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**Jörn Brüggemann**

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Programme: International and Diplomatic Studies

INGO's and public management: the case of  
Human Rights Watch

(Master's Thesis)

Author: Jörn Brüggemann

Supervisor: prof. PhDr. Vladimíra Dvořáková, CSc.

Declaration:

Herewith I declare that I have written the Master's Thesis on my own and I have cited all sources.

Prague, 14 July 2014

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*Student's Signature*

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## List of abbreviations

CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HR	Human rights
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
TNA	Transnational advocacy network

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## Introduction

“[...] NGOs are social analogues to ‘benign parasites’ that seek to ‘infect’ and thereby change the behavior of their hosts without harming them” (Heins, 2008, p. 2).

This quotation by the German scholar Volker Heins aims at defining non-governmental organizations in quite a metaphorical way by drawing comparisons to the nature and the influence of parasites on their hosts. Indeed, INGOs have become one of the hottest topics in the academic discipline of IR and many scholars came up with different explanations based on their individual perception of the global political system. This diversity of mindsets makes it hard to get down with one definite answer and rather enhances the view that INGOs should be identified as a “[...] curious phenomenon [...]” (Baehr, 2009, p. 2) within the disciplinary debate.

With this curiosity in mind, the following thesis at hand seeks to provide a new analysis concerning the influence of INGOs within the international arena. For the purpose of understanding the actual impact, the thesis makes use of a case study with Human Rights Watch as the INGO of choice. Starting off as a relatively small group of activists engaged with the dissident movements in the former Eastern Bloc, nowadays, HRW has established itself as a globally operating organization dedicated to the protection of human rights as well as to the prosecution of its violators in many different countries around the world. By focusing on well-researched advocacy campaigns, HRW has been capable of arranging face-to-face consultations with heads of states on a regular basis in order to pursue their organizational goals. However, though HRW could be perceived as a crucial actor with respect to the defense of human rights, the organization HRW has been largely and surprisingly neglected by academic scholars (Welch, 2001). Therefore, the following thesis aims at filling this particular research gap by scrutinizing the role of Human Rights Watch in global politics.

Consequently, the following main research question has been formulated:

*In what way does Human Rights Watch contribute to the defense of HR by taking into account their organizational characteristics as an INGO as well as their position within the global political order?*

In order to find an analytical and profound answer to this research question, it is clearly essential to include a wide scope of sources. Concerning the theoretical framework – thus dealing with the organizational setup of NGOs, the global political order and the influence of NGOs on the defense of human rights – a thorough literature review has been conducted. The underlying notion of the theory has been largely based on the work of constructivist thinkers such as Alexander Wendt. With respect to the understanding of global politics, especially Mary Kaldor and other advocates of the global civil society school have been scrutinized. This study has been further adjusted through the inclusion of Jürgen Habermas' oeuvre and his ideas concerning communicative action. In order to test the actual impact of INGOs on human rights, two models and their methodological implications have been sketched, which will also round up the constructivist theoretical framework. The analytical parts of the study will be based to a tremendous extent on primary sources published directly by Human Rights Watch as well as third authors. In this respect, it must be highlighted again that HRW has been largely ignored by academic scholars, which made the acquisition of information much more difficult. The spiral model will be applied to the work of HRW with the help of a Mexican case study, which has been chosen according to their relevance with pre-established criteria as well as the depth of primary sources available.

Elaborating on the structure of the paper, the first chapter will provide the reader with a theoretical analysis that incorporates both constructivist as well as critical theory thoughts. Divided into two separate parts, first of all, NGOs will be scrutinized according to their major characteristics that also establish their role in global political order to a certain extent. Being part of the third sector – or commonly baptized as the global political society – they have increased their relevance tremendously as another powerful actor within the international arena. The first section will be wrapped up with a critical Habermasian perspective, which also includes crucial insights of his theory of communicative action. The second major part deals with two concrete models that help to understand the actual impact of international human rights NGOs such as HRW vis-à-vis nation states and international organizations. The so-called boomerang effect and spiral model developed by constructivist thinkers proclaim that INGOs significantly contribute to the promotion of HR as well as to their implementation in the domestic setting of



nation-states. Both models will allow analyzing the implications of key operations of Human Rights Watch with respect to the actual defense of HR.

The second chapter will introduce HRW to the reader by outlining their historical emergence. In order to understand the intentions that led to the formation of HRW, first of all, the evolution of human rights in international relations will be explained. The second subchapter will focus on the Helsinki conference held in the mid 70's that further fueled the importance of human rights within global politics. Based on these implications, the foundation process of Helsinki Watch (the first of the watch committees) will be analyzed and put into perspective within the historical setting. Consequently, the fourth sub section will deal with Americas Watch that influenced the defense of human rights in the Western hemisphere. The last two sub chapters will be dedicated to the internationalization of HRW (the formation of the actual umbrella organization) as well as to the methodological development, thus determining the overall *modus operandi*.

The third chapter aims at analyzing the contemporary structure of Human Rights Watch and their actual influence on the defense of human rights. As a result, the first main sub chapter will test the theoretical implications for its validity when considering the current organizational setup of HRW. Here, several aspects such as major characteristics or the organizational hierarchy and governance will be scrutinized and critically reviewed. The other major objective of the last chapter deals with an application of the spiral model in order to get an understanding how HRW effectively functions when defending human rights domestically.

## **1. (International) Non-Governmental Organization – theoretical background**

This chapter will first of all provide a theoretical understanding of INGOs and the global political system and will later focus on theoretical models that enable an analysis of human rights NGOs on the defense of human rights.

### **1.1. International NGOs and the global political system**

The premier sub-chapter aims at sketching a theoretical image of NGOs by stressing their core characteristics as well as some underlying motives. This will be followed by a brief analysis of contemporary global politics, thus outlining some major theoretical paradigm shifts that link all three perceived actors: nation-states, the market and global civil society. Being officially considered as an important representative of the latter, the next section will focus on NGOs as part of global civil society and the implications emerging out of this relationship. Lastly, some critical thoughts will be included by applying the theory of communicative action by German thinker Jürgen Habermas to NGOs and global civil society as a whole.

#### **1.1.1. Characteristics of NGOs, INGOs and human rights NGOs**

In order to critically examine the role of (international) NGOs as part of global politics, it might be primarily useful to get a deeper theoretical understanding of the composition of these organizations and their underlying motives. The academic discipline of international relations has come up with a various amount of different definitions that seek to outline the core features of NGOs. As incorporated within the name, they are first and foremost non-governmental organizations and thus officially independent of national governments and their sphere of influence. Secondly, non-governmental organizations are based on a non-profit, voluntary approach and operate on behalf of citizens in order to “[...] represent the interests of citizens against the interests of the state and private businesses” (Oxford Reference, 2014).

Apart from the overall valid assumptions on non-governmental organizations mentioned above, British scholar Mary Kaldor further analyzed NGOs with the help of four categories (2003, p. 90). First of all, it is important to elaborate on the geographical situation in which NGOs operate, thus distinguishing between rather Northern based NGOs and its

Southern counterparts. Not only the geographical aspect must be taken into consideration here, but especially the degree of integration within the system gives reason for differentiation. Critics claim this North-South difference to be a prove of injustice as Northern NGOs often possess greater networks or better access to funding, which influences the overall organizational performance (Khagram, et al., 2002). The second distinction of NGOs concerns the general course of action that opens up either the category of deliberation or an active provision of assistance at site. When looking at these two courses of action, it becomes clear that they both constitute themselves on complete different grounds. Whereas the effect of provision of assistance can be actually viewed and measured easily, the concept of deliberation do incorporates a more complex and less-measurable paradigm. Here, communication acts as the key in order to foster structural policy changes in the end. NGOs and their measures to utilize communication as a way of persuasion can vary but information provision/exchange or the exertion of symbols do function as considerable tools (Keck & Sikkink, 1999). Thirdly, the composition of NGOs has been differentiated according to the overall motive or more precisely whether the organization was based on solidarity or either mutual concerns. Narrowing this down, NGOs can either be comprised of people affected by a certain problem (thus sharing a similar interest to solve the problem) or not directly affected people who nevertheless gather together in order to change the situation accordingly. Even without personal damage, these people can link themselves identically to the affected and therefore acquire personal motivation to stand up for their interests. As a fourth core category contributing to the understanding of NGOs, their organizational framework should be considered. When elaborating on this point, it is barely possible to come up with an overall valid statement due to the diversified and flexible approach of NGOs towards the topic of organizational conception. Indeed, NGOs represent probably the highest degree of institutionalization but the missing guiding principle has not only provoked positive feedback. Consequently, NGOs have been attacked due to missing democratic organizational forms, thus undermining their intentions to change societal issues; especially when referring to anti-democratic policies (Khagram, et al., 2002).

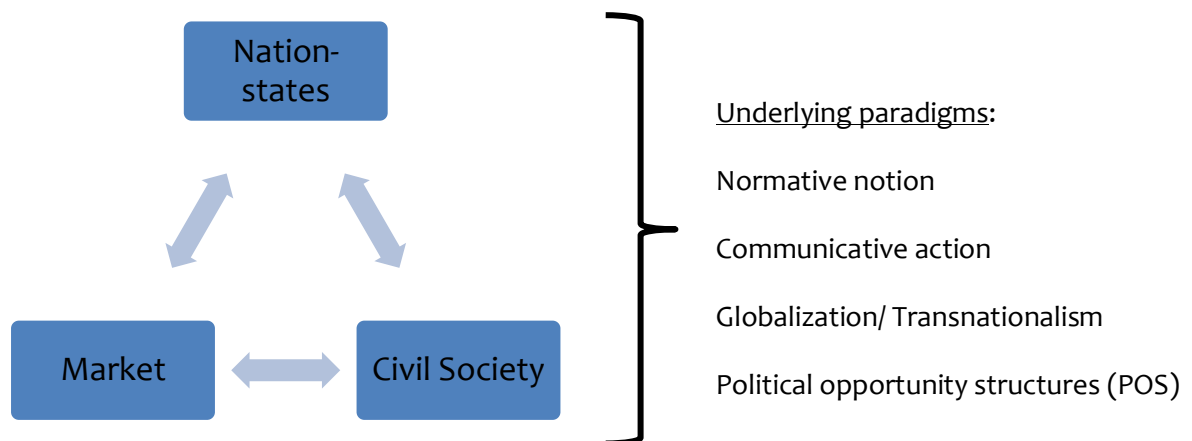
International non-governmental organizations come up with the exact features that also determine NGOs in general. The major distinction that must be made concerns the actual scope of operations followed by INGOs. In contrast to their domestic counterparts

(NGOs), international non-governmental organizations are band together to serve “[...] purposes on a worldwide or regional basis” (Lechner & Noli, 2011, p. 260). When tracing back the origins of INGOs, already the 19<sup>th</sup> century experienced the emergence of internationally oriented organizations such as the International Red Cross (Boli & Thomas, 2011). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially with the end of the Cold War, the numbers of INGOs skyrocketed and their realm of influence increased accordingly. This becomes particularly evident when evaluating their participation in intergovernmental decision-making processes like the pivotal Earth Summit in 1992 (Walk, 2011) or through the granting of consultative status within the institutions of the United Nations (Gilbert, 2008). Of course, the possibilities of impacting on global politics can only be understood through the changing system conditions which only enabled non-state actors to get involved and determine decisions actively (*see following chapters*). By thoroughly scrutinizing the fields of interest of (I)NGOs, one can frequently identify a certain concentration on particular areas. As outlined by Michael Bond (Bond, 2011, p. 296), the largest INGOs focus either on human rights, development or the environment. By clearly aligning to the sector of human rights, to date, around 300 INGOs have dedicated themselves to the defense of this crucial aspect of our everyday lives (Donnelly, 2012, p. 149). Since HR epitomize a large assortment of different rights, INGOs tend to either focalize on a particular law or – as in the case of Human Rights Watch – on a greater spectrum covering several statutes under international law.

Having sketched the core features that can be attributed to all forms of NGOs (independence of government, non-profit approach and voluntary basis) as well as some underlying motives (North-South division or the actual mode of operation), these organizations have clearly established themselves as crucial actors in the international arena. Moreover, INGOs focused on specific issues such as human rights have contributed to the implementation of policies and monitoring of those, which indicates their increasing significance in the whole. In order to understand the mechanisms enabling this rise, the next chapters will discuss perspectives on the contemporary world order and NGOs as part of the strongly emerging global civil society.

### 1.1.2. A constructivist view of the global political system

When elaborating on the political system and its underlying structures, nation-states have been frequently characterized as key actors. Based on the outcome of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, nation-states turned out to be the dominating players by comprising the vast amount of power in their own hands (Mathews, 1997). Seeing the world as an anarchic place in itself, nation-states acted in their own good in order to securitize their survival over competing opponents, thus outweighing other possible aspects determining the behavior among states. This *realist* principle came into question when scholars started arguing for a more diversified analysis of the world order by emphasizing the relevance of non-state actors on the global sphere. A contemporary view of the world system therefore includes states on the one hand but also two other actors shaping modern societies significantly:



#### Own illustration about the contemporary global order

Laying the theoretical framework for the influence of NGOs, the current world order perceives three actors, the nation-states or public, the markets or economic sphere and a third sector, the so-called civil society. As demonstrated, all three are somehow linked to each other, thus representing the interdependent character of the contemporary societal order. The significant theoretic paradigms underlying and supporting this *troika* can be indicated with the help of the following aspects; **normative notion, communicative action, globalization/ transnationalism and political opportunity structures.**

### ***Impact of norms in global system***

One paradigm shift that revolutionized the analysis of international relations concerns the general perception of power in global politics. From the realist point of view, power has been and always will be constituted by nation-states, and also the philosophic anarchic standpoint as well as its consequences for the behavior of states remains as equally important as always (already indicated above). The core assumptions of this were severely questioned in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and especially after the downfall of the Soviet Union. Growing international cooperation and the supranational power shift gave rise to a new thinking that perceived the world and its substances to be socially constructed. Even the overall condition of anarchy was evaluated as a socially constructed situation by the nation-states (Wendt, 1992). This concept of social constructivism expanded the academic discussion further by highlighting the pivotal significance of norms as part of international relations. States – equally social constructs – do not seek to maximize power in the first place but instead are severely motivated by the identity inherent to the system (Sehovic, 2012). By accepting this standpoint, norms come up with crucial importance as they determine the identity of the state, but lastly also the relationships with other actors by either sharing or opposing existing norms. In order to comprehend the impact of norms within the international system, it seems legitimate to come up with a further profound definition in the first place. The academic discourse has outlined several versions but by emphasizing the importance of Global Civil Society and its actors (e.g. NGOs), it becomes crucial to differentiate between two sorts of norms, the “international norms” and “collective beliefs” (Khagram, et al., 2002).

What?	Who?
<b>International norms</b>	<b>Nation-states</b>
<i>Rules of the Game</i>	<i>Players</i>
<b>Collective beliefs</b>	<b>Transnational actors</b>
<i>Internal rules</i>	<i>Gaming pieces</i>

#### **Own illustration about significance of international norms and collective beliefs**

International norms can be best described as a set of *rules of the game* that have been adopted and placed into force by the *players*. In the real-life scenario, the rules of the game would for instance concern human rights that have been accepted by the players,

or the nation-states. When tracing collective beliefs to the game board, they could be mostly regarded as *internal rules* that determine the behavior and strategy for the *gaming pieces*. Within the existing international arena, collective beliefs would be somewhat shared norms by not politically legitimized, transnational actors in the sub-political fraction of society. The existence of international norms and collective beliefs have been also directly connected to the composition of contemporary power, and more importantly as a valid supplement to the prior comprehension of power in hard military or economic terms.

### ***Communicative action***

Apart from the normative notion, also communicative action and its theoretical background should be considered as important part of the analysis in order to understand the contemporary setting of global politics. Communicative action has been introduced into the academic field by the very influential German thinker Jürgen Habermas. According to him, modern society is generally constituted by the existence of two concepts, the *system* and the *lifeworld* (Selchow, 2013). The first concept, the system, is influenced by instrumental action in which the two factors power and money play an essential role. In fact, their given characteristics lead to a situation in which the behavior of the actors is determined by a strong material notion. On the other side, the lifeworld brings in a quite different approach as it highlights communication and action at the same time, thus generating the concept of *communicative action*. The lifeworld epitomizes the actual social context humans live in that establishes and guarantees the space for communication. The latter comes up with immense significance since it is perceived to provide not only the basis for information exchange but moreover for the coordination of actions through communicative consensus. The public sphere in which the communicative action takes place guarantees therefore an approach in which aspects such as understanding do prevail in order to outweigh the material paradigm by the system.

### ***Globalization and political opportunity structures***

Other than norms and communicative action, globalization has had its effects not only on the people itself but especially on the world system. Through the help of technological advancements, the fast pace of telecommunications, the world got closer connected,

hence dwindling blurring boundaries that prevented people from thinking in global terms beforehand. The impact of this strive towards globality has also challenged the power of states in the first place due to the paradigm shift towards international cooperation and the emergence of powerful supranational organizations. Current world politics cannot be easily characterized due to a missing overall global authority, but indeed, it can be argued that the world nowadays features at least a multilateral approach with several differently-staged authorities (Della Porta, et al., 2006). The aspect of a missing state claiming the overall global legitimacy and power has resulted in a world order lacking essential political organization. This major deficit has therefore led to the establishment of so-called political opportunity structures (POS) that tend to provide spaces of action for different transnational actors (Beck, 1999). Obviously, the degree to which POS support the likes of transnational actors depends on other factors such as the shape of the domestic political environment, hence generally enabling better opportunities in open democratic societies than in more authoritarian or closed societies.

### **1.1.3. Global Civil Society and NGOs**

Having examined the contemporary global political system as well as its underlying theoretical paradigms, a further focus will lie on the aspect of (global) civil society and NGOs in particular. To determine global civil society and its inherent actors has been one of the toughest challenges within the academic discipline. To date, many different scholars have come up with their own perceptions of civil society (e.g. Keck and Sikkink 1999; Khagram et al. 2002; Kaldor 2003). Due to the varying standpoints on how to approach civil societies and its participants, definitions currently struggle to get down to one principal assumption. However, all academic work seem to come to the conclusion that global civil society can be best described as a playground of different transnational actors. The attribute of transnationalism in this way and as a binding factor among the participants has been generally contributed by fulfilling at least one of three dimensions. According to Khagram et al. (2002), either the origins of a problem, the actions that take place or the final results must have transnational characteristics, thus expanding the relevant dimension into more than one nation-state or society. By following this aspect, global civil society has been frequently linked to the emergence of social movements, advocacy networks and also non-governmental organizations, of which the latter have



been attributed as “[...] the main representatives [...]” (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). Summing this up, NGOs can be characterized as tremendously diversified organizations that tend to share their greatest similarity when it comes to considering its overall goal to change societal problems.

Based on the contribution of technological advancements and novel modes of transportation as well as communication, NGO's have increased their impact within the international arena since the end of the cold war, leading to a situation in which “[...] governments must compete with civil society” (Bond, 2011, p. 294). The success of such non-governmental organizations can be primarily linked to the circumstance that nation-states have lost their monopoly of information provision to the public. Being perceived as interest representation of the normal human being, NGO's nowadays are able to effectively unite the voices of their members in order to provide services in societies where the respective governments fail to do so (Mathews, 1997). Furthermore, the lacking democratization of the international system has been effectively utilized by NGOs since their organizational conditions provide for all citizens the opportunity of becoming engaged in the actual decision-making process and enhance the impact of the global civil society as a whole. The democratic prerequisites offered by NGOs as well as their flexible and dynamic approach fuel the likes of such organizations in strong contrast to the rather rigid governmental systems (Gilbert, 2008). Due to the flat organizational character, NGO's also combine elements that allows to react to problems or issues in a much more quicker way than the bureaucracy-based nation-states. Therefore, NGO's nowadays work in close cooperation with nation-states not only on the negotiation table but also when it comes to executing the planned activities, thus taking over a certain degree of responsibility. However, one must also note the limitations of non-governmental institutions since they still function only as special interest groups that are highly dependent on their members and on the general public perception (Bond, 2011). The restriction in terms of partaking in political decision-making processes is another issue since NGO's do not act as political parties, thus not threatening the political culture of nation-states to lose sovereignty in this matter. Critically perceiving the entire idea of global civil society, Volker Heins even argues that NGOs do not possess the required democratic foundations and mechanisms that they actually try to impose on the

international system, thus delegitimizing their actual standing within global civil society (Heins, 2008).

#### 1.1.4. A critical Habermasian perspective on NGOs as part of global civil society

After having examined the global political system as well as NGOs and its core features, it might be useful to combine such aspects into a critical perspective. When analyzing the role of NGOs in global politics, especially Habermas and his communication theory comes up with crucial importance. As outlined by Kaldor (2003:21), NGOs do play a major role when they are able to “[...] institutionalize problem-solving discourses of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres.” By doing so, NGOs translate problems arising in the social context of the lifeworld into the actual public sphere that seeks to find consensus on the basis of communicative action. Decisions made within the public sphere should therefore provide the actual realm to which also states should attach their policies. Evaluating this, NGOs would be perceived as intermediaries between the social aspect of society and the system. By placing this concept into the social mechanisms of the world, the following model will help to illustrate the role of NGOs in global politics:



#### Own illustration: NGOs as part of global politics

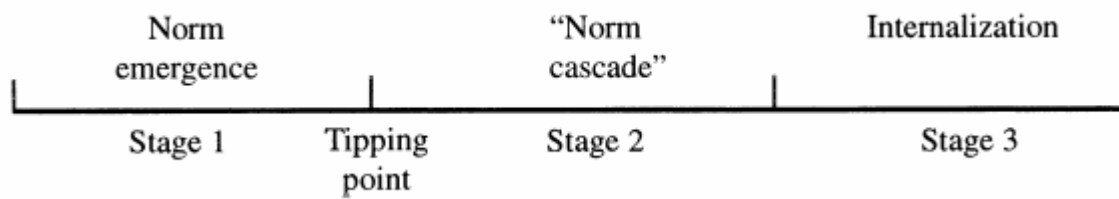
Accepting Kaldor’s major assumptions of NGOs and their position of communication facilitators between the system and the lifeworld, it seems reasonable to expand on the concept of mediators. NGOs not only function as intermediaries but as active

communication vehicles that are influenced by all three social mechanisms: state, market and civil society. They therefore combine factors of influence from both the lifeworld and the system, i.e. norms and consensus as well as money and power. Seeing that the *raison d'être* of NGOs stems normally from norms and inputs of the lifeworld, it follows that in order to effectively communicate these norms and inputs to the system, NGOs also need to employ the power mechanisms related to the system, i.e. power and money. The way in which power and money are utilized on the system level depends on the normative expectations of the underlying society's lifeworld. NGOs are vehicles for communicating norms and interests from the lifeworld to the system. As communication within the system takes place in terms of power and money - the mode of employment of which depends on underlying norms - the mode in which NGOs employ power and money must be seen as a way of communicating the NGOs' underlying norms to the state and the market. The dual nature of NGOs, flexibly employing communicative action from both the system level and the lifeworld, forms the basis of a critical perspective on Kaldor's concept of NGOs as intermediaries. The term intermediary does not do justice to the fact that NGOs due to the dual nature of their communicative action, NGOs do not always maintain an equidistance to system and lifeworld, but rather change in composition and support (from both system and lifeworld) as the communication of their norms progresses. In short, NGOs can 'move' from the reality of the lifeworld towards the system and vice versa. This movement finds its expression in the change (and possibilities) of employment of communicative action. As an example, one can imagine a strong normative change towards environmentalism in the lifeworld. Consequently, an NGO is founded with said environmentalist norms at the core. As this new norm attracts more support in the lifeworld, the ability of the NGO to participate in communicative action with the system increases, as an increase in lifeworld support also results in increased power and monetary resources (e.g. through a rise in donations and/or membership). One can now further imagine that this NGO - equipped with sufficient power and money - employs these in a manner that is in keeping with its normative *raison d'être*. The act of employing power and money, however, already constitutes an act of communicating to the system's actors. The NGO has 'moved' somehow a bit from the lifeworld towards the system. A sufficiently large NGO that communicates 'loudly enough' (i.e. can expend large amounts of power/money) will be heard and 'arrives' in

the system. Once arrived in the system, the same NGO can be used as a vehicle for communication by the system actors. One possible way is for system actors to support this NGO by donating or by trying to publicly collaborate with said NGO. Especially public collaboration (e.g. sponsoring), however, require a change in attitude from the system actor towards the norms that lie at the core of the NGO. In other words, a system actor communicates the fact that the message from an NGO has been 'heard' by demonstrating collaboration. In the same vein, another option is disregard or even open hostility of system actors towards an NGO. This behavior equally embodies a form of (negative) communication towards the lifeworld. Thusly, both forms of interaction of system actors with an NGO entice a reaction from the NGO's constituents, that is a change in its power base (e.g. in- decrease of donations/members, re-evaluation of its *raison d'être*, etc.). In short, the NGO serves as an organizational construct (vehicle) that is flexible in terms of its core mission and the mode of power employed (normative/power/monetary). It is a vehicle that can adapt its role and shape to best fit available opportunity structures to most effectively communicate its core purpose. In this process it 'moves' between lifeworld and system with their different power bases, adapting itself according to communicative interaction with both sides, thusly transmitting information resulting in the possibility to gauge opportunity structures and to adapt the NGO itself accordingly.

### **1.2. Influence of NGOs on the defense of human rights**

As already touched upon in one of the previous sub-chapters, NGOs influence to a tremendous extent the global system by actively shaping international norms. These set of rules, such as human rights, can be perceived as overall valid standards that act as guiding moral principles and – if anchored under international law – even powerful, legal statues to be followed by the world community (Flockhart, 2006). When scrutinizing the emergence of international norms, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 895) identified a three-stage process that seeks to explain the procedural conditions for this standard-setting.



### The norm three-stage process (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 896)

First of all, advocates of norms (such as NGOs or TNAs) attempt to raise awareness to the aspect of novel norms and essay to prove its importance and impact to a certain amount of norm-respecting nation-states. Secondly, the leading norm-respecting countries engage with other nation-states in order to convince them from the idea of adapting such new norms. This particular stage has been also framed as a norms cascade in which countries are somewhat forced to turn into proponents of the novel moral standards. Underlying motives for previously uneager nation-states to obey have been diagnosed as (a.) conformity, (b.) legitimation and (c.) self-esteem (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 895). Whereas conformity and self-esteem refer to the willingness to global integration or the ambition to keep a positive public image, norms have also been diagnosed as essential tools for both international and national legitimation. Not only do countries seek to gain recognition as civilized nations by adapting new norms (Risse, 2002), international legitimation also simultaneously enhances the domestic sphere since citizens expect their national governments to come up with the same or even higher level of legitimacy (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Generally accepted by all actors, the third and last stage of the standard-setting process concerns the internalization, which means that the particular norm transforms into an uncontroversial rule that would not require any further discussions.

This particular approach by Finnemore and Sikkink incorporates the process commonly known to scholars as socialization. It can be basically defined as a procedure where individuals or nation-states turn ideas into norms that consequently lead to a change of “[...] identities, interests, and behavior [...]” (Risse & Sikkink, 1999, p. 11). The notion that can be identified within the definition clearly indicates that states are considered as social constructs that each can acquire certain identities based on the situation that they find themselves in. The relevance of international institutions as well as the socialization

according to globally valid norms can be viewed as a cognitive process that only exists due to the collective knowledge created mutually among the social constructs of nation states (Wendt, 1992). Due to the rising influence of global civil society representatives as part of international decision-making processes, the shaping of identities should also consider the impact of NGOs. With respect to the field of human rights, NGOs can provide on-site service assistance to people in need and thus contribute to the opportunities created by a common identity. However, and more appropriately in this thesis, NGOs (such as HRW) can also seriously engage during the stages of the norm socialization. Through activities ranging from “[...] establishing human rights norms, monitoring conditions and lobbying governments [...]” (Gilbert, 2008, p. 45), NGOs partake in the socialization process by adding own identical notions.

When empirically evaluating the real significance of NGOs participating in the socialization process, one might consider an analysis based on two models that sought to bring the influence of non-state actors with respect to the defense of human rights to light. Both the boomerang effect as well as the spiral model will function as the key theories to be tested when taking into account the actual repercussions of the work of Human Rights Watch.

#### **1.2.1. The boomerang effect**

For the purpose of analyzing the complex spiral model, it is first of all necessary to take a look at the boomerang pattern developed by Keck and Sikkink in 1998, which incorporates certain features relevant for further modifications of the socialization theory (Risse, 2002).

As an initial situation, the boomerang effect requires the existence of a repressive state that significantly undermines the voices of domestic forces rooting for social change, which might refer to the adaptation of internationally valid human rights norms for example. Being stuck internally, the local opposition forces will then essay to get in touch with exogenous transnational advocacy networks since they are capable to “[...] amplify the demands of domestic groups, pry open space for new issues, and then echo these demands back into the domestic arena” (Keck & Sikkink, 1999, p. 93). By including much more powerful and influential TNAs in the situation (e.g. also INGOs like HRW), the

actions taken by the repressive governments tremendously backfire (like the toss of a boomerang) as they now find themselves under international pressure (Risse, 2002). This dilemma can be even further fueled due to the close cooperation of transnational advocacy networks with nation-states and international institutions who might then seek the opportunity to engage and call the repressive governments to stop their policies and foster change (Risse & Sikkink, 1999).

When referring to the tactics used by TNAs, Keck and Sikkink (1999, p. 95) outlined (a.) information politics, (b.) symbolic politics, (c.) leverage politics and (d.) accountability politics as the four major methods that enable the networks to operate. Characterized as “[...] essential and dispersed [...]” (Risse & Sikkink, 1999, p. 96), information politics provide the basis for TNAs to acquire the relevant knowledge, build the case and consequently frame a rhetorical plan when dealing with the affected governments. This stage would also include the collection of testimonies from people involved on-site in order to gain essential, first-hand information. Secondly, symbols (e.g. political events) can be effectively utilized by transnational advocacy networks for the purpose of raising attention to a particular issue that requires a critical intervention (Keck & Sikkink, 1999, pp. 96-97). As a third method – or the so-called leverage politics – TNAs can influence more dominant actors such as nation-states by using hard or soft leverage (Keck & Sikkink, 1999, p. 97). In terms of human rights, this might be illustrated with the help of a case where TNAs convince the world community to cancel foreign aid dedicated to a country where the government systemically breaches international humanitarian law. But also soft leverage can be employed, especially when governments stress the importance of a positive image and thus react sensitively to public critique based on moral values. Lastly, TNAs also play the accountability card by means of highlighting discrepancies between theoretical dedication to aspects such as HR and the lack of actual implementation, hence creating a large gap between the proclaimed truth and the real situation. By scrutinizing this disparity openly, many governments will feel some kind of ashamed and consequently “[...] try to save face by closing the distance” (Keck & Sikkink, 1999, p. 98).

Tremendously determined by their discursive and rhetoric capabilities, the boomerang effect gives a theoretical understanding how transnational advocacy networks can

decisively foster change with respect to the compliance of international norms and their implementations within the nation-state. This pattern was further modified during the late stages of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the next subchapter will introduce this much more complex, multidimensional model commonly baptized as the spiral-model.

### 1.2.2. The spiral model

When reflecting on the general goal of the spiral model, it can be primarily described as a tool to indicate the socialization process of nation-states with respect to international norms. It seeks to explain the complex mechanisms of state socialization from the initial phase (repression by a government) to the final stages (implementation and compliance of norms) by scrutinizing the role of actors on three dimensions, (a.) domestic society, (b.) affected state/ government and (c.) the international community (Risse, 2002).

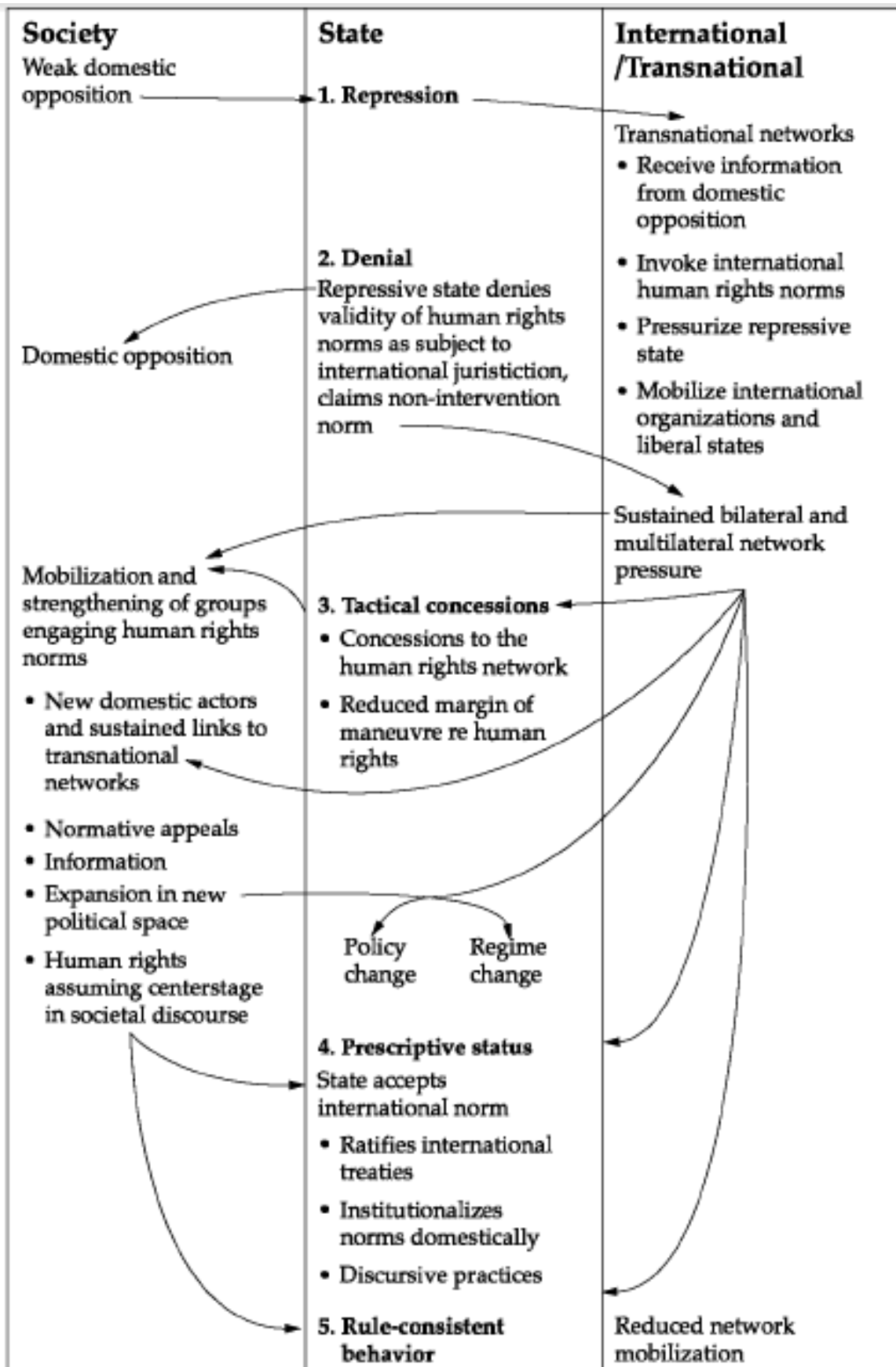
Theoretically, the spiral model takes for granted that human rights norms are predominantly determined and shaped by the work of intergovernmental organizations (e.g. United Nations) (Risse & Sikkink, 1999, p. 19). Moreover, it also accepts that TNAs (containing various actors such as INGOs with a common understanding regarding norms) possess a certain degree of influence, which can be linked to their advocating capabilities vis-à-vis IGOs and nation-states (Risse & Sikkink, 1999, p. 21). By involving domestic opposition as well as transnational actors (TNAs, nation-states etc.), the spiral model also touches on the implications outlined within the boomerang pattern. The mutual cooperation between the two entities leads to synergies that tremendously reinforce both sides during the multi-staged process of socialization (Gilbert, 2008).

The spiral model as analytical tool does not imply a concrete, immediate improvement of the human rights situation on-site but rather highlights the importance of the last stage when the internalization of norms takes place (Risse, 2002). Concerning the scope of application, the dynamics of the spiral model can only be employed to nation-states with functioning state administrations that also act as the core oppressors of human rights (Risse, 2002). When discussing the notion of human rights norms, intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations have been defined as crucial players. The set of human rights developed by the UN (*see chapter 2.1.2.*) has been frequently criticized as a Western-based approach imposed to the rest of the world (Mutua, 2004). Applying this



to the spiral model, one could raise criticism that it does not allow any “[...] room for other societies to articulate their own conceptions of human rights or to help readjust Western conceptions” (Marsh & Payne, 2007, p. 670). However, when evaluating on the construction of the UDHR – which involved representatives from diverse countries with different cultural backgrounds (Osiatynski, 2004) – one could also perceive the contemporary conception of human rights as a collectively constructed framework.

Getting more into detail, the spiral model acknowledges five particular stages that lead to the socialization and consequent internalization of norms in domestic countries. They have been baptized as (1.) repression, (2.) denial, (3.) tactical concessions, (4.) prescriptive status and (5.) rule-consistent behavior (*see illustration below*).



The spiral model taken from “The Power of Human Rights” (Risse & Sikkink, 1999, p. 20)

### (1.) Repression

Comparable to the boomerang pattern, also the spiral model requires a repressive government that oppresses the domestic forces that are not powerful enough “[...] to present a significant challenge to the government” (Risse & Sikkink, 1999, p. 22). Depending on the degree of repression and the conditions of the political system (whether closed or open society), this stage can absorb a lot of time, especially when the domestic opposition face problems to get in touch with transnational advocacy networks (Risse, 2002). Only with the help of TNAs – and the international recognition of the human rights issue – the local groups acquire the power to increase the pressure on the domestic government (Gilbert, 2008).

### (2.) Denial

The second stage of the spiral model indicates two basic developments. First of all, the domestic forces succeeded in raising awareness within the international community. Consequently, actors such as INGOs amongst others put the issue on their agenda and engage by forming a more powerful transnational network (Risse & Sikkink, 1999, p. 22). Secondly, the newly formed TNAs make use of their integration as part of the international arena and approach Western decision-makers to get involved in the particular HR issue. By pointing out to Western governments their significance “[...] as promoters of human rights” (Risse & Sikkink, 1999, p. 23), the transnational advocacy networks widen up the public space in order to pressure the non-complying government more intensely. Being openly denounced, the repressive officeholders will commence a strategy of denial for the purpose of reducing the international accusations to absurdity (Risse, 2002).

### (3.) Tactical concessions

As a next step, the spiral model deals with tactical concessions that determine the further development towards socialization. Concretely speaking, the international pressure in combination with possible restrictions in foreign aid force the repressive government to make strategic concessions. This might result in short-term and only weak policy changes, but even the fact that the government moves towards recognition of human rights aspects enhances the spirit and strengthen the determination of the opposing forces

(Risse, 2002). As analyzed by Risse and Sikkink (1999, p. 25), the most crucial aspect of this stage concerns the shifting focus of attention from the TNAs to the domestic groups, who take over the control and emerge as powerful actors guarded by the international community.

#### (4.)Prescriptive status

The fourth stage, influenced on the mechanisms of dialogue among all actors involved, describes a status where norms are being perceived as uncontroversial, regardless whether countries continue with their human rights violations or not (Risse, 2002). Since theoretical agreement and practical implementation can vary with respect to human rights norms, Risse and Sikkink (1999, p. 29) highlight that prescriptive status can be taken seriously when governments (a.) ratify HR treaties, (b.) incorporate the norms into domestic law, (c.) create opportunities for citizens to complain against abuses and (d.) establish an open dialogue among all stakeholders.

#### (5.)Rule-consistent behavior

To really round up the socialization process, a last step must be taken, which concerns the internalization of norms into the domestic system. As already indicated above, theoretical and practical efforts sometimes outline discrepancies, therefore, TNAs and local opposition groups must keep up their strive until the governments fully recognize and internalize the human rights norm within the society. Only then, the civil society will be able to improve its situation significantly as they are able to prosecute any human rights abusers on the basis of the newly implemented rules (Risse, 2002).

## **2. Historical development of Human Rights Watch**

The second major chapter of this thesis is composed of several subsections that seek to analyze the historical development of Human Rights Watch. It will focus on the evolution of HR in international relations as well as on the impact of the Helsinki Conference. This will be followed by several sections dedicated to the emergence and evolution of Human Rights Watch over time. Lastly, also their methodological approaches will be scrutinized.

### **2.1. Evolution of Human Rights in International Relations**

The present subchapter will briefly dive into the evolution of human rights as a topic in international relations. First of all, several selected historical events will outline important steps taken as part of the development of HR. This will be followed by the second subchapter which aims at sketching the internationalization process of human rights with the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War.

#### **2.1.1. Brief historical overview**

When reflecting on the evolution of human rights, several major historical events come into mind that contributed to the emergence of this nowadays, unquestioned topic of our everyday lives.

First steps into the direction of human rights can be traced back already to the 13<sup>th</sup> century when English noblemen successfully proclaimed more personal rights within the realm of the Magna Charta, which consequently diminished the power of the Crown. Further progress concerning the aspect of HR came in the wake of the enlightenment époque due to the works of influential thinkers such as John Locke, who identified that “[...] people have rights, such as the right to life, liberty, and property, that have a foundation independent of the laws of any particular society” (Tuckness, 2012). His legacy not only fuelled the likes of other famous philosophers (e.g. Jean-Jacques Rousseau) but also translated into actual political action with the American Revolution as well as the French Revolution during the late stages of the 18th century. Both revolutions paved the way for a new understanding of human rights, and as for the French case even framed the so-called *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. This document guaranteed that all individuals were provided with formerly non-existing human rights in

terms of liberty and equality. Its underlying universal prominence stressed the notion that all individual human beings – regardless of their social status – would be considered as equal before the law (Streiff-Fénart, 2012). A third significant impact on the overall evolution of human rights can be linked to the foundation of the International Red Cross and the Geneva conventions initiated by this particular organization. With its multilateral character, the Geneva conventions established precise rules for the treatment of wounded or imprisoned soldiers, and moreover set the stage – in combination with the Hague conventions – for international humanitarian law as conclusive part of international law (ICRC, 2014).

### 2.1.2. Internationalization of human rights

Though there had been core achievements throughout the time, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century unearthed in a remorseless way the lack of international cooperation with respect to human rights. Since HR and its compliance were generally perceived as a matter of internal affairs, the world became the deedless witness of the horrendous atrocities committed by Nazi Germany during WWII. The unprecedented death toll caused by the genocide on Jews, Romani people, homosexuals and other societal groups, enhanced the spirit of the allied nations to implement a system under international law that would create the legal framework for future condemnation. The aftermath of the Second World War finally introduced the actual term of ‘Human Rights’ into the public discourse; not only through the Nuremberg trials against German War criminals – that were partly held responsible for crimes against humanity – but also through the creation of a fundamental declaration that was significantly inspired by former U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. As an integral part of the newly-formed United Nations, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* marked a turning point with regards to the conception of HR in general. Having included key aspects from previous declarations (such as the American Bill of Rights or the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen), the UDHR went notably further by linking human dignity as an inherent trait universally applicable to each and every human being on the planet (Glendon, 2001). By taking away the nation states’ exclusivity concerning human rights, the international community commonly agreed on a set of rules that would consequently determine their relations in several respects in order to prevent any future systematic abuses or genocides from happening.

When reflecting on Article 2 stating that “[...] no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs” (United Nations, 1948), also all human beings under colonial rule were included, which functioned as a decisive reference point for the independence movements to come. Due to the composition of the UDHR, various topics were incorporated that have been primarily categorized as either (a.) civil and political rights or (b.) economic, social and cultural rights (Donnelly, 2012). The declaration in itself had no binding character but rather emphasized a set of standards and norms that should function as guiding principles for all nations around the globe. However, in the aftermath of the UDHR, actions were taken to translate the content of the declaration into actual solid legal text in order to acquire a binding agreement among the actors involved. To achieve this ambitious goal, long-lasting negotiations were started in the early 50’s but severely slowed down due to the rising tensions between the two major power systems in the West and East respectively. The growing discrepancies in terms of ideology further attributed to the gap relating to the conception of human rights in the first place. Whereas the U.S. and allied countries emphasized the importance of civic and political rights as superior, the USSR stressed their ideological orientation by supporting social, economic and cultural rights as most crucial (The Levin Institute, 2014). The struggle between these negative and positive rights resulted in the foundation of two separate international covenants with one consequently focusing on the political and civil dimension whereas the other one incorporated rights around the economic, social and cultural scale. After both covenants went into force, they were subsequently backed or disapproved by the particular power houses, which further enlarged the disparity when considering the conception of overall valid human rights (Patenaude, 2012). The emphasis on economic and social rights of the USSR fueled the likes of domestic dissidents who demanded also for more political and civil liberties. By appealing to these voices, the Helsinki conference in 1975 acted as a game-changing event with groundbreaking achievements, which will be further examined in the next chapter.

## 2.2. The impact of the Helsinki conference

The evolution of human rights in international relations can look back on a long-lasting tradition with interim milestones such as the Geneva Convention or the UN Declaration on Human Rights (outlined above). However, the effective implication of these pivotal human rights always lacked commitment when viewing the abstentions made by the communist states. The major event that first tremendously contributed to the rise of human rights on the international sphere can be linked to the Helsinki conference that established a normative notion with far-reaching consequences for the affected societies. Therefore, this subchapter will outline the historical context and actual implications of the negotiations as well as the reactions in the USSR and their satellite states.

### 2.2.1. Historical context and actual implications

A crucial milestone for the international human rights movement and for the evolution of HRW was set within the context of the Helsinki conference held in the summer of 1975. The officially called *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)* was a series of mutual talks between representatives from the Communist Bloc – thus including the Central Eastern European States and the Soviet Union - and leaders from Western European countries as well as their North-American allies United States and Canada in order to diminish political pressures, and to enhance cooperation among all parties involved (Palmowski, 2009). The CSCE took place during a period that already experienced a first tangible notion of mutual reconciliation on the European continent. Especially the foreign policy efforts by the former West German chancellor Willy Brandt – commonly baptized as *Ostpolitik* - should be mentioned here since they provided an essential fundament for the further process of international understanding.

The Helsinki conference itself dealt with various aspects that can be categorized with the help of the following sections:

- a. On the *political dimension*, the state heads emphasized key concepts such as territorial integrity or peaceful co-operation among countries. The conference also highlighted the recognition of national boundaries throughout Europe, which had been one of the core goals to be achieved by Soviet representatives (Neier, 2012).



- b. With respect to the *economic dimension*, the CSCE also endeavored to create a valid basis for trade relations between West and East European states.
- c. Beyond the scope of political/security and economic interest, the thirty-five participating states also put the aspect of *human rights* on the agenda, a quite unique event when reflecting on earlier negotiations between the two distinct ideological worlds. Concretely speaking, the CSCE obliged the signatories to provide their citizens with essential freedoms concerning their self-fulfillment (relating to areas such as freedom of religion, thought or conscience), and also stressed the importance of human interaction, thus allowing people to travel or to reunify with relatives (Molineu, 1978).

The inclusion of human rights in line with international, multilateral negotiations between the East and the West was a novelty that not only transformed the relationship between states and citizens but also functioned as a strong boost for the HR movement that would subsequently emerge in the aftermath of the negotiations. Whereas the Soviet Union and their affiliated Eastern European partner states abstained from adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and also refused to sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Neier, 2012), the outcome of the CSCE and the resulting ratification of the Helsinki accords clearly marked a turning point with respect to the conception of HR as integral part of the society. Having praised the political outcome of the Helsinki conference as a success over the West, the USSR underestimated the impact of the human rights dimension and rather perceived this section of the agreement as another public “[...] lip service” (Patenaude, 2012). The comparably lax interpretation of the Helsinki accords by Soviet leaders can be also traced to the fact that they were not constituted as binding treaties in line with the principles of international law but rather symbolic concessions, which made the nation states merely responsible in the moral point-of-view. However, the consequent reactions in the Soviet society as well as in their satellite states fuelled the debate on HR against the expectations by communist officials.

#### **2.2.2. Reactions in Soviet Union and their satellite states**

The outcome of the Helsinki conference renewed the dissident movements in several communist states soon after its disclosure to the public. As a result, only one year after the signing of the Helsinki accords, a Russian physicist called Yuri Orlov launched the to

date existing organization *Moscow Helsinki group* that proclaimed as its paramount goal to monitor the compliance of the Soviet government with the human rights regulations set during the Helsinki negotiations (Montgomery, 2002). The creation of the government-critical Moscow Helsinki Group remained not unheard in other countries that were within the sphere of Soviet influence. Further supported by the public encouragement of Orlov and some affiliated dissidents, the human rights social movement continuously spilled over to the neighboring satellite states. As a matter of fact, various similar organizations – with an identical monitoring mandate – arose in the successive time period and enlarged the public discourse with respect to human rights in states such as Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia, Armenia or Poland (Neier, 2012). In addition to these developments, also Czechoslovakian dissidents expressed their strong discontent with the communist government by forming the famously known Charter 77. The group - that was headed by influential personalities such as Jiri Hajek, Jan Patocka or Vaclav Havel - also gained significant backing by Western leaders like former U.S. President Jimmy Carter (Kraus, 1982). The flourishing dissatisfaction within vast layers of the societal elite in the Soviet Union and their proxy states as well as the overall positive recognition of the Eastern human rights movements in the Western world alarmed communistic government officials, who feared a severe loss of control. The consequent retaliation policies by state powers in the Eastern Bloc harmed the capacities of the domestic actors such as the Moscow Helsinki Group or Charter 77 but led to the formation of a Western-based human rights organization that would subsequently step into breach in order to defend the rights of the oppressed people. The emanating organization that is being referred to is nowadays commonly known under the name of *Human Rights Watch*.

### **2.3. Foundation of Helsinki Watch – the forerunner of HRW**

As already indicated in the last sub-chapter, the Eastern Bloc experienced a tremendous rise of HR social movements in the wake of the Helsinki accords that were signed by all communistic governments without abstentions. The core character of these emerging organizations could be best described as monitoring units that checked the respective government compliance with the human rights regulations outlined in the final Helsinki act. With this obligation in mind, formations like the Moscow Helsinki Group frequently engaged in the public discourse by highlighting any human rights abuses that would

restrict aspects such as freedom of conscience or freedom of thought. Being perceived as a peril that could undermine the political authority and disrupt public order, the communistic governments reacted quickly to the ‘threat’ of social movements and retaliated with concrete measures varying from arrests or imprisonments towards domestic or foreign exiles for the dissidents (Montgomery, 2002).

With the influence and subsequent success of the human rights formations at stake, local Russian figureheads such as Andrei Sakharov requested for exogenous help in order to continue the struggle for HR from the outside. The appeal was consequently heard by the American human rights activist Robert L. Bernstein, who – together with two other U.S. associates Orville Schell Jr. and Aryeh Neier – founded *Helsinki Watch* in 1978 (Neier, 2012). Due to the close contact of the first chairman Leonard Bernstein with oppressed dissidents in the Soviet Union, the Western world became thoroughly acquainted with the human rights abuses that were happening in the Eastern bloc. As a result, Bernstein was able to secure essential public funding required for the establishment of the forerunner organization of Human Rights Watch. Bernstein and his associates clearly linked the paramount mandate of Helsinki Watch to the monitoring of human rights abuses in the USSR and the states of the Warsaw Pact, and to further support similar oppressed citizen movements in the same region (Watch, 2014). It might be therefore argued that both the Eastern HR organizations as well as Helsinki Watch incorporated identical objectives and only differed when considering their regional origins and ideological pre-determinations. Actual efforts taken by Helsinki Watch in the beginning aimed at blaming the communist officeholders for the non-compliance with the rules anchored in the final Helsinki act. However, Soviet functionaries downplayed these critics from the outside on a regular basis, more precisely by equating the exogenous voices as attempts to interfere with internal, domestic affairs, and as such not allowed under international law (Patenaude, 2012). For the purpose of countering these responses, Helsinki Watch was obliged to adjust its original conception and subsequently diversified its mandate accordingly in order to emerge as the globally active HRW.

#### 2.4. The emergence of the Western counterpart - Americas Watch

Helsinki Watch, with its core goal to monitor human rights violations in the Eastern Bloc, was progressively criticized by communist officials for its unfair focus that would exclude HR abuses committed in the Western hemisphere. Indeed, egregious events like the coup d'état in Chile in 1973 - followed by the brutal reign of dictator Pinochet for more than 15 years - were commonly accepted by Western leaders, and in this particular case even actively supported through American intelligence services (Kornbluh, 2003). The outrage of the U.S. involvement during the Chilean putsch transformed the American discourse significantly in the aftermath as many politicians argued to include human rights as pivotal pillar within the foreign policy doctrine. This paradigm shift was further fostered through the overall growing influence of human rights in international relations (see chapter 2.2. *The impact of the Helsinki conference*), and consequently implemented under the Carter administration from 1977-1981. During an era of détente between the two superpowers, Carter exchanged previously utilized concepts such as *realpolitik* with measures prioritizing the morality of actions as well as strengthening the ideas of freedom and human rights around the world (Pflüger, 1989). Concrete reforms undertaken incorporated the installment of a 'Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the State Department' in conjunction with changing directives to the U.S. embassies in order to monitor domestic human rights abuses and address those critically with the affected governments on-site (Schneider, 1979).

The rather idealistic foreign policy established through the Carter doctrine experienced a dramatic turn with the inauguration of Ronald Reagan as 40<sup>th</sup> President of the United States in January 1981. Reagan, who greatly altered the ideas of modern conservatism in the U.S., also evoked a severe shift back to old cold war tensions that prevailed during earlier stages of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Precisely speaking, the U.S. foreign policy became much more open to the support of allying forces – regardless of their particular values or approaches - throughout the world that were in combat with leftist units affiliated with the USSR. The major staging ground for these (in)direct interventions of the United States concerned the realm of Central- and South America where many nation states were facing civil war alike quarrels between rightist and leftist parties. With the backing of brutal, authoritarian regimes in Guatemala or El Salvador that were responsible for

atrocious human rights abuses against domestic dissidents as well as citizen groups (Sullivan & Jordan, 2004), the Reagan administration depreciated the HR paradigm in turn for a rather pragmatic, realpolitik-based strategy.

The relatively prompt transformation of the U.S. foreign policy approach as well as the human rights abuses committed in other countries of the Western hemisphere fueled the social movements within the American society, thus leading to the formation of *Americas Watch* in 1981 (Montgomery, 2002). By dealing with human rights violations on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, *Americas Watch* not only enlarged the overall mandate geographically but moreover counteracted critics that perceived the organization primarily as pro-Western and ideologically biased on reporting only HR abuses in the communist world. As an equal partner to Helsinki Watch, the expansion also paved the way for a professionalization and remodeling of the tactics used. As outlined by the former CEO of HRW, Aryeh Neier, the evolution of *Americas Watch* and their resulting operating methods “[...] became the distinguishing characteristics of the work of Human Rights Watch [...]” (Neier, 2012, p. 210). This predominantly affected the informing aspect of the organization since *Americas Watch* started publishing detailed and thoroughly-investigated reports on human rights violations on a regular basis. Also content-wise, a shift was recognizable as the researchers commenced to scrutinize infringements against international humanitarian law and misdemeanor by all parties involved, thus including the actual perpetrators as well as their associated proponents (Neier, 2012). Due to the U.S. meddling with internal affairs of other countries, the Reagan government emanated as a prominent target of *Americas Watch*, who continuously excoriated the American affiliation with human rights abusing regimes or guerilla forces on the same continent. Attempts by the Reagan administration to hush critical voices ironically backfired as reports published by *Americas Watch* proved to be more credible than authorized government findings (Neier, 2012). Therefore, it can be stated that the emergence of *Americas Watch* successfully expanded the international movement of human rights to the previously undocumented Western hemisphere, and hence strengthened the trustworthiness and unbiased perception of the organization – Helsinki as well as *Americas Watch* - as a whole.

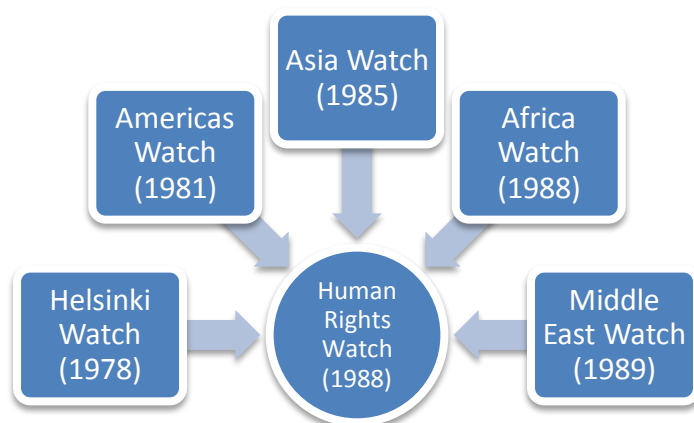
## 2.5. The global approach and framing of Human Rights Watch

The organizational enlargement to the West as well as the changing operating methods – particularly the inclusion of violations against international humanitarian law – revolutionized the likes of HR activists and opened opportunities to tackle abuses on the global scale.

After the establishment of Helsinki Watch in 1978 and Americas Watch in 1981 respectively, a third Watch committee arose with a focus on human rights violations on the largest continent, Asia. The installment of Asia Watch in 1985 functioned as a response to the growing influence of authoritarian regimes throughout the region that enacted suppressive measures against wide segments of the society. Accompanied by severe legal restrictions, regimes in Vietnam, Burma or Singapore attempted to prevent any human rights organizations such as Asia Watch from reporting on domestic HR infringements on a regular basis (Montgomery, 2002). Nonetheless, several domestic HR formations like the *Chinese Democracy Movement* turned up and underlined the relevance for political change and democratic reforms that would be in line with international human rights. However, especially Chinese officeholders countered the internal developments harshly and employed military forces on the summit of public protests in June 1989 that ended in the infamously known Tiananmen square massacre exactly 25 years ago (Jian, 2014).

A fourth area of interest requiring the attention of human rights advocates concerned the African continent that was immensely suffering from civil war situations and authoritarian regimes in various regions. The resulting formation of a watch committee in 1988 – consequently baptized as *Africa Watch* – commenced its work on human rights abuses in many sub-Saharan nation states. Concerning their exact ambition, Africa Watch tended to focalize their operations on both armed conflicts (e.g. in Somalia, Sudan or Liberia) as well as repressive governments (e.g. in Kenya, Nigeria or Zimbabwe) responsible for infringements against international human rights law (Dicker, 1991). Due to its strategic importance for the United States and USSR during the Cold War period, Africa Watch scrutinized violations against international humanitarian law from different vintage points in order to outline perpetrators (both governments as well as opposing forces) and sponsors often located outside the African continent (Montgomery, 2002).

The last addition to the complex composition took place in 1989 when *Middle East Watch* complemented the already existing circle of performing watch committees. By including the geographical areas of North Africa and – more essentially - the Middle East, the organization enlarged its scope of influence to one of the most crucial regions when evaluating the impact of its geopolitical relevance worldwide. Constant quarrels between Israel and its Islamic neighboring countries or unities as well as the Iran-Iraq war lasting almost during the entire decade of the 80's enhanced the craving for organizations to monitor the domestic conditions with respect to compliance under international human rights laws. As a consequence of these demands, a tremendous extent of the initial work of Middle East Watch concentrated on the events indicated above. Concerning the Iran-Iraq war, researchers of Middle East Watch were furthermore faced with unprecedented atrocities committed by Iraqi forces that introduced the previously unknown term of genocide into the public discourse of the HRW activists (Neier, 2012). Also the second trouble spot – dealing with the likes of Israel and their neighbors – has influenced the direction of Middle East Watch in such a way as the organization has been frequently criticized for a proclaimed biased, anti-Semitic reporting style (Bernstein, 2009).



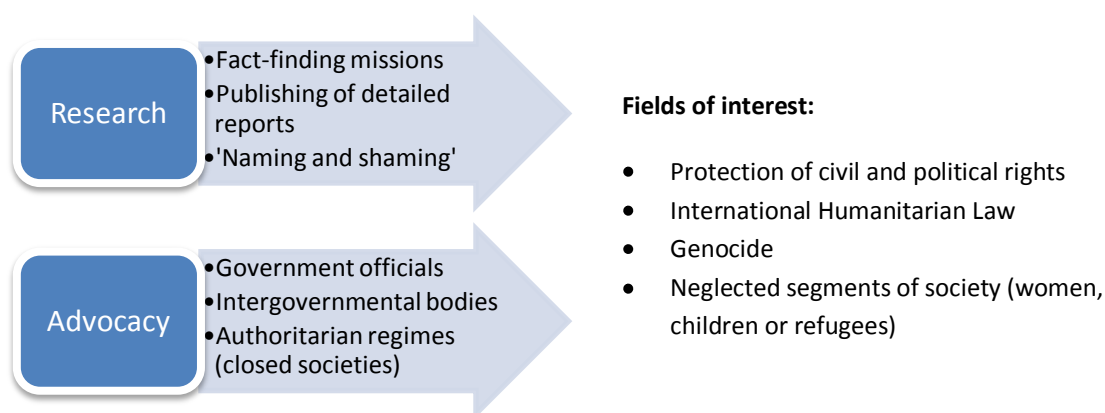
#### Own illustration about the development of Human Rights Watch

As outlined above, the five watch committees clearly operated in their own geographical realm and moreover benefited from a “[...] near total autonomy in both their day-to-day functioning and their substantive work” (Brown, 2001, p. 78). Especially the first two watch committees, Helsinki Watch as well as Americas Watch, were able to significantly enlarge their scope of influence throughout the debut years and earned a great deal of reputation within the rising international human rights movement. Their fearless

confrontation with the superpowers both in the West and the East that were held responsible for (in)direct violations against overall existing human rights fueled the likes of other activists to form additional watch committees that would consequently report on HR abuses in new parts of the world. Due to the increasing coverage of crucial regions in Asia or Africa, voices got progressively louder proposing a merger of all watch committees under one roof in order to coordinate the activities and strategies jointly. As a result, in 1988 the watch committees subsequently merged under the umbrella organization labeled as *Human Rights Watch* that was perceived as an attempt to utilize the emerging synergies for “[...] a greater whole” (Brown, 2001, p. 78). Ever since the establishment, Human Rights Watch has become the frequent point of attraction though the regional divisions exist to date. However, all organizational objectives and strategies are centered within HRW, which will be further outlined in the following.

## 2.6. Methodological development of HRW

For the purpose of analyzing the methodological development of Human Rights Watch, a brief look at their mission statement already gives a broad indication about their actual mandate. As outlined, HRW “[...] defends the rights of people worldwide” and they moreover “[...] investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power to respect rights and secure justice” (Human Rights Watch, 2014a). This truly global approach incorporates the two key pillars that have marked the work of Human Rights Watch since the establishment of its forerunning organization Helsinki Watch, namely *a) the focus on research* and *b) their ambition to advocate key decision-makers*.



Own illustration about the methods used by HRW



Concerning the field of interest, right from the beginning, a focus had been given on the protection of civil and political rights as outlined in crucial documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (see chapter 2.1. *Evolution of Human Rights*) or within the final act of the Helsinki accords (see chapter 2.2. *The impact of the Helsinki Conference*). In this respect, Helsinki Watch installed a research method commonly phrased as “[...] naming and shaming [...]” (Human Rights Watch, 2014a) that would seek to compile details about the human rights abuses of the governments involved as well as to consequently attract public attention by mediatizing their findings. Moreover, the organization also paved the way for the advocacy pillar as they attempted to influence U.S. foreign policy through the publication of outcomes but more importantly through face-to-face consultations with officeholders.

The emergence of Americas Watch enhanced the speed and impact of the watch committees as the organization improved their overall capacities with respect to their research conception. The progressive struggle with U.S. officials under Reagan forced Americas Watch to a change of plans that would translate into a much more efficient way of operations in the long-term. In order to counter domestic critics, Americas Watch adjusted its style of reporting by concentrating on a thorough, flawless research that would provide objective and impeccable results. In form of reports, the research did not simply stress egregious abuses but determined the fundament for “[...] Americas Watch’s belief that those events had transpired” (Neier, 2012, p. 210). Characteristically, the organization adopted a somewhat attitude of intransigence as Americas Watch continued to report on abuses in affected countries until significant changes were put into practice. Another revolution based on Americas Watch concerned the adoption of international humanitarian law as further field of interest. This paradigm shift was primarily due to the circumstance that several states in Latin America were suffering from human rights violations committed by both governments and opposition forces that were not recognized for their legitimacy by the corresponding state (Watson, 2004). However, by adding international humanitarian law to the agenda, Americas Watch was able to hold all the parties responsible that could be linked to atrocities and infringements committed during the armed conflict.

With the end of the bipolar world and the growing importance of intergovernmental structures as part of global politics, Human Rights Watch also enlarged its mandate of advocacy to such bodies, and also closed societies that were tabooed beforehand (Brown, 2001). Accompanied by a novel field of interest that was caused by the genocide on Kurdish people during the Iraq-Iran war, Human Rights Watch affirmed its ambition for intergovernmental coordination in order to implement mechanisms that would consequently put the perpetrators on trial. The motivation of HRW was not only linked to atrocities around the crime of genocide but also to other globally existing problems such as landmines. Considering this particular case, Human Rights Watch played a paramount role in establishing compliance mechanisms with a goal to ban these unlawful weapons once for all. As a founding member of an international campaign against landmines, HRW received worldwide applause and was awarded for its efforts amongst others with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 (Human Rights Watch, 2014d). Nonetheless, genocide has tended to influence international relations also after the massacre on the Kurdish when viewing events in Rwanda or Bosnia during the mid 90's.

Moreover, the downfall of the communistic regimes opened also capacities to deal with so-called apolitical prisoners. The rights of these people were not oppressed because of their political mindset but rather arbitrarily discriminated and excluded from society. When tracing this down more narrowly, Human Rights Watch expanded its center of attraction to societal segments such as women, children or refugees to name a few (Watson, 2004). Also here, the organization seeks to establish mechanisms that would prevent issues such as the recruitment and consequent employment child soldiers in many African countries from happening.

### **3. Current structure, management of Human Rights Watch and impact on the defense of human rights**

The third chapter engages analytically both the organizational setup of Human Rights Watch as well as their influence on the defense of human rights. The last aspect will be illustrated with the help of a case study from Mexico where one can see the traces of HRW's work by applying the spiral model outlined earlier.

#### **3.1. Current structure and management of HRW**

The first subchapter deals with the current structure and management of HRW by analyzing major characteristics, their organizational hierarchy and governance and the funding processes as last point of interest.

##### **3.1.1. Major characteristics**

As already outlined in the previous chapter, Human Rights Watch (or rather Helsinki Watch) emerged as a result of the multilateral Helsinki Conference, which set new standards with respect to human rights. The further development – that saw the evolution of other watch committees – fueled the importance of the entire organization in its attempt to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice. With its original focus on political prisoners that were held detained by oppressive governments in the East or the emphasis to shame the U.S. government involvement in the Western hemisphere, HRW had a somewhat narrow spectrum of operation opportunities in its early stages. Due to its growing acceptance and influence as a credible actor in the international arena, HRW also further developed and adjusted its organizational direction accordingly. When looking at the contemporary characteristics that shape the work of this INGO, one can identify an organizational alignment based on (a) geographical aspects and (b) thematic standards.

Regional division	Thematic division
Europe/ Central Asia	Arms
Africa	Business and human rights
Americas	Children's rights
Asia	Disability rights
Middle East and North Africa	Health and human rights
United States	International Justice
	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights
	Refugees
	Terrorism/ Counterterrorism
	Women's rights

#### Division of HRW according to regions and topics

Evaluating on the geographical paradigm, HRW currently structures its modus operandi by using a regional division that resembles in some measure the original composition of the watch committees. This global approach is further strengthened through the installation of several offices in the world, which include international hotspots like Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, London, Paris, Tokyo or Washington D.C. (Human Rights Watch, 2014h). Since one of the key goals of HRW aims at reporting directly to decision-makers on site (Wong, 2012), the establishment of a global office network can be perceived as a clever move that gives the organization a major impetus when pursuing their objectives. The second direction determining the work of HRW concerns a division according to particular topics that play a crucial role in the international human rights framework. The individual themes that are nowadays part of HRW modus operandi have been added throughout the time and were not always equally important. As an example might act the promotion of women's rights, which became part of the official agenda only in 1990 as a result of an internal, organizational analysis that proclaimed a sufficient lack of reporting on this sensitive field (Brown, 2001). The flexibility of HRW as well as its ability to make use of new political opportunity structures in this way can also be supported when viewing the inclusion of terrorism/ counterterrorism within the debate. HRW has moved to become one of the core critics of the contemporary U.S. drone policy by demanding their compliance with international law (Human Rights Watch, 2014f). Though stressing

the relevance of civil and political rights as most crucial realm of influence, HRW has also made attempts to introduce topics dealing with economic, social and cultural rights. However, HRW does not proclaim for itself the capability to foster economic or social change on the whole but rather emphasizes its willingness to get involved within this field whenever their methodology of naming and shaming works well (Roth, 2004).

The growing global representation as well as the thematic enlargement has also contributed to a rise of employees that actively engage themselves for the INGO. Whereas HRW provided job opportunities to around 275 people in 2008 (Wong, 2012), contemporary figures indicate a total number of 400 employees to date “[...] consisting of human rights professionals including country experts, lawyers, journalists, and academics of diverse backgrounds and nationalities” (Human Rights Watch, 2014g). This increase of more than 100 people might not impress in the first place but when looking at the composition, it becomes clear that HRW actually diversified its personnel. This internationalization of the staff not only enriches the organizational culture but also aides to silence critical voices that openly attacked HRW for its relatively Western based staff (Brown, 2001). The leading position of the INGO, however, has always remained in US-American hand, with its current Chief Executive Officer Ken Roth, who leads the organization since 1993 (The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, 2014). To this day, HRW compiles “[...] more than 100 reports and briefings on human rights conditions in some 90 countries [...]” (Human Rights Watch, 2014g) and also seeks the regular contact with IGOs or enterprises in order to successfully pursuit their human rights goals. Their integration within international governmental organizations can be further stressed by the fact that HRW has been granted a special consultative status in the ECOSOC that it actively holds since 1993 (United Nations, 2013).

### **3.1.2. Organizational hierarchy and governance**

When evaluating the contemporary organizational composition of Human Rights Watch, it can be stated that the NGO experienced various changes throughout its existence. The early phase of HRW was to a tremendous extent influenced by former CEO Aryeh Neier who took the lead after the establishment of the HRW umbrella committee in 1988. Under his leadership, the individual watch committees were able to remain a great amount of autonomy, thus also giving a lot of proposal power to the respective

figureheads of the particular entities (Wong, 2012). This rather centralized approach came under scrutiny when Ken Roth became the new CEO in 1993, who tried to implement some organizational changes. In order to broaden up the space for deliberation concerning the agenda setting of the INGO, Roth constructed several new offices as well as a so-called senior management team that currently consists of 24 members (Human Rights Watch, 2014g). These additional layers have led to a shift of proposal power away from the regional or thematic directors. Indeed, nowadays topics of interest emerge rather through a coordinated approach within the organization in order to guarantee internal coherence and thematic consistency (Wong, 2012). Concerning the actual execution of proposed topics and agendas, HRW provides the Chief Executive Officer, the senior-management team and the thematic directors with a strong enforcement power. However, due to the deliberative character of HRW – thus aiming at constructing topics collectively - this veto power should be only perceived as a theoretical rule that is utilized rarely (Wong, 2012). The fact that the superior staff does not effectively make use of its right to veto proposals indicates the force of communicative action in the Habermasian sense. Since all units within the organization seek to engage on rationally, all participants exchange their arguments on a truthful basis. By deliberating constructively, superior staff as well as researchers and supporting personnel are able to achieve a common ground for the mutual agenda setting. Based on this collective understanding and the acceptance of the better argument, enforcement power (or the power to veto other) becomes practically irrelevant and thus remains a moot rule.

The overall operations of the INGO are governed by a board of Directors that is currently made up of 35 prestigious members (Human Rights Watch, 2014b). When scrutinizing the composition of the board, one can clearly identify that it incorporates major decision-makers from all over the world. The representatives can be traced to all three sectors public, market and civil society, which stresses the significance of HRW as a communicative actor within the international arena. The internal divisions – arranged according to the region or general topic – epitomize a somewhat classical hierarchical character, thus incorporating an executive director, the corresponding deputy as well as researchers and supporting staff (Brown, 2001). Each division can rely on the help of various advisors that are grouped in own committees. Quite comparable to the Board of Directors, also the advisory committees aim at “[...] tying Human Rights Watch to the

broader activist and academic community [...]” (Watch, 2014). The cultural diversification among its members as well as their actual sphere of influence within the international community enables HRW to adjust its agenda effectively and according to the relevant local structures.

Increasing their local identity and impact on-site induced HRW’s strive to the establishment of so-called city committees that boost the impact of the organization “[...] through fundraising, outreach, and advocacy” (Human Rights Watch, 2014c). Based on voluntarism, HRW can rely on a strong network in more than 30 cities that are located in major metropolises around the world but also in highly sensitive cities like Beirut. Through their local presence, HRW acquired the possibility to not only promote itself publicly or gain novel funding sources, but also to “[...] expand its influence in developing centers of power” (Wong, 2012, p. 103).

### 3.1.3. Funding

Another important aspect that helps analyzing the organizational capabilities of HRW deals with the funding process and their underlying sources. The fact that HRW does not incorporate traits of a membership NGO contributes positively since it enables the organization to react much faster to trends that might require their intervention. Whereas NGOs like Amnesty International must act in line with their members to a certain extent, HRW has fewer restrictions when taking into account the overall decision-making process (Wong, 2012). However, a non-existent member base also comes up with the disadvantage for HRW that they do not possess a stable and solid funding source. Therefore, HRW tremendously counts on donations coming from different sectors like the public or private but also from wealthy individuals. Especially highlighted in this sense must be the core maxim of HRW that it does not [...] accept any government funds, directly or indirectly” (Human Rights Watch, 2012). This basic principle can be analyzed as an attempt to avoid any possible dependence on national governments that might compromise the credibility of the entire operation as well as weaken the organizational fundamentals and integrity. Since its beginning, HRW heavily relied on the contributions from institutions like the Ford Foundation or the Open Society Institute (Brown, 2001). The influence of these donors on the organizational setting becomes clear when considering a large contribution made recently by famous investor and philanthropist

George Soros. Through his foundation – the above mentioned Open Society Institute – George Soros donated in total \$100 Million to HRW in 2010, which became the biggest contribution he has ever carried out to a NGO (Strom, 2010). By attaching a somewhat indirect obligation, Soros challenged HRW to collect the same amount of money within the upcoming ten years. He also demanded a clear focus on emerging countries in order to change the public image of HRW away from being “[...] an American organization” (Strom, 2010). In this way, even large donors can take up the task that would be normally conducted by real members, namely to critically elaborate on the work and foster changes where needed. By stressing the aspect that HRW still incorporates the shape of a primarily Western organization, Soros publicly fueled the deliberation process and a critical internal reflection among the participants of HRW. The response by HRW under the lead of Ken Roth indeed framed the organizational transformation to become less Western and more active in emerging countries. Concretely, the Soros fund enabled the organization to open up new offices in order to deepen the internationalization process of the organization as a whole (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The interconnectedness among NGOs like HRW and its donors might also contribute to the positive synergies that fuel the development vice versa. When relating this to the Soros example, the link between both organizations becomes quite obvious since the former CEO of HRW, Aryeh Neier, also functioned as head of the Open Society Institute from 1993-2012 (Open Society Foundations, 2014).

### **3.2. Influence of HRW on the defense of human rights – a case study**

Having analyzed the contemporary organizational structure and its implications for the operation of HRW, the second section will now focus on a case study that illustrates the influence of HRW on the defense of human rights. As outlined earlier (see 1.2. *Influence of NGOs on the defense of Human Rights*), this case study aims at analyzing the actual impact of HRW on nation-states and their implementation and compliance with human rights.

The background topic of this case study deals with the aspect of ‘disappearances’ of Mexican citizens, which accounts for approximately 26,000 missing people since 2006 only (BBC, 2013). These forced disappearances are conducted by both criminal drug cartels but also official government units like police or military personnel. With his publicly proclaimed war on drugs, former Mexican President Felipe Calderón launched a



nationwide campaign that sought to dissolve the major drug cartels as well as to bring all involved criminals to justice. However, as already indicated above, the civil society has become one of the main targets of this war and the federal government has longtime neglected to investigate on the occurred disappearances.

With this background understanding of the conflict in mind, the case will now be analyzed according to the stages of the spiral model, which have been defined as (1) Repression, (2) Denial, (3) Tactical concessions, (4) Prescriptive status and (5) Rule-consistent behavior.

#### (1.) Repression

Disappearances as a human rights violation has been a commonly known phenomenon in the Latin American world. Many repressive regimes made use of this technique to silence political opponents or dissidents as outlined earlier (*see Chapter 2.4. The emergence of the Western counterpart – Americas Watch*). Mexico – that has faced a brutal war on drugs under Ex-President Calderón – has remained one of the few Latin-American states that refused to investigate the disappearances and open court trials against the responsible people (Godoy, 2014). Due to missing laws that guarantee the prosecution of state agents, victims of the disappearances were tremendously helpless in their attempts of bringing those to justice, who committed human rights violations. Civil society representatives (especially related relatives) found themselves in a situation to be best described as “[...] disillusioned with authorities [...]” (Human Rights Watch, 2013, p. 8). Their operational capabilities were extremely limited and did not allow for any reviewing of the precise circumstances leading to the disappearances.

#### (2.) Denial

The grave development of missing people in Mexico did not remain unnoticed by Human Rights Watch. Instead, the organization put the issue on its agenda and actively engaged by sending so-called fact-finding missions to the country. During a 2 year time span ranging from 2009 until 2011, HRW was able to discover the entire extent of the governmental refusal to convict police or military members involved in the crimes. Putting this into concrete figures, only 4 convictions were conducted within a realm of in total almost 5,000 investigations (Human Rights Watch, 2014e). Official responses by

Caldéron and members of his administration were severely skeptical. This becomes even more clear when considering the fact that the federal government denied the authenticity of lists containing the names of missing or kidnapped persons (Fox, 2012). The unwillingness of the Caldéron-administration to critically investigate on the cases of involvement of their state agents backfired due to the emergence of civil society organizations and their corresponding efforts.

### (3.) Tactical concessions

As already touched upon above, the denial by official Mexican decision-makers as well as the international attention brought by HRW fueled the likes of civil society representatives to team up and challenge the public sector. Especially in quite explosive regions controlled by drug cartels such as Nuevo León, novel movements changed the public discourse and unified local NGOs and individuals in their fight for more justice. Organizations like Propuesta Cívica or the Mexican Association of Relatives of the Disappeared utilized the changing public sphere in order to critically engage with local authorities. Accompanied by the fact-finding missions of HRW on-site, the civil society representatives increased their bargaining position within the public realm, hence providing them with the possibility to pressure the administrative institutions responsible for the investigations (Human Rights Watch, 2013). The synergies that enhanced the pursuit for justice of the civil society also transformed the attitude of key officeholders towards the issue of violations committed by state agents. Especially in the local perspective, formerly reluctant people in charge and prosecutors were suddenly eager to meet with victims and NGOs in order to shed light on the dark.

### (4.) Prescriptive status

Skeptical in the beginning, the discourse between local citizens and investigators ameliorated throughout the time, which can be linked somehow to the effects that come along as part of communicative action. Both sides engaged deliberately to mutually work on an advancement of the systematic approach towards the investigation of human rights abuses. The dynamism evolving from the discourse brought also fruitful results with more than 50 people charged with crimes (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Also within the big picture, tremendous changes were realized that can be to some extent linked to

the work done by HRW. As a result of their fact-finding missions and with the growing domestic opposition, HRW acquired the opportunity to meet up with Calderón in order to directly convince him from their waterproof evidence regarding the governmental failures. The direct lobbying of the former Mexican President put an end to the long-lasting denial phase on the federal level. Moreover, by accepting the existence and extent of the human rights issue, Calderón also paved the way for new legislation reforms. Stressed by HRW during their meeting with the former statesman, the Mexican government finally amended prevailing laws and “[...] ordered an end to interrogations of suspects on military bases and approved new rules on the use of force by soldiers and police” (Human Rights Watch, 2014e, p. 26).

#### (5.) Rule-consistent behavior

When evaluating the last stage of the spiral model for the Mexican case, it can be concluded that the government clearly accepted to deal with disappearances conducted by their own state agents. Calderón’s eagerness to implement reforms domestically must be perceived as a first step towards socialization of the rule of law in this particular aspect. However, disappearances have not stopped and remain to be a crucial problem within the Mexican society. Therefore, HRW has continued to monitor the investigational processes in order to foster the ultimate goal of socialization. Their tremendous capabilities to pressure governments and impact on the defense of human rights domestically can be stressed through their influence on the successor of former President Calderón. The newly inaugurated Mexican leader Peña Nieto actively adapted to the reforms taken by his predecessor and somewhat showed his rule-consistent behavior. Obviously, much of the credit must be given to HRW and their constant monitoring of the processes in Mexico, which resulted in a very detailed report that scrutinized the actual shocking extent of disappearances. Thus, Peña Nieto – not able to deny the allegations – established on the same day novel judicial units for investigation purposes as well as a thorough national data base with all relevant information of the disappeared (Human Rights Watch, 2014e).

Concluding, this case study illustrated the systematic approach of HRW with the help of the spiral model. The Mexican issue of disappeared people and the official reluctance to deal with the problem appropriately catalyzed the operation of HRW. Through their fact-

finding missions on-site as well as direct consultations with key officeholders, HRW opened up the public space. As a consequence, these novel political opportunity structures were strongly utilized by domestic forces, which pressurized the federal government internally as well as externally (*also referred to as the boomerang effect*). The new public atmosphere, allowing to deliberately engage with the topic, consequently fostered legal implementations and an advancement within the socialization chain. Regardless of the still existing issues, HRW's efforts transformed the public sphere in a stark way, thus demonstrating the relevance of the defense of the particular human right without any exception.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this master thesis was to gain more insights into the actual impact that INGOs like Human Rights Watch incorporate as part of global politics. The case of HRW proved to be a great example, which had been largely neglected by the academic analysts so far.

The theoretical framework introduced important implications necessary to understand the influence of INGOs to date. Based on a constructivist thinking, it was possible to outline a global political order, which is tremendously influenced by civil society actors such as INGOs. Especially the increasing significance of norms within an internationally arena – that is becoming more and more connected – gives impetus to actors that base their work on these collective beliefs. The deliberative power incorporated by INGOs enables them to actually challenge nation-states as well as market representatives by transforming the public sphere thoroughly.

Human Rights Watch as particular case study has been analyzed as an organization that epitomizes the power of a rising global civil society. Throughout their historical development, HRW actively contributed to the defense of human rights against repressive governments as well as other violators. Obviously, the foundation of HRW was to a tremendous extent dependent on an overall evolution of human rights within the international arena. The end of the Second World War and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations paved the way for human rights to become an official and crucial part of international affairs. However, it took until the mid-70s when

human rights turned into a major paradigm to be followed by nation-states. With the emergence of Helsinki Watch and the consequent evolution of other watch committees, the non-governmental organization strongly engaged with repressive governments (regardless of political orientation) in various regions of the world.

Analyzing the contemporary organizational structure of HRW has been a difficult task due to relatively little information available. However, one can clearly state that HRW nowadays acts as a human rights defending organization that is virtually able to respond to abuses in every corner of the world. Its eagerness to review organizational process and adjust to novel human rights issues provides HRW with a unique flexibility and a large room for operations. This is also further strengthened through the integration of HRW within the international arena when considering their consultative status at the United Nations, the platform for worldwide relevant negotiations. Their growing presence in major capitals in conjunction with effective methodological approaches frequently permits HRW employees to meet up with heads of states.

The impact this might have on the domestic opposition as well as on the actual socialization of norms has been described with the help of the example from Mexico, where the government refused to deal with forced disappearances. By actively engaging on-site, HRW tremendously fostered civil society movements that were otherwise unheard and powerless. As indicated in line with the spiral model, the intervention of HRW transformed the public sphere and boosted the dialogue between public and civil society representatives. The eagerness of the Mexican government to implement changes must be perceived as a success of HRW in its pursuit to defend human rights.

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