Westhrin, 2021). Many argued that there is a very limited debate about nuclear weapons in parliament, but also in the media, and even in academia. Some of them also saw this lack of a debate about foreign policy as a “*democratic problem*” (Interview 7, 2021; Interview 8, 2021). I argue that the lack of debate about nuclear weapons might have been caused by the practices of constructing consensus, and practices of considering consensus a virtue, which ultimately make debate unnecessary. However, despite a large debate about nuclear weapons in Norway, one can argue that the practice of constructing a consensus against the TPNW is a practice that are undergoing much competence contestation.

³⁷ In Norwegian, she argues for a “*skinnenighet*” (Det Norske Akademi for Språk og Litteratur; Det Norske Akademi for Språk og Litteratur; Sjursen, 2015).

5.1.2 Consensus within NATO

There is also a practice of constructing a consensus within NATO and between NATO-states about nuclear weapons role in the alliance, and consequently a consensus about not supporting the TPNW.

Common arguments are that “*no NATO-states participated in the TPNW-conference [except the Netherlands], nor has voted in favour of the TPNW*” (Stortinget, 2018). Moreover, non-NATO states that are perceived to have similar interests as Norway, such as Sweden, Finland and Switzerland are used as examples of states that perceive “*the TPNW is against their national security interest*” (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). While it is true that none of the states mentioned above have so far have signed the TPNW, it is not a consensus within these NATO-states against the TPNW. In fact, several large cities within NATO-countries have signed an appeal in favour of their nation signing the TPNW. In Belgium (one of the states that host American nuclear weapons), the new government declaration speaks positively about the impact of the TPNW to multilateral nuclear disarmament (ICAN, 2021a, 2021c).

The stationing of nuclear weapons in member states is in fact a historically controversial topic within the alliance. As argued by Maïka Skjønberg:

*“It is not a consensus within NATO about the [stationing of] American nuclear weapons in Europe. The fact is that their stationing was controversial from the start. NATO-states such as Denmark and Norway refused to host nuclear weapons in times of peace, as early as the 1950s. Since the end of the cold war, there have been several attempts to take the war heads out of Europe, or at least start an open and transparent dialogue about it within NATO. None of the attempts have succeeded”*³⁸ (Skjønberg, 2017).

Moreover, Skjønberg argues that several NATO-states wanted to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in NATO's defence and security policy prior to the revision of the Strategic Concept in 2010 (Skjønberg, 2017). In fact, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway sent a the Secretary General of NATO at the time, Mr Anders Fogh Rasmussen in February 2010 (Vanackere, Westerwelle, Asselborn, Verhagen, & Gahr Støre, 2010). The letter proposed “*to include the topic of NATO's nuclear policy in our evolving security environment in the agenda*” for the meeting (Vanackere et al., 2010). It also welcomed

³⁸ Unofficial translation from Norwegian.

the President Obamas initiative of “*substantial reductions in armaments*”, and “*reducing the role of nuclear weapons*” in the alliance (Vanackere et al., 2010). According to Skjønsberg, the DPPR (2012) was also originally intended as an attempt by some of the states to discuss the potential of withdrawing the B-61 nuclear war heads out of Europe. Due to heavy protests from the nuclear-armed states, most notably France, what was supposed to be a Strategic Nuclear Posture Review, became a Defence Posture Review (Skjønsberg, 2017).

This debate is however, not included in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Utredning about the TPNW. On the contrary, NATOs Strategic Concept (2010), the DDPR (2012) and Summit *Communiqués*, is argued to “*make up the framework that Norway has committed to in NATO that was unanimously adopted at NATOs summits by the heads of states in the NATOs member states*” (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). Although it is true that they were unanimously adopted, the history of the making of the Strategic Concept, and the DPPR, was far from an undisputed process. It is a story of competence contestation over the role nuclear weapons should have in the alliance, not a story about consensus.

5.1.3 Consensus between nuclear-armed states and allies

Finally, it is the practices, or speech acts that signify a consensus between nuclear-armed states and its allies to never sign the TPNW. This practice is expressed in the frequently used argument that “*nuclear weapons is a challenge, but as long as other states have them, we must have them too*” (Interview 11, 2021). This is also NATOs primary justification for the maintenance of nuclear weapons in the alliance’s strategic concept (NATO, 2010).

Another much used argument is that “[...] *The TPNW will not remove a single nuclear war head because none of the states that have nuclear weapons, will adopt it*”³⁹ (Brende, 2017)

The consequences of these statements as “facts” of international life are that they signify that being in favour of the TPNW is to be naïve, or ignorant due to the bad intentions of other, nuclear-armed states. I will elaborate the last point more in 5.4 about “the practices of differentness”. In short, it is the practices of (linguistically) differentiating between rogue and

³⁹ Unofficial translation from Norwegian

non-rogue states, where the Western-democratic states (and allies) are considered the only competent gatekeepers of nuclear weapons.

5.2 The practices of constructing dichotomies

The second practice of Norwegian nuclear decision-makers is the construction of dichotomies, or “irreconcilable differences” between the NPT and TPNW, that works to delegitimize the latter. This includes constructing a dichotomy between “realism and “idealism”, “mutual” and “one-sided” disarmament, and “technical” and “political”, respectively. This has led to a discussion where the TPNW is linguistically associated with “insecurity” and the NPT associated with “security”. Consequently, this has led to a debate where the arguments of the humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons and the TPNW is considered naïve, or partisan.

5.2.1 The realist-idealist dichotomy

The practice of the construction a dichotomy between realism and idealism, where the NPT, or current disarmament regime, is considered the ‘realistic’ approach, and the TPNW ‘idealist’, is one of the speech acts that are most frequently repeated by nuclear practitioners that oppose the TPNW (Braut-Hegghammer, 2020; Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). I argue that the construction of a dichotomy between realism and idealism to explain the differences between the NPT and TPNW is consciously used to delegitimise the latter. A statement from one of Norway’s leading scholars on nuclear weapons, exemplifies this practice:

“To achieve the goal about a nuclear weapons free world we will need both idealism and realism” (Braut-Hegghammer, 2020). Moreover, the Braut-Hegghammer argues that the TPNW does not take into consideration “*security political realities*”. The same argument is repeated in the Utredning, with the referral to NATOs Council’s statement of 2017: “*[T]he ban treaty is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture*” and “*in our view, disregards the realities of the increasingly challenging international security environment*” (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018)

Some of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study also used an “idealist-realist” divide when discussing the TPNW-NPT, where the TPNW was considered not to adhere to

political ‘realities’ (Interview 2, 2021; Interview 5, 2021; Interview 6, 2021). Some of the interviewees however, argued that the debate on nuclear weapons would have benefited from building down the idealist-realist dichotomy:

“It is also more a suppression technique than an well-founded argument” (Interview 7, 2021).

Another nuclear practitioners criticised how “balance of power” with nuclear weapons is considered “realist” but a nuclear accident happening is not (Interview 9, 2021).

5.2.2 The mutual disarmament vs. one-sided disarmament dichotomy

Another practice of the Norwegian decision-makers of nuclear disarmament, is the linguistic constructing of the claim that the TPNW, in comparison to the NPT, encourage one-sided disarmament, as compared to mutual disarmament (Søreide, 2020). One of the most used arguments against the TPNW is thus how it contradicts the widely shared political platform about successful nuclear weapons disarmament as *“balanced, mutual, irreversible, and verifiable”* (Søreide, 2020; Utenriksdepartementet, 2018).

For the NGO-representatives interviewed in this study, this dichotomy between mutual (NPT) and one-sided disarmament (TPNW) is very harmful for a constructive debate about the former. Many of the also disagree with the premise of the statement:

“When you join a treaty, you join it on behalf of your nation. If that means that the TPNW is “one-sided”, then, it is true, it is one-sided. But does it encourage one-sided disarmament? No.” (Interview 9, 2021)

Moreover, it is argued that the TPNW *“is a contribution to fulfil article 6 of the NPT”* (Interview 9, 2021). Several of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study, however, argued that the TPNW, like the NPT, needs to be *supplemented* with bilateral agreements between adversaries, to create the necessary trust for successful disarmament (Interview 9, 2021). This is also the norm in the domain of non-proliferation and disarmament. One example is the New START treaty between the United States and Russia that was recently renewed (U.S. Department of State, 2021).

5.2.3 The technical-political dichotomy

The practice of the dichotomy construction between the technical and political, is the speech acts that signify that the TPNW rely on ‘political’ arguments, as compared to apolitical ‘technical’ expertise of the current regime, such as the NPT. Consequently, there seems to be a widely shared assumption that technical expertise and political interest can be separated in the debate about nuclear weapons and disarmament. While the former is considered a virtue, the latter is considered a burden in Norway’s foreign policy. I argue that science and society are inextricably linked, and cannot be thought of independently of each other (Berling & Bueger, 2017, p. 339). The practice of constructing this divide between technical (NPT) and political (TPNW), is however, a clever way to discredit the TPNW as partisan, compared to scientific expertise.

This practice is exemplified by the current description of the Norwegian nuclear disarmament politics as a case of “*technical diplomacy*”, and Norway as a pioneer within the technical diplomacy (MFA-representative Jørn Osmunden at Polyteknisk forening Norge, 2021). Verification is the most concrete example of Norway’s technical diplomacy. Verification of disarmament is about verifying, for example using inspections by international observants or satellite photos, that states get rid of their nuclear weapons according to what is decided in a given treaty (NAIL, 2020). It is a practice of current decision-makers to perceive it as an apolitical strategy to nuclear disarmament, although it is sometimes argued that “*the TPNW has weak verification mechanisms*” (Minister For Foreign Affairs, Ine E. Søreide in the Stortinget, 2018; Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). The Norwegian Research Institute NAIL on the contrary, have argued that the TPNW for most states have *better or the same* mechanisms for verification (NAIL, 2020).

There is also a widely used practice of perceiving some institutions as “technical”, and therefore stripped of political interest. This includes for example the Norwegian Armed Forces (*Forsvaret*), Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (*Direktoratet for strålevern og atomsikkerhet*), and Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (*Forsvarets forskningsinstitutt FFI*) (Interview 5, 2021; Interview 6, 2021; Interview 12, 2021). This topic largely divided the interviewed nuclear practitioners.

Some of the nuclear practitioners however, politized the resources Norway is now spending on verification for nuclear disarmament purposed, at the expense of for example signing the TPNW:

“Now, Norway spend a lot of money on the “verification track”. It has been a Norwegian flagship for years. Some might say that it is a little paradoxal that one invests so much money in something you don’t want: nuclear disarmament” (Interview 11, 2021)

Several of the NGO-representatives also agreed that the verification track is important, but that it is not contribution to nuclear disarmament, in terms of removing nuclear war heads (Interview 9, 2021). Several nuclear practitioners argued that is a more comfortable, and non-controversial policy (Interview 2, 2021; Interview 7, 2021; Interview 8, 2021; Interview 9, 2021).

5.2.4 Resulting in the security- insecurity dichotomy

The result of the practices of constructing dichotomies between the TPNW vs NPT, is that the former has practically become a symbol of national insecurity, while the former status quo-regime is considered the safe choice, that bring about stability, at least for the current decision-makers. As I will argue in the following, this has to do with the strong social norms that are connected to the existing practices, such as the practice of nuclear deterrence (5.3). it is also due to the widely shared belief that nuclear weapons bring about peace and security, and fear and uncomfortableness of imagining not being under NATO's nuclear umbrella (5.5)

5.3 The practices of nuclear deterrence

The third practice of Norwegian practitioners is the practices that maintains nuclear deterrence as the guiding principle for Norway's current nuclear disarmament policy, because it is also key to Norway's defence policy. The Norwegian MFAs emphasise NATO's strategic concept [Natos strategiske konsept] (2010), NATO's Defence and Deterrence Posture Review [Forsvars- og avskrekkinggjennomgangen] (DPPR) (2012), and the NPT as the most important security documents of Norway's current policy (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018). These documents maintain the necessity of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. As

described in 2.0, nuclear deterrence is broadly speaking the idea that the possession of, or threat to use nuclear weapons, will prevent an adversary from taking an undesirable action they would otherwise take, and therefore security (Greitens, 2014, p. 375). It is therefore the assumption that Norway's security is dependent on nuclear deterrence, as compared to deterrence with conventional weapons⁴⁰. Moreover, it is assumed that the nuclear weapons of the nuclear-armed states of NATO is providing Norway with this security guarantee.

“The key to nuclear deterrence is that people believe in it” (Interview 6, 2021).

Although the current decision-makers and many nuclear practitioners maintains the importance of nuclear deterrence, as compared to conventional deterrence, several of the interviewed practitioners challenged its “credibility” in practice. For them, the credibility of the “nuclear umbrella” was ultimately a question of whether the other nuclear-armed states would be willing to jeopardize London, Paris, or Washington DC, for Oslo? (Beaumont, 2021; Lodgaard, 2020a).

One of the MFA-representatives argued that this credibility should be one of the first questions we ask ourselves when it comes to whether nuclear weapons provide “security”. Due to how we have prioritized most of our money on the nuclear umbrella, we have simultaneously “built down” our national armed forces:

“We [Norway] barely have an army. Our sea defence is poor. Our air defence, well, we have the F35, but that is another discussion. Bottom line is we do not have a proper land defence [landforsvar] of our country. And Russia, China and the US are all interested in the High North. We should worry about these things” (Interview 11, 2021)

The expensiveness of nuclear arms at the expense of other important areas is also a focus of the ICAN-campaign, which recently launched a report about the global spending on nuclear arsenals (ICAN, 2021b). For ICAN, as well as for many of the interviewed nuclear practitioners in this study, the money spent on nuclear weapons *at the expense* of dealing with a global pandemic, climate change, hunger, and other global issues is morally unacceptable.

⁴⁰ Conventional weapons is defined as “ordinary weapons of combat, contrary to nuclear weapons, radioactive weapons, chemical weapons, and biological weapons” (Folk og Forsvar, 2021).

5.3.1 The practices of obedience to NATO and the United States

Closely interrelated to the practices of nuclear deterrence, is the practices of obedience to (nuclear-armed states of) NATO and the United States. Because a good relationship with the United States is perceived key to Norwegian security due to the American nuclear-umbrella, conformity to the interests of the United States is made a top priority. As discussed in the introduction, this policy might be perceived as the “norm”, of beyond the current government. Following this logic, resistance to the US is not only perceived socially uncomfortable but “dangerous” (See Egeland, 2017a on how Norway wants to be perceived as a good, transatlantic ally).

Many of the interviewed nuclear practitioners thus argued that the United States was the most important reason for why Norway is maintaining the necessity of nuclear deterrence. However, they still maintained that Norwegian nuclear practitioners also “believe” in the necessity of nuclear deterrence as compared to conventional deterrence, as means of national security:

It [nuclear deterrence] is the mainstream position, and it will have very strong social repercussions if you challenge it. You might risk not to be taken seriously (Interview 11, 2021).

To question the mainstream position is in other words problematic, as nuclear deterrence is a well-established practice. In fact, several of the nuclear practitioners argued that the social norms “surrounding” the narrative that nuclear weapons sustain security and peace, is very strong:

“To question it, is like “walking into a church in the 1700s and claim that God is dead” (Interview 11, 2021)

The social aspects, and perhaps “social consequences”, of challenging the nuclear establishment will be discussed more in 5.5 about “the practices of uncomfortableness and fear of alternative framings of nuclear order”.

5.4 The practices of differentness

A practice that is interrelated to the practices of nuclear deterrence, and the debate over its credibility, is the linguistic practices of treating of nuclear weapons and nuclear-armed states and its allies so “different” from other weapons, and actors. The practice of differentness of nuclear weapons here, means the practices of perceiving nuclear weapons existence’s outcomes as different than other weapons, for example of in sustaining ‘balance of power’, or ‘peace’. The practice of the differentness of nuclear-armed states (and its allies) is the practice of perceiving these states as not only “different”, but more important in the nuclear weapons debate.

5.4.1 The differentness of nuclear weapons

Nuclear weapons continue to be important for purposes of obtaining “status” internationally, as a symbol of power. As one of the MFA-representatives argued in this study, for some nuclear-armed states, nuclear weapons might be that state’s last “remain” of a time of great power, implicitly referring to the United Kingdom and France (Interview 11, 2021). The practices of the differentness of nuclear weapons, has also created a practice of believing that adversary states are not open for normative pressure to disarm their nuclear weapons. To that they are simply too important. Norway’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Børge Brende, wrote in an op-ed in 2017:

“External pressure will hardly contribute to the abolition of nuclear weapons”⁴¹ (Brende, 2017).

The op-ed was a response to the argument of the ICAN-movement that a legal ban on nuclear weapons would “stigmatize” nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. This claim is funded on the assumption of a ‘nuclear taboo’, or ‘norm’ of non-use of nuclear weapons (Tannenwald, 2005, 2007). This norm was assumed to be strengthened from the TPNWs entry into force. The belief that normative pressure does not work to abolish nuclear weapons, was also an opinion that were shared by several of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study. Moreover, it was argued that normative pressure is less likely to work in non-democratic states because there is no civil society to push for disarmament. In

⁴¹ Translated from Norwegian with the original title “Ytre press vil neppe bidra til å avskaffe atomvåpen».

the Norwegian context, this argument is mostly used to explain the hopelessness of believing that normative pressure would work towards Russian or North-Korean decision-making (Interview 2, 2021; Interview 6, 2021). Given the importance of nuclear weapons, NATO cannot trust that its adversaries will disarm, so neither can they. This ‘fact’ of international life supports the continuance of nuclear deterrence as primary defence strategy.

Another problem with the practice of treating nuclear weapons so different from other weapons is for disarmament purposes. There is a contradiction between the logic of removing and even abolishing nuclear weapons, if you simultaneously keep telling others how important nuclear weapons are, for obtaining power, and state survival (Interview 9, 2021; Lodgaard, 2010, p. 173).

5.4.2 The differentness of nuclear-armed states and its allies

The practice of differentness of nuclear armed states and its allies, is the practices of treating nuclear-armed states different in the nuclear debate. For Western-democratic states, this practice of differentness also means a differentiation between responsible and non-responsible nuclear-armed states, where the NATO-states are considered the former. In that sense, one could add this point to the practice of constructing dichotomies, in 5.2. In this case: the dichotomy between rogue and non-rogue states.

According to the practitioners of “differentness”, the TPNW is not only problematic in terms of being an attempt to delegitimize nuclear weapons. It also not acknowledging the differentness between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear armed states, with the imperative of ‘human security for all’ (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria, 2014a). Neither does it acknowledge the distinguishment between responsible and non-responsible nuclear weapons states. As described by Paul Beaumont (2021) [about British Nuclear Politics]:

“The TPNW does not separate British and North-Korean Nuclear Weapons” (Beaumont, 2021).

The TPNW thus removes the differences between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear armed states, which is an unwanted outcome of power balance. This practice can be illustrated with how nuclear practitioners argue that the TPNW does not matter, because the nuclear-armed

states has not signed, nor will sign it (Brende, 2017; Søreide, 2020). In 2017, there was 122 states that adopted the TPNW. The arguments about how the TPNW does not matter, does thus signify that those states are less significant than the nuclear-armed states.

The differentness between responsible and non-responsible nuclear-armed states, is also a practice of the Norwegian MFA. One example is the Norwegian MFAs response to how the United Kingdom recently announced that it would increase the ‘cap’ on its nuclear weapons stockpile. For the nuclear-disarmament movement, this announcement was shockingly blunt due to its obvious violation of the NPT (Widskjold, 2021). However, the Norwegian authorities, as well as some of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study, argued that the British decision was based on intel that roger states, such as Russia and China have increased their arsenals (Utenriksdepartementet, 2021). In that sense, and due to the divide between responsible and non-responsible states, the British decision to violate the NPT was constructed as the only responsible thing to.

5.5 The practices of uncomfortableness and fear

The final finding is what can be referred to as the practices of uncomfortableness and fear of alternative framings of nuclear order. It includes the uncomfortableness with the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW for pushing such framings, and for exposing the shortcomings and inhumanness of existing regimes. The verification-agenda and a steep reduction in funding for NGOs that support the TPNW, serve as examples of the current government’s practices of uncomfortableness and fear. A fear that also is about not knowing the consequences of opposing NATO and the United States, or no longer being under NATOs nuclear umbrella.

5.5.1 Reluctance to question the assumption that nuclear weapons have provided the peace

“If Norway chose to no longer be under NATOs nuclear umbrella, that is a completely different security policy. If everyone abolish their nuclear weapons, we talk about a completely different world” (Interview 12, 2021)

One can argue that the humanitarian initiative and a consequence-based approach to nuclear weapons, somewhat changed the nuclear weapons debate. With survivors of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki and victims of nuclear testing as the starting point of the analysis, the consequences of nuclear weapons use were suddenly brought closer to people. Similarly contributed the discussions about the increased potential for future nuclear explosions to pull the nuclear weapons debate “down” from being an abstract idea (Interview 9, 2021; Interview 11, 2021). This debate, it seemed like, had not been relevant since the “end of the people resistance” against nuclear weapons in the end of 1980s, when the cold war ended (Sætren, 2021).

It also created a lot of uncomfortableness among Norwegian decision-makers, because the humanitarian initiative challenged the assumption of nuclear weapons role in providing peace and stability. One of the NGO-representatives pointed out how we are still taught at school that nuclear weapons create peace, and a balance of power, or ‘terror balance’. Many thus assume that nuclear weapons are the reason why we have not yet had a third world war. And this assumption has not really being questioned, until the humanitarian initiative. The reluctance to challenge this type of knowledge is based partly on fear, and the unknown alternatives to NATO’s nuclear umbrella (Interview 9, 2021).

In the Norwegian debate, many get uncomfortable when you start to talk about what we should do if we are not going to have an American nuclear umbrella. It is uncomfortable, but a lot of fear in this (Interview 11, 2021).

The same MFA-representatives argue that one of the reasons alternative imaginaries are uncomfortable is that a nuclear weapons explosion seems out of our control:

“Should we risk our NATO-membership on the things we cannot even control?” (Interview 11, 2021)

As I wrote in part 5.3, about nuclear deterrence, there is also very strong social norms to this narrative, where claims of challenging NATO’s nuclear umbrella also means that you risk not being taken seriously. One of the MFA-representatives argued that this there was the reason for why so many *retired* politicians and military personal like admirals and generals, do not “go after” nuclear weapons before after they finish with their professional carriers (Interview 11, 2021).

One example is the open letter in support of the TPNW signed by 56 former prime ministers, ministers for defence and foreign affairs from 20 NATO-states and Japan and South Korea (Axworthy et al., 2020; ICAN, 2020a). Six of the signatories were former Norwegian

ministers Kjell Magne Bondevik, Bjørn Tore Godal, Thorbjørn Jargland, Eldbjørg Løwer, Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen, and Knut Vollebæk. Another is example the op-eds by four former American former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, Nunn, and Will Perry in the Wall Street Journal in favour of abolish nuclear weapons (Perry, 2020).

Will Perry also recently wrote an article in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists arguing on why the world need a ban on nuclear weapons, but how even the modest recommendations of lowering the nuclear dangers are not being seriously debated in the United States:

«Even the Doomsday Clock warning, one that seems so easy to understand, has not generated significant political action» (Perry, 2020).

5.5.2 The US nuclear establishment and selective knowledge production?

One of the MFA-diplomats argue the problem of not being taking seriously if one were to challenge the relevance of nuclear deterrence, is more severe in the United States than in Norway:

“There is a «nuclear establishment”, that are very influential in producing nuclear knowledge. In the United States, the industry is part of that. Part of the nuclear establishment is also the NATO-system, that can produce many convincing arguments about why nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence is necessary. You also have academics that do the same” (Interview 11, 2021)

According to this nuclear practitioners, critical academics were very careful in the United States. However, some of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study argue that academics in Norway are also scared of not being taken seriously if they challenge the assumptions of nuclear deterrence.

Another “symptom” of the practices of uncomfortableness and fear is the how alternative framings of security seem to receive less funding. From approximately 2015, there has been a steep reduction of nuclear disarmament NGOs that support the TPNW (NTB, 2017). In fact, there was a large agreement among the interviewees from NGOs that there has been a reduction or lack of funding of institutions, organizations, and projects, if they are ‘not in line’ with the status quo-politics (Interview 1, 2021; Interview 7, 2021; Interview 8, 2021;

Interview 9, 2021). An unwillingness to fund alternative framings of nuclear order (or political opponents of the government, such as the TPNW), have also been questioned by opposition parliament several times for its reduction of the funding (Stortinget, 2015, 2021). The latest in 2021, one of Arbeiderpartiet's representatives asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs if the government only fund point of view's they agree with. And the minister for foreign affairs first two sentences were:

“A societal debate is wanted. Also about Foreign policy”.⁴²(Ine Eriksen Søreide's respond to the question posed from a representative of parliament Stortinget, 2021)

Interestingly, this respond also confirm the practice of consensus (as described in 5.1). Because why wouldn't a societal debate about foreign policy be wanted?

Moreover, some of the interviewees argued that the government do simply not listen to some research communities. For example, in the making of the *Utredning* from 2018, nuclear disarmament NGOs had a meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, about their input on the report, and are also listed in the report, to “document” that they were conferred with in the making of the report. Several of the interviewed nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study, say that their organization opinions were not part of the report, that was supposed to look at “all sides”, of a possible Norwegian signatory to the TPNW (Interview 1, 2021; Interview 7, 2021; Interview 8, 2021; Interview 9, 2021). Several of the nuclear practitioners also argued that the only research institute in Norway that solely research nuclear issues, Oslo Nuclear Project, at the University of Oslo are not challenging the mainstream position either (Interview 9, 2021; Interview 11, 2021):

“What kind of free thinking is there in the University of Oslo, for example? I studies political science there in the 1970s. I think there was more critical thinking then, than it is now.”
(Interview 11, 2021)

Verification is another example that illustrates the practices of uncomfortableness, in terms of being a disarmament “domain” that is considered not to challenge status quo. The technical

⁴² Translated from Norwegian, originally «samfunnsdebatt er ønskelig. Også om utenrikspolitikkk.»

“track”, as argued above, and verification as the most important domain, is now the policy area the government is spending most money on in disarmament diplomacy. The consequence of the practices of uncomfortableness and fear of alternative framings (of nuclear order) has thus been limited the scope about nuclear disarmament (Interview 8, 2021).

5.6 Summary of findings: the five practices of nuclear disarmament

I have found five practices, that are generally describing Norway’s politics of nuclear disarmament, between 2013-2020, as the practices, understood as “competent performances” and “social acts of know how” that are considered the most competent by current decision-makers, but also to a large extent, by the opposition.

The first finding (1) is *the practices of consensus*, which is the practice of constructing a linguistic consensus, or the idea of a broad agreement, about Norway’s current disarmament policy against the TPNW, even though most political parties in parliament is in favour of Norway signing the TPNW (Lillegraven, 2021; NTB, 2021a, 2021b). The second (2) finding is *the practices of constructing linguistic dichotomies*, or irreconcilable differences, between the TPNW and Norway’s national interests. The TPNW is ‘idealist(ic)’, as compared to ‘realistic’, in favour of ‘one-sided disarmament’, instead of to ‘mutual disarmament’, rely on ‘political’ arguments, as compared to the current apolitical ‘technical’ expertise of the current regime. As a result, these practices have also constructed a dichotomy between security, understood as the existing disarmament regimes, such as the NPT, and insecurity understood as the TPNW. The third (3) finding is *the practices of believing in the necessity of nuclear deterrence*. The latter is closely related to practices of social pressure and obedience to the interests of NATO in general, and of the United States in particular. The fourth finding (4) is *the practices of the ‘differentness’ of the nuclear-armed states and nuclear weapons*, compared to other states and weapons, which have resulted in the exceptionality of nuclear-armed states, and the belief that normative pressure on such states do not work within this particular policy discussion. The fifth finding (5) is *the practices of uncomfortableness and fear of alternative framings of nuclear order*, then the mainstream approach. One example of this uncomfortableness is the reduction in funding to nuclear disarmament NGOs that supports the TPNW. These five practices are interrelated and have in common a framing of

the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW as “dangerous”, for Norway’s social relations, national security, and world “order”.

6.0 Practicing Egeland’s “ideology of nuclear order”?

In the following chapter I will use Kjølvs Egeland’s ‘ideology critique’ as a critical framework to interpret my findings, of the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament (Egeland, 2021). I will use this framework as a checklist to assess whether the Norwegian practices can be said to adhere to the ‘ideology of nuclear order’, as this is described by Egeland. In this chapter, I argue that the Norwegian practices adhere to many of the same “imaginary maps” of the ideology of nuclear order, but the ongoing competence contestation over nuclear politics are also destabilizing some of these maps, with the humanitarian initiative and TPNW as the most obvious examples. As such, the ideology of nuclear order is an “order” of increasing instability, much due to the ICAN-movement’s work of deconstructing the heuristic shortcuts (which they refer to as “myths”) the mainstream ideology rely on to manipulate the object of nuclear disarmament (ICAN Norge, 2020).

The practices of Nuclear Order as an ideology

Can the Norwegian practices of knowledge production about nuclear weapons and disarmament be said to adhere to the “ideology of nuclear order”, as that order is described by Egeland (2021)?

The ideology of nuclear order has provided the dominant intellectual and institutional framework for global nuclear politics since the 1960s (Egeland, 2021, p. 22). It is structured by formal and informal rules, and maintained by actors that through their discourse and practices promote the following [ideology]:

1. The ambition to move nuclear war heads to zero, but in the “long-term”
2. Nuclear deterrence is an essential and objective precondition for international security and stability;
3. To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to dangerous hands;
4. The idea that the world is on the precipice of a new and dangerous era;

5. Being optimistic about undertaking “practical” and “pragmatic” diplomatic steps of nuclear disarmament, that simultaneously maintains nuclear deterrence as a leading principle (Egeland, 2021, pp. 7-9, 20)

6.1. The ideal, long-term vision of moving nuclear war heads to zero

The first criteria that make up the ideology of nuclear order, according to Egeland (2021), is the discourse and practices that stresses the ambition to move nuclear war heads to zero, but in the ‘long-term’. Long-term here, means in the unforeseeable future, because nuclear abolishment is beyond the international community’s immediate grasp, and control (Egeland, 2021, p. 7). Essentially, it is the speech acts of a long-term “vision”, or “sublime object” of nuclear abolishment, as Egeland calls it, that is primarily that; speech acts, that is not accompanied by means to get there in practice, except “practical, or pragmatic steps”, that have already been tried before.

The linguistic practices of disarmament as a long-term ambition resonates well with several of my findings of the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament. Firstly, it resonates well with the linguistic practice of constructing an idealist(ic) – realist(ic) divide, where the represents TPNW the former, and the NPT represents the latter (see 5.2). As illustrated above, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ine Eriksen Søreide, adhere to these practices. One example is the Minister’s arguments in the Parliamentary debate about whether Norway should make a report about the possible implications of Norway signing the TPNW as a NATO-member in February 2017. She argued that “*the goal*” is a nuclear weapons free world, but there are “*no shortcuts*” to get there, and that it would be the result of a “*long-term work*” (Ine Eriksen Søreide [10:49:32] Stortinget, 2018). Here the TPNW, is signify the idealistic shortcut that also encourages one-sided disarmament, as compared to mutual disarmament (a dichotomy discussed in 5.2):

“The only way to achieve the zero-vision [of nuclear weapons] and contribute to real disarmament is through mutual, balanced, irreversible, and verifiable reductions” (Ine Eriksen Søreide [10:49:32] Stortinget, 2018).

That the abolition of nuclear disarmament is “*long-term goal*” is also expressed in the “unanimous” parliamentary votes “St. Meld 27 (2007-2008) and “St. Vedtak 26. April 2016”,

that are usually used to signify the broad agreement, or consensus about this being a long-term goal (5.1). However, the practices of the speech acts of constructing an idealist-realist divide where the TPNW represent the former, consequently signify that “ideal” of nuclear abolishment, by the same nuclear practitioners is considered “idealistic”, or “naïve”. As discussed in chapter 5, most nuclear practitioners argued that abolishing nuclear weapons will not happen “overnight” (Interview 2, 2021; Interview 5, 2021; Interview 6, 2021; Interview 11, 2021).

Some of them, however, argued like Egeland (2021), that the current speech acts of moving nuclear war heads to zero, is little more than that:

“Everybody is allegedly in favour of nuclear disarmament, or maybe not the Russians, but it is never a good time to do it. So it is comfortable to talk about verification until that day comes” (Interview 11, 2021).

The MFA-representative’s argument that *“it is never a good time to do nuclear disarmament”*, is thus very fitting to Egeland’s description about the long-term ideal of disarmament in the “unforeseeable future”. Verification will be discussed below as one of “the practical, or pragmatic, steps to nuclear disarmament” that does not lead to real disarmament (see 6.5).

Egeland’s argument about a nuclear order, where the speech acts about the ideal vision of nuclear abolishment is one of the criteria that uphold that order, is at the one hand, very fitting with the findings about the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, many of the nuclear practitioners in this study, as well as Egeland (2021) himself, contest and expose these practices as nothing more speech acts that do very little for disarmament in practice. This is also of the main arguments of the ICAN-movement, which are deliberately working to deconstruct such speech acts as one of the “heuristic shortcomings” of the mainstream approach (Bolton & Minor, 2016; Borrie, 2014; ICAN Norge, 2020).

The contestation and critique of the Norwegian practices as more “comfortable” than critical, and ineffective than effective, to some extent challenge the stability of this practice. This is also evident after two out of three political parties in the Government (Kristelig Folkeparti

and Venstre), and four parties in opposition (Miljøpartiet de Grønne, Sosialistisk Venstreparti, Senterpartiet and Rødt) has voted in favour of a Norwegian adoption of the TPNW (Lillegraven, 2021; NTB, 2021a, 2021b). Høyre, Fremskrittspartiet and Arbeiderpartiet on the other hand, maintains the speech acts of nuclear disarmament as a long-term vision (Arbeiderpartiet, 2021; Lillegraven, 2021). However, this illustrates the instability of this practice, and consequently, the instability of the nuclear order, at least from a Norwegian perspective.

6.2 Protect our nuclear deterrent

The second criteria that make up the ideology of nuclear order according to Egeland (2021), is that nuclear deterrence through discourse and practice is treated as an essential and objective precondition for international security and stability (Egeland, 2021, p. 8). This also includes “the assumption that everybody benefits from them” (Egeland, 2021, p. 8)

As discussed in Chapter 5, the practices of nuclear deterrence were also one of the practices that I found to be the most prevalent in the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament. The practice of nuclear deterrence is expressed in the Norwegian MFAs commitment to NATO's strategic concept (2010), the DPPR (2012), and the NPT (1976) (see 5.3). These documents maintain the necessity of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. My findings showed that to challenge the perception that nuclear weapons provide stability and security, was considered so socially challenging, that one of the nuclear practitioners compared it to:

“walking into a church in the 1700s and claim that God is dead (Interview 11, 2021).

6.2.1 Challenges to the validity of nuclear deterrence

However, as argued in 5.3, while many nuclear practitioners maintain the importance of nuclear deterrence, as compared to conventional deterrence, several of the interviewed practitioners in this study challenged its “credibility” in practice. For them, the credibility of the “nuclear umbrella” was ultimately a question of whether the other nuclear-armed states would be willing to jeopardize London, Paris, or Washington DC, for Oslo (Beaumont, 2021; Lodgaard, 2020a). One of the MFA-representatives argued that this credibility-discussion

should also be discussed with a consideration of the costs of maintaining this nuclear umbrella, at the expense of other land-defence, and armed forces (Interview 11, 2021).

Another problem with the practice of nuclear deterrence, which is often a critique from post-positivist scholars towards neorealist IR, is how it is seen as the primacy means of *survival* - and survival the supreme interest of all states (Dunne & Schmidt, 2014, p. 110). This assumption signifies that there are no limits to what actions a state can take in the name of necessity. Killing millions with nuclear weapons if “national security” is perceived to be at stake, is no exception. Several of the interviewed nuclear practitioners in this study, challenged nuclear deterrence a morally unacceptable means of security (Interview 7, 2021). As discussed in Chapter 4, Norway’s humanitarian efforts in international diplomacy, including in efforts of nuclear weapons disarmament, have increasingly made Norway’s position under NATO’s nuclear umbrella more controversial.

Egeland (2021) also argue that an additional problem with the current nuclear deterrence regimes, is “the assumption that everybody benefits from them” (Egeland, 2021, p. 8). This argument fits well with my description in 5.4 about the “practices of differentness” of the nuclear weapons and nuclear-armed states and its allies. The humanitarian initiative and the TPNW’s emphasis on “human security for all”, are thus challenging the legitimacy of these practices of differentness by not distinguishing British nuclear Weapons from North-Korean nuclear weapons, or the security of nuclear-armed states from the security of nuclear-armed states. An additional problem with the practice of treating nuclear weapons so different from other weapons, for disarmament purposes, is that they simultaneously keep telling others how important nuclear weapons are, for obtaining power, and state survival (Interview 9, 2021; Lodgaard, 2010, p. 173).

Egeland’s argument about a nuclear order, where the practice of nuclear deterrence is one of the criteria that uphold that order, is at the one hand, very fitting with the findings about the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament. Maintaining the necessity of nuclear deterrence as compared to conventional deterrence remains a key practice. This has largely to do with how it remains the most socially competent in relation to NATO and the United States. The abovementioned challenges to the validity of nuclear deterrence, however, show that the practice of nuclear deterrence is undergoing significant competence contestation. This is primarily because the TPNW or humanitarian initiative is considered a “fairer” approach to

nuclear weapons, including in Norway. I argue that the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW has thus created a very difficult situation for Norway, both domestically and internationally. The latter also has do with Norway's wanted image as a "humanitarian, good state" (Egeland, 2017a; Interview 9, 2021).

6.3 Prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to dangerous hands

The third criteria of discourse and practice, that are contributing to the ideology of nuclear order according to Egeland (2021), is acts that prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to "dangerous hands". It is also the practices of relying on existing regimes to do so, such as the NPT, that distinguishes between legitimate, and legal, official nuclear weapons powers (Egeland, 2021, p. 8). Moreover, as argued by Egeland (2021) although the practices of nuclear order, is allegedly dedicated to the elimination of nuclear weapons, these 'ideals' are constrained by a set of informal rules related to the major power ostensible "social rights" as custodians of international order (Egeland, 2021, p. 20).

The Norwegian debate practices of "differentness" of the nuclear-weapons states, and nuclear weapons (see 5.4), fits Egeland's description, that also distinguish "rogue" and "responsible" states. I argue that for Western-democratic states, including Norway, this practice of differentness means a differentiation between responsible and non-responsible nuclear-armed states, where the NATO-states are considered the former. One example of this practice is how the Norwegian MFAs response to UKs announcement of its intent to increase of the 'cap' on its nuclear weapons stockpile. For the nuclear-disarmament movement, this announcement was shockingly blunt due to its obvious violation of the NPT (Widskjold, 2021). However, the Norwegian authorities, as well as some of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study, argued that the British decision was based on intel that roger states, such as Russia and China have increased their arsenals (Utenriksdepartementet, 2021). In that sense, and due to the divide between responsible and non-responsible states, the British decision to violate the NPT was constructed as the only "responsible" thing to.

6.3.1 The challenge from the TPNW over the practices of "differentness"

Egeland's argument about a nuclear order, where the practice of "preventing their spread to dangerous hands", is very fitting with the findings about the Norwegian practices of nuclear

disarmament. The practice of maintaining the necessity of nuclear weapons and the nuclear-armed states as the “gatekeepers”, or “custodians” of this order is thus an example of this practice. The humanitarian initiative and the TPNW, however, are challenging the validity of this “order”. As argued above, the TPNW “favour human security” over national security and deconstruct the validity of favouring the security of any state over another, or states over people. The ICAN-movement has also brought the attention to the consequences of the practices of differentness, by bringing to our attention that the *victims* of nuclear weapons testing is often indigenous peoples (Alexis-Martin, Bolton, Hawkins, Hawkins, & Mangioni, 2021; ICAN, 2020b). By reframing the concept of security, and “who” security is for within a traditional framing of security, the movement continue to delegitimize this limited perception of security. As such, it seems that the TPNW and the humanitarian initiative has challenged the validity of the “differentness” of nuclear armed states. Consequently, the TPNW is posing a direct challenge to the stability of nuclear order, as this is described by Egeland (an argument he also agrees with):

“the supports of the TPNW have sought to contest the ideology of nuclear order and build a new vision for nuclear politics” (Egeland, 2021)

6.4 The world is on the precipice of a new and dangerous era

The forth criteria of discourse and practice that are contributing to the “ideology of nuclear order” according to Egeland (2021) is the idea that the current non-proliferation regime are *eroding*, the risk of nuclear weapons use is *rising*, and that deterrence relations are increasingly *unstable* [...] pushing international society to a tipping point (Egeland, 2021, p. 8). Due to how the ideology of nuclear order is wedded to the pursuit of a sublime object of a world without nuclear weapons “in theory”, not in practice (Egeland, 2021, p. 1), one must assume that the practices of creating a narrative about the world being on the edge, is a tactic to maintain the necessity of nuclear weapons.

The description fits the discussion to most of the nuclear practitioners that I have interviewed. As argued in 5.1.2 about the practices of constructing an idealist-realist dichotomy. This is often justified with how the TPNW:

«disregards the realities of the increasingly challenging international security environment”
(Utenriksdepartementet, 2018)

I also showed to this practice in Chapter 4, that the one of the most used arguments from Norwegian authorities for the abstention from the humanitarian initiative, was the how *Norway’s external security environment changed in this period*. This made a ban nuclear weapons much more unrealistic (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018):

“The Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons resulted in two follow-up conferences on the same topic in Mexico and Austria during 2014. These last two conferences took place during a period marked by a tightening of relations between Russia and Western countries following Russia’s unlawful annexation of Crimea”
(Utenriksdepartementet, 2018).

These speech acts argue for why it is better to “postpone” the nuclear abolishment project to a time it will be smarter, as argued above in 6.1 “The ideal of removing nuclear war-heads as an “ideal”, and a “long-term project”. This description is in fact very fitting with the mainstream position of Arbeiderpartiet and Høyre, as argued in Chapter 4.3 The former even included the difficult [external] security environment outside of Norway had made it “impossible”, or very difficult for Norway to sign the TPNW, in their party programme (Arbeiderpartiet, 2021). However, most NGO-representatives does not believe the “dangerous” circumstances is the “real” reason why the mainstream position wants to continue with status quo politics, but is used as an argument to do exactly that (Interview 8, 2021).

However, the “dangerous era”-argument is also frequently by the NGO-representatives of disarmament organizations as the best argument for abolishing nuclear weapons. For example many nuclear practitioners refer to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists *Doomsday Clock* in their arguments for the abolishment of nuclear weapons, which is currently 100 seconds to midnight (The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, 2021). Such as Will Perry (see 5.5.1). In Egeland’s (2021) terms, one could therefore say that the TPNW- narrative represents a different ideology, which also adhere to the criteria of “the world on the precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era”, as their strategy. However, with a different sublime object of abolishing nuclear weapons.

The “doomsday” practice, used by most nuclear practitioners, whether in favour of the TPNW or not, is an example of the competence contestation, or instability of the “nuclear order”. Because this narrative is also an argument for why we cannot do business as usual (Lodgaard, 2020b).

6.5 A series of practical steps

The fifth criteria that are contributing to the ideology of nuclear order according to Egeland (2021) is the discourses and practices that claim that a series of “practical”, or pragmatic” steps can be taken with regards to nuclear disarmament, that have already been tried, with limited or no success, and that maintains nuclear deterrence as a leading principle (Egeland, 2021, pp. 8-9). Moreover, it is the practices of strongly discouraging alternatives (to the nuclear order) and seeing alternatives as unimaginable for realization. Examples on such steps are “transparency measures” and no-first use policies (Egeland, 2021, p. 9).

As illustrated above, with the discussion of how “verification” is a “side-track” to actual disarmament, the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament can be said to adhering to this practice. Verification is spoken about as the one of the features of Norway’s “technical competence diplomacy”, to nuclear disarmament. While verification is important in nuclear disarmament, the argument about nuclear disarmament is less credible when one simultaneously argue for the necessity of nuclear deterrence as a leading principle, and the “differentness” of nuclear-armed states.

As discussed in Chapter 4, one of the MFA-representatives argued that if one wants to succeed with a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons, one should do it outside the existing institutions, such as the “outside” the UN. This was allegedly the “success formula” of the Ottawa-process and the process of banning land mines (Interview 11, 2021). Egeland (2021) argue something familiar, with the reference to the NPT review cycle. Because these meetings are “within” the existing institutions of the NPT, the meetings mostly support the status quo “nuclear order”. Moreover, Egeland (2021) argues that this is due to how the NPT maintains the “differentness” of nuclear-armed states as compared to non-nuclear armed

states including the “right to possess nuclear weapons”, and thus the upper hand in the debates (Egeland, 2021, p. 22).

Egeland (2021) argue that one of the reasons the ideology of nuclear order, and the NPT, with its hierarchical structure and despite the common knowledge that its overarching justification of nuclear-weapons impending disarmament is a “sham”, has survived, is because of “cynical reasoning”:

“a sense that resistance is socially uncomfortable, dangerous, or will inevitably just be dragged down by the power of things”, inspired by Peter Sloterdijk’s definition of “cynical reason” (Egeland, 2021)

This description also fits well with my findings about the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament, in 5.5. What causing the uncomfortableness, in the Norwegian case might be the “the consensus-culture”, where consensus or broad agreement is considered a “virtue”, and resistance is considered uncomfortable, or even against the national interest. The uncomfortableness might also be due to the practices of constructing dichotomies where the TPNW as an alternative framing has become synonymous with “insecurity” (5.2). The latter also has to do with the strong social repercussions it is expected to have to challenge the idea that nuclear weapons and deterrence bring about security (5.3), but also a real fear of alternative world orders.

Consequently, many of the Norwegian practices adhere to Egeland’s description about the practice of constructing speech acts about “taking pragmatic and pragmatic steps to nuclear disarmament”, but in fact not doing any real steps to get there due to uncomfortableness or fear, or even a lack of ability to even imagine⁴³ nuclear abolishment in practice:

“If Norway chose to no longer be under NATO’s nuclear umbrella, that is a completely different security policy. If everyone abolish their nuclear weapons, we talk about a completely different world” (Interview 12, 2021)

⁴³ This is also one of the arguments of IR-scholar Benoît Pelopidas article “*Nuclear Weapons Scholarship as a Case of Self-Censorship in Security Studies*” (Pelopidas, 2016)

6.6 Practicing the ideology of nuclear order? – the Norwegian case

In this chapter, I have used Kjølsv Egeland's "ideology critique" as a lens to interpret my findings, of the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament (Egeland, 2021). I have used it as a 'checklist', to assess whether the Norwegian practices can be said to adhere to the 'ideology of nuclear order'. I have argued that many of the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament adhere to the "ideology of nuclear order", as this is described by Egeland. In doing that, they contribute to the maintenance of having nuclear abolishment as its "sublime object", while simulations delegitimizing the TPNW an alternative to the status quo-regimes.

I argue that the Norwegian practices adhere to all the criteria's that make up the "ideology of nuclear order", however, as I have showed, most of these practices is undergoing significant competence contestation. This is primarily because the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW is considered a "fairer" approach to nuclear weapons, including in Norway. (1) *The ambition to move nuclear war heads to zero, but in the "long-term"*, is a practice that Norwegian nuclear practitioner also practice. The "long-term" ambition is legitimized as realistic, as compared to idealistic, and according to mutual, as compared to one-sided disarmament. The TPNW represents the idealist, one-sided "short-term" solution to nuclear disarmament. However, many nuclear practitioners contest this practice as "comfortable" and thus exposing this tendency to speak, and not act. The maintenance of (2) *nuclear deterrence as an essential and objective precondition for international security and stability*, is also a held by Norwegian decision-makers. However, the validity of nuclear deterrence and the nuclear umbrella is increasingly challenged. For example, for its credibility, expensiveness, (im)morality, and general fairness. The practice of (3) *preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to "dangerous hands"*, is also adhering to the Norwegian practice of treating nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear armed states different. This divide between rogue and non-rogue states, and the "hierarchical" structure of the NPT is however, undergoing significant competence contestation, most notably with the entry into force of the TPNW. (4) *The idea that the world is on the precipice of a new and dangerous era*, is also a practice of Norwegian nuclear practitioners. The realist(ic) notions about the "external security environment" as particularly dangerous is also frequently repeated by Norwegian practitioners. However, as I argued this "doomsday" narrative, is also upheld by the NGOs, who however sees de-facto nuclear abolishment as its "sublime object". The mainstream nuclear practitioners argue that the dangerous security environment is an argument for

business as usual. (5) *Being optimistic about undertaking “practical” and “pragmatic” diplomatic steps of nuclear disarmament, that simultaneously maintains nuclear deterrence as a leading principle*, is also a practice Norwegian nuclear practitioners adhere to. This is because of the “fear and uncomfortableness” of alternative framings of world order, and a disposition to favour consensus, without dealing with alternatives. The humanitarian initiative and TPNW on the other hand, has exposed the real nature of the “practical and pragmatic” steps of nuclear disarmament.

Consequently, due to the many competence contestations over the criteria that make up the “ideology of nuclear order”, including from Norwegian practitioners, I argue that the idea of a social (nuclear) order, might run the risk of not only reproducing the practices of that order, but also neglecting the instability of practice (Schindler & Wille, 2015). Although Egeland’s ideology of nuclear order recognize the how the TPNW has increasingly contested the nuclear order, the definition of “ideology” falls short in one important aspect. According to Egeland’s definition of ideology, the aim of criticising the current ideology as “ideational maps that reproduce some aspect of world politics at the expense of another”, is *not* to “to compare normative systems or to reveal and unmediated truth or reality”, (Egeland, 2021, p. 3). I argue that the humanitarian framing of nuclear weapons is normatively better than the mainstream position, or “ideology” of nuclear order, both in terms of its methodological validity in scholarship, as well as morally more acceptable, and fairer than its opponent.

7.0 Conclusion

This study about the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament asked the following Research Question’s (RQ):

- *RQ1: What are the competent performances of nuclear practitioners in Norway?*
- *RQ2: Was the Norwegian abstention from the humanitarian initiative a ‘policy shift’?*
- *RQ3: How do the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament adhere to ‘the ideology of nuclear order’, cf. Egeland (2021), and what are the destabilizations (of that order)?*

7.1 RQ1: TPNW – a source of (national) insecurity

The answer to my first research question, was presented and discussed in Chapter 5. I argued that the current policy of nuclear disarmament adheres to at least five practices. These five practices are interrelated and have in common that they all contribute to manipulate the “object” of nuclear disarmament. The persistence of the practices is continuing to construct a narrative about the TPNW as an unwanted nuclear disarmament regime, that will not remove nuclear warheads, only enhance insecurity in world politics.

7.2 RQ2: A return to passivity – *not* a policy shift

With the starting point of a public debate about whether Norway’s abstention from the initiative in 2014-2015 was a policy shift or not, I argued in Chapter 4 that the Norwegian opposition to the TPNW was not a ‘policy shift’, but a return to (the new) ‘normal’. The normal is according to several nuclear practitioners the uncritical acceptance of the will of NATO and the United States in security related issues. I have argued the practices of constructing forced “consensus” about foreign policy and nuclear politics, is one of the strategies to maintaining this normal.

7.3 RQ3: The disruptiveness of the TPNW on the nuclear order

In chapter 6, I argued that the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament adhere to some extent to the criteria’s that make up the “ideology of nuclear order”, as this order is described by Egeland (2021). However, as I have showed, most of these practices is undergoing significant competence contestation. This is primarily because the humanitarian initiative and the TPNW is considered a “fairer” approach to nuclear weapons in Norway. This is partly due to the influence of the ICAN-movement that are deliberately working to deconstruct some of the “heuristic shortcomings” about the TPNW. Most importantly the shortcomings that intends to mask the immoral assumptions of the current disarmament regime.

7.4 Prospects for changes in the nuclear “(dis)order”?

This study of *the Norwegian practices of nuclear disarmament* has showed that the assumption about how nuclear weapons enhance states’ “security”, maintains a competent assumption. This is partly because practitioners fear that to challenge it will lead to a “career suicide”, which have led to a trend where mostly *retired* nuclear practitioners dare to do so.

However, as I have argued in this study, many of the practices that upholds this narrative is undergoing comprehensive competence contestation from civil society NGOs, academia and in politics. ICAN Norway as a civil society movement, is likely to be the primary actor in this resistance, with the application of critical-IR theory to the realm of politics and diplomacy. However, there is still a long way to if one wants to deconstruct the “ideology of nuclear order, and some debates that needs to be undertaken to move past the assumption that nuclear weapons provide states with security.

The first, as argued by several of the nuclear practitioners interviewed in this study, Norway needs to have a *security political debate* about the implications for Norway of “abandoning” the American nuclear umbrella. As one of the MFA-representatives argued, a good place to start the conversation is the *credibility* of the nuclear umbrella. For example, is it likely that the United States will be willing to “sacrifice” Oslo for Washington? Is the norm of non-use [of nuclear weapons] so strong that conventional deterrence is more credible than nuclear deterrence? And can we even accept a nuclear retaliation on our behalf when we know about the humanitarian harm this will cause on civilian populations, and on the world? Another place to start the conversation is to talk about *money*. If the credibility of the nuclear umbrella is uncertain, then maybe we should reconsider the amount of money we are spending on it, at the expense of other areas that are important for our society. We also need include normative, and *moral considerations* as part of the security debate, without rejecting such attempts as naïveté. Moreover, we need to debunk the validity of declaring a foreign policy “*consensus*” to win political debates about foreign policy. As this study has shown, nuclear weapons have always been a very controversial topic in Norway, as well as in NATO. As such, if I could to this master’s thesis over again (only with more time and unlimited money), I would have interviewed various decision-makers in *all the NATO-states about the TPNW*. I expect such a study to show that there is *never* a consensus in politics. I also expect that I would find the same thing I found in this study: that the humanitarian initiative and TPNW is considered to have a *normatively* better framing of nuclear disarmament, and of world (dis)order. With the acknowledgment that this framing is relatively better and fairer than its opponent, I therefore argue to replace the ideology of nuclear order (in academia as well as in politics), with the ideology of a “humanitarian order”.

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