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The Tibetan Self-Determination Case of UNPO

A research on the influence of UNPO on the Tibetan Self-Determination Case.

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Abstract

This thesis studies the influence of non-governmental organizations on the norms in international relations, the non-governmental organization will be the UNPO, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, an organization that stands up for regions and peoples with a desire for autonomy or self-determination. The international norm of this thesis is Tibet's right to self-determination. Tibet is one of the oldest UNPO members and has struggled for self-determination since the beginning of the fifties. The main question to ask is if a relative small NGO like the UNPO has a degree of influence on the international norms, especially the right to self-determination of Tibet. I expect that the influence of the UNPO will vary between low and moderate since China is a rigid state that will not give up a region for the request of a NGO. Next to this there are a lot of NGOs that try to influence the self-determination case of Tibet and none of them has achieved remarkable results. Some scholars, Mark Burdmann in particular, state that NGOs have such an influence on international norms that they could change the world map. Others, for example Zaidi, have argued that the influence of most NGOs is negligible. The research on NGO influence is supported by the model of Betsill and Corell. This model measures the level of influence according to questions asked about the role of a NGO during negotiating processes. The answers to these questions are collected through a case study on the self-determination process of Tibet and the role that UNPO played during this process.

Introduction

Tibet, an often discussed region in the Southwest of China. Due to violence and political tensions it has appeared on news headlines more than once. The two subjects, politics and violence, often correspond when it comes to one specific topic namely: the right to self-determination. Different headlines in the New York Times represent this fact: 'Tibetans in Exile Re-elect Political Leader'¹, 'China Charges Tibetan Education Advocate With Inciting Separatism'² and 'Tibetan Entrepreneur Has Been Illegally Detained, Family Says'³. These headlines cover the tensions between the People's Republic of China and the Tibet Autonomous Region. Tibet has a desire to once have the right of self-determination. Unfortunately for Tibet, China has an even bigger desire to keep Tibet within its republic. Tibet's case is supported by multiple NGOs, of which UNPO is. As stated earlier the UNPO is an organization that helps 'indigenous peoples, minorities and unrecognized or occupied territories who have joined together to protect and

¹ Anand, Geeta & Tsering, Tenzin. 2016. ["Tibetans in Exile Re-elect Political Leader"](#) *The New York Times*

² Wong, Edward. 2016. ["China Charges Tibetan Education Advocate With Inciting Separatism"](#) *The New York Times*

³ Wong, Edward. 2016. ["Tibetan Entrepreneur Has Been Illegally Detained, Family Says"](#) *The New York Times*

promote their human and cultural rights'⁴. Since Tibet is one of the members it seems obvious that the UNPO influences the process to self-determination of Tibet.

The right to self-determination, one of many norms in international relations. International norms are often the protocol in international relations and constructed by opinions, decisions and judgements by communities, societies and organizations (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891–892). These opinions, decisions and judgements are the basis for how a state or person should behave. Norms are often sensitive to change and it is no secret that they do change over time. Inter-governmental organizations or court decisions have influence on possible norm change since they often created the norms next to this they also have the abilities to change them. Besides IGOs and court decisions there are NGOs, which mostly try to get certain norm changes done or put it on different agendas. But do NGOs contribute to norm changes? Non-governmental organizations are organizations not connected to a state. NGOs come forward with the (in)correct aspects of norms but often do not directly change any of them. To accomplish this they directly address IGOs or states. This research handles a research question which is: *'Do small NGOs like UNPO have influence on international norms?'* To answer this question, I will use the self-determination process of Tibet combined with the influence of the UNPO on this process as my case study. I will try to discover if UNPO has changed the self-determination of Tibet over time. This research question is supported by different sub-questions which able me to answer the research question.

Research puzzle

'there are efforts to break up their respective countries, reinforced by the activities of such organizations as the UNPO' (Burdmann 1996, 31)

Pressing questions came up to me when I read both the article of Burdmann as the principles of UNPO. The quote above originates from an article that criticizes the influence of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization in states like Russia and China. Burdmann's evidence is a map that shows the disputed peoples in Russia and China in which UNPO is active. Bashkortostan, Yakutia, Chechnya, Ingushetia, East Turkestan, Tibet and Taiwan are examples within the Russian Federation and the Chinese Peoples Republic. Burdmann continues that UNPO is a Western organization aimed at destabilizing Russia and China and enlarging their influence in former colonial states like Indonesia and

⁴ Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. 2014. [Information brochure / November 2014](#).

India (Burdmann 1996, 33-34). When reading the article of Burdmann I question the argumentation and quotes made by Burdmann, it made me question the real influence of UNPO.

The non-governmental organization Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organizations (UNPO) is an organization that assists members on their path to self-determination or autonomy. During the 20th century more and more countries dealt with the phenomenon 'self-determination'. We have seen Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Soviet Union, Kosovo in Serbia, Timor in Indonesia and nowadays we see Baluchistan in Pakistan, East Turkestan in China and Abkhazia in Georgia. The right to self-determination is vague and often interpreted very broadly which makes it hard for a people, region or state to assert itself. UNPO supports and helps members by providing assistance on their path to self-determination or autonomy.

The research presented above presses me with a couple of questions. How could a relative small NGO, like UNPO, play a major role in self-determination cases? Could it be true that UNPO has indeed influence on destabilization of states like Russia and China? Overall, what could UNPO contribute to breakaway regions on their path to self-determination?

Research question

The research puzzle presented above describes the main topics that will be issued in this thesis namely UNPO, self-determination and Tibet. These topics correspond with each other in a way that Tibet is a region that desires self-determination. Being member of UNPO Tibet tries to strengthen its desire and voice for self-determination. These three topics form the major topics in this research and are the elaboration of the real question of this thesis namely if small NGOs do have influence on international norms. This question will be answered on the basis of a case study done to the influence of UNPO on the self-determination process of Tibet. In order to get a better understanding of this case a number of sub-questions are asked:

Is there consensus between self-determination at UNPO and at the United Nations?

What is the current status of Tibet's self-determination?

What is the policy of UNPO among the self-determination of members?

What kind of activities does UNPO organize to support Tibet's path to self-determination?

These sub-questions cover the important parts of the case. Answering these questions should give a proper image of the case that I am using. The case should provide the necessary information in order to answer the research question. Next to the questions related to the case study I will also use a sub-question related to the model that will be used in this thesis namely the model of Betsill and Corell.

According to the model of Betsill & Corell, does UNPO has any influence on the matter of Tibet?

The answers received from the sub-questions above should give the necessary details to answer the research question. As stated before the overarching topic of this research is the influence of small NGOs on international norms. I use the term *small NGOs* since UNPO is one of the smaller NGOs active during the process of Tibet. There are lots of NGOs that try to influence this process and UNPO is just one of the small players. The research question that I will handle in this thesis is the following:

'Do small NGOs like UNPO have influence on international norms?'

Literature review

The sections above describe the research puzzle followed by the research question. As can be deduced from the research question this thesis mainly focuses on the influence that small NGOs can have on international norms. Could it be possible that small NGOs make a difference when it comes to international norms such as the right to self-determination? This literature review displays different opinions concerning NGO influence, most of the scholars suggest that the importance of NGOs is only growing and that there is no way back when it comes to the NGO influence. Next to the influence of NGOs, international norms and the right to self-determination are explained.

Non-governmental organizations

To understand NGOs and the influence that they have, a definition is necessary. Different scholars have spent time on defining NGOs. It is a hard to define NGOs, Martens devoted a whole essay to NGOs in order to find the applicable definition of NGOs. She reviewed important Scholars like Risse-Kappen, Weiss, Sikkink and Della Porta to get the most useful definition on NGOs. The definition of NGOs that I will handle in this thesis is developed by Martens: *'NGOs are formal (professionalized) independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote common goals the national or international level* (Martens 2002, 282).

NGO influence

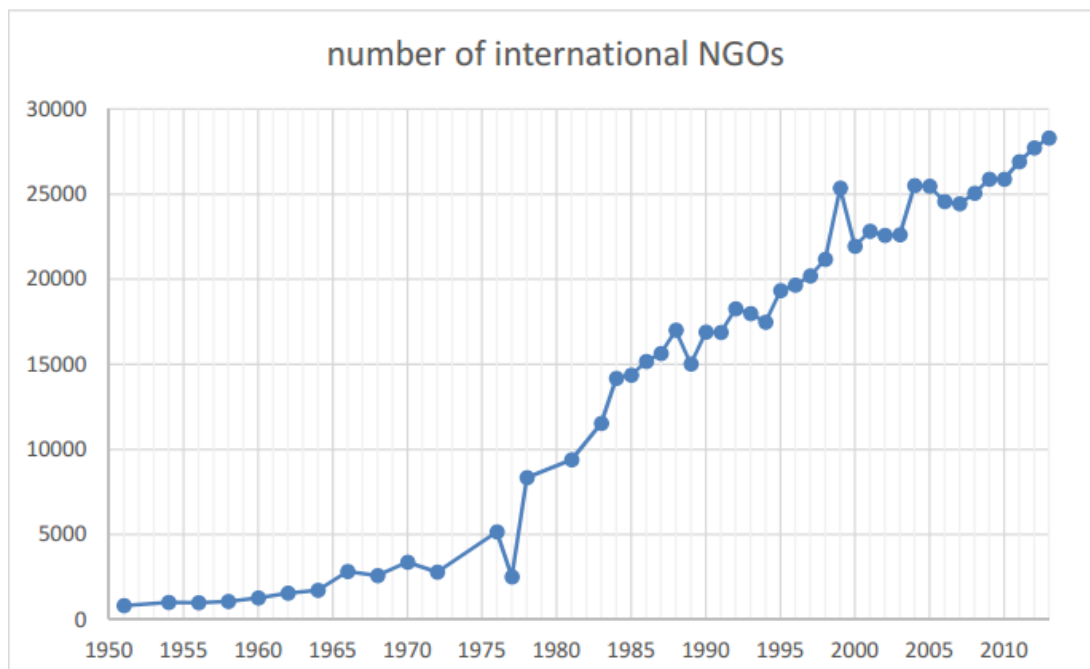


Figure 1 Number of NGOs 1950 – 2010

Source: (Aldashev & Navarra 2014, 3)

The figure above explains what many in international relations scholars are suggesting, namely that NGOs become an essential part on the stage of international politics. If we see the numbers presented in the figure, one has to acknowledge that NGOs might have influence on certain matters since the number of NGOs increased enormously. It could be prove that the concept of NGO works. One of the scholars who sees a magnifying role for NGOs is Mathews. In her article she quotes that states are losing quite an amount of control in the globalizing world. States are more and more replaced when it comes to determine norms on specific issues (Mathews 1997, 50). According to her analysis NGOs are responsible for roles that differ by subject. Some advocate, protest and mobilize public support. Others are featured by legal, scientific, technical or policy analysis. But most of them shape, change, implement, monitor and enforce (inter) national commitments, institutions and norms (Mathews 1997, 53).

Another scholar, Simmons, agrees with Mathews about NGO influence. According to him the influence of NGOs increases every decade. The activities carried out by NGOs as portrayed by Mathews, are familiar to Simmons. The difference between Simmons and Mathews is that Simmons places the activities in chronological order which Mathews does not. According to Simmons NGOs start with agenda setting. Trough diplomacy and other coercive methods they force the leaders and policymakers to give a matter

attention. When a matter is on (inter)national agendas negotiations take place. These negotiations are often between two parties in which the NGO forms the intermediary party. The third function is conferring legitimacy. When for example norms in international relations need to be changed, NGOs give support by withholding or promoting public and political support. The last function is making solutions work, this means that NGOs can be a deciding factor during for example negotiations. They can achieve what governments cannot (Simmons 1998, 83-88). Another important factor of NGOs, not mentioned in the four functions, is the translation of international agreements into international norms that are used in normal life (Simmons 1998, 87).

Mathews and Simmons were not the only scholars who wrote about NGO influence, Bas Arts is also one of them. He argues that NGOs have influence on international norms or policies. Arts states that NGOs do have influence and that this influence can increase when certain goals are achieved. According to Arts a NGO enlarges its position in international relation: '(1) the more the NGOs' goals are achieved with regard to a specific political outcome; (2) the more these are achieved due to their own and intended interventions; (3) the higher the political relevance of the political outcome concerned is; and (4) the more direct the NGOs' impact is' (Arts 2001, 198). This could explain why NGOs like Amnesty International have more influence than for example the NGO Mind Freedom International. Amnesty International has received much more international status than MFI.

Boli and Thomas also claim that NGOs play an important role in international politics especially when it comes to international norms. According to them NGOs are an important factor behind the promotion of international norms. They question certain problems in society and force states to act in order to protect the civilians against possible dangers such as for example landmines. NGOs come up with 'new' norms or behavior which they would like to see adopted by governments. According to Boli and Thomas: *'their position as norm developer is established because NGOs adopt by five general principles namely: (1) universalism, (2) individualism, (3) rational voluntaristic authority, (4) rationalizing progress and (5) world citizenship'* (Boli and Thomas 1999, 35-45). These cultural principles are distributed by NGOs which makes them an actor with cultural and symbolic influence over states. Boli and Thomas also claim that NGOs have important functions in the process of spreading and updating of norms (Boli and Thomas 1999, 35-45).

Besides the scholars like Boli, Simmons and Arts which are argue that NGOs do have, there are also NGO criticasters. One of them is Akbar Zaidi. Zaidi claims that there is a 'hype' around NGOs, this hype makes

it impossible for NGOs to work because of high and unfair expectations. According to Zaidi the failure of NGOs is due to a number of causes, one of them is donor money. The donor money makes the NGOs lose its independence and its accountability. NGOs rely to much on foreign funds. Other things as replicability and sustainability get into trouble because the success of projects. Most NGO projects are quite specific in execution this makes it difficult to transport the same project to another area. The third critique of Zaidi is that the successes of NGOs is a farce. The number of NGOs is enormous but at the same time there are not that much same number of solutions, options or any alternatives offered to problems. At the end of Zaidis article he gives a final argument that NGOs will never replace states because of their limited scope and reach (Zaidi 1999, 265 - 270).

Arts, Mathews, Boli, Thomas and Simmons believe in the influence of NGOs on certain matters and all explain a very similar way on how to do this. If we look at history we see that it is true that NGOs have influenced international norms. An example is the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) that had great success in reducing the use of landmines for which it received a Nobel Prize⁵. Another example is Amnesty International, this NGO received the Nobel prize for ‘having contributed to securing the ground for freedom, for justice, and thereby also peace in the world’⁶. These examples show that NGOs can really have influence on policies of states or on norms within international relations.

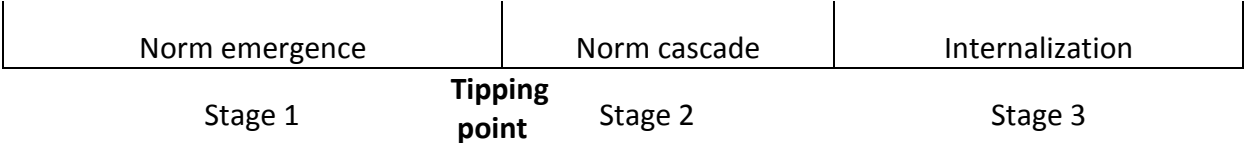


Figure 2 Norm Life Cycle

Source: (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, 898).

Norms

Much has been written about international norms, it is often said that norms come forward out of the constructivist theory. According to these constructivists norms are the guidebook of behavior around and between states. This guidebook provides the standard of this behavior over time. The guidebook on norms exists mainly consists of rights, obligations and other regulated sources. It is possible that norms change over time and that they adjust to the time in which they are present (Björkdahl 2002, 13). Next to Björkdahl other scholars have tried to explain the phenomenon international norms, Rodger Payne is one of them. He described norms as ‘structures which by definition are collective expectations about proper

⁵ Gladstone, Rick. 2014. [“U.S. Chided for Delays over Treaty on Weapons”](#). *The New York Times*

⁶ Bainbridge, Luke. 2012. [“Fifty Stars from ‘Supergroup’ to Mark 50 Years of Amnesty”](#). *The Guardian*

behavior for a given identity', followed by 'norms, in other words, constitute a community's shared understandings and intentions; they are social facts and reflect legitimate social purpose' (Payne 2001, 37-38). In the article written by Payne he uses Finnemore and Sikkink to develop his conception around international norms. Finnemore and Sikkink developed a model which describes how norms develop over time and become a settled international norm.

As showed in the 'norm life cycle' a norm passes three stages before it develops itself into a real norm. Figure 3 of this thesis shows the different stages combined with actors, motives and dominant mechanisms behind every stage (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 896-905). The first stage covers norm emergence, resulting out of the desire to change behavioral patterns. The emergence of a new norm is often done by actors like NGOs or other actors with an organizational platform (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 898). The tipping point is situated between stage one and stage two. This tipping point is actually the most important stage in norm development since it is decisive. It is decisive in a way that if the norm does not get past this stage it will not become a real norm (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 895). Passing this tipping point a norm will often be adopted by international actors. During the norm cascade, a norm will be developed and elaborated. At this point the norm reaches great audience, this strengthens the norm because support from the audience enlarges legitimacy. The final stage is internalization. During this third stage the norm is already part of the daily life and adopted by states and organizations. The internalization stage is mainly focused on the conformity and application of the norm. This is done by the law, professions and the bureaucracy (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 896).

The three stages correspond with the process of self-determination. An organization, like UNPO, questions a self-determination case of a member. When this norm emerges it finds the tipping point on its path, if it crosses this point the member will have great chances to receive self-determination. The current stage of Tibet is still at stage one. Kosovo is an example of self-determination that passed the three stages.

	Stage 1 Norm emergence	Stage 2 Norm cascade	Stage 3 Internalization
Actors	Norm entrepreneurs with organizational platforms	States, international organizations, networks	Law, professions, bureaucracy
Motives	Altruism, empathy, ideational, commitment	Legitimacy, reputation, esteem	Conformity
Dominant Mechanisms	Persuasion	Socialization, institutionalization, demonstration	Habit, institutionalization

Figure 3 Stages of Norms

Source: (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, 896)

Self determination

Woodrow Wilson once gave an explanation that marked the concept of self-determination. He stated: ‘Self-determination is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril’ (Paust 1980, 3). At this time, Wilson was one of the first who recognized this right but also one of the first who suggested to develop this right as a binding norm. Until today it remains a vague concept with a lot of different interpretations. In order not to get lost in the different interpretations I made a selection on different opinions about the rights to self-determination. The selection consists out of the UN version, the UNPO version and the version described by Paust.

‘All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development’ (UN resolution 1514).

The sentence above is developed by the United Nations and is the basis for references to self-determination. This definition is quite vague, outdated and makes different interpretations possible. Following this definition Tibet should get its independence right away. The UNPO agrees with the UN definition, their only critique is that it should be broadened because, as earlier stated, this definition is susceptible for wider interpretations. The UNPO therefore adds additional points namely (UNPO 2006a):

- *‘The nature and extent of the common characteristics and values of a people and of their dis-identification with the dominant group*
- *The stability of expectations and extent of public support*

- *The viability of the anticipated goal and its compatibility with the dominant group's vital interests and those of the region and world community as a whole*
- *Its contribution to the furtherance of human rights and dignity'.*

These points are necessary in order to meet the justification of self-determination. The last definition is developed by Paust:

'The right of self-determination, most broadly understood, is the right of all peoples to participate freely and fully in the sharing of all values (e.g., power, wellbeing, enlightenment, respect, wealth, skill, rectitude, and affection). The right to political self-determination involves this broader focus but may be summarized as the collective right of a peoples to pursue their own political demands, to share power equally, and as the correlative right of the individual to participate freely and full in the political process. Whether or not collective and individual self-determination are viewed as human rights as such, there is no question that self-determination and human dignity are intricately interconnected with human rights as well as the only legitimate measure of authority – the will of the people.' (Paust 1980, 13).

This definition of Paust helps to deepen the definition of the UN as the one the UNPO. In this thesis the definition of Paust and the UNPO will have the main lead because Paust gives the immersed version of self-determination and UNPO simplifies to understand its influence in the Tibetan case.

Theory

The overarching theory of this thesis is constructivism. Constructivists explain the behavior of actors in international relations by using structures, norms and identities. According to constructivists the international system does not consist fully out of states, there are more factors and actors which contribute to norm standards in international relations. Norm standards are created by interactions between states and other actors. The constructivist attitude towards NGOs is rather positive since they see them as normal functioning actors in international relations. According to different constructivist scholars NGOs have the capabilities to address certain (norm) problems, to respond to these problems and often the possibility to change norms within the international system. NGOs are capable of placing ideas and changes in international norms on the international agenda. They are seen as the norm entrepreneurs which seek to change the current (in) correct standards (Weiss et al. 2009, 128-129). This corresponds with the idea of norm emergence developed by Finnemore and Sikkink. It should be said

that the NGOs are not the same as states . NGOs cannot change for example laws or other binding agreements but they can change attitudes towards these phenomena (Ahmed & Potter 2006, 14-15). One way how constructivists prove that NGO influence exist, is by stating that if persons, non-state actors and governments communicate with each other, the communication is something what provides understanding and behavior. Both factors are important when it comes to norm influence (Ahmed & Potter 2006, 15).

Research design

Methodology

Two methods are appropriate to conduct academic research, qualitative and quantitative. This thesis handles a qualitative research method. This qualitative method contains mostly research done on the basis of literature. Through this way I try to explicate social phenomena. The choice to conduct quantitative research is based on different reasons. The first reason has to do with the size of this study. Time and authorized size did not allow me to conduct quantitative research. Quantitative research on the influence of small NGOs on international norms is possible but time-consuming. The second reason has to do with the availability of information concerning UNPO. The UNPO information content is low, especially when an UNPO member is highlighted on itself. Due to the qualitative method I could conduct an interview with the possibility to go into greater detail and derogate from the developed question. This is not possible during quantitative research. The final reason continuous on the second reason, qualitative research enables me to have a closer and deeper look into the data and to do substantiated statements about the processes. Qualitative research is often related to process research. Since this thesis conducts research to the Tibetan self-determination process it fits this character of qualitative research (Bleijenbergh 2013, 11).

During this research I will mainly use academic literature combined with the reports and resolutions of both UNPO and the United Nations. The academic literature covers the necessary information about NGOs, international norms, self-determination and the Tibetan case of self-determination. The data in this thesis is collected through an interview with Jeroen Zandberg, treasurer and employee of UNPO for more than 15 years. This interview also helps to answer questions that are not possible to answer with just using literature. I have chosen to conduct an unstructured interview because this made me able to discuss the answers with the interviewee. The paragraph below will handle the operationalization of the data.

This thesis uses a single case study. This case is deepened and eventually be a part in the model of Betsill and Corell. The case in this research is Tibet's process to self-determination combined with the influence of the non-governmental organization UNPO. I have chosen for the Tibetan case because of several reasons. First of all because of Tibet's membership of UNPO. Research to the influence of UNPO cannot be done without a taking a member as part of this case study. At this moment Tibet is still a part of the Chinese People's Republic, this brings me to the second reason. Burdmann issued that UNPO is an organization with an amount of influence that can destabilize states like Russia, India or China. Since Burdmann is the main reason to conduct this research I saw relevance in taking an UNPO member from one of the described states by Burdmann. The third reason is Tibet's ongoing struggle for self-determination. Since 1950 Tibet tries to disconnect itself from China. The fourth reason to choose Tibet concerns literature availability. Tibet is a region which is widely covered in the literature. This makes the Tibetan case much easier to handle than for example Baluchistan or Sindh since the literature about these members is very low compared to Tibet. Next to this the Tibetan case distinguishes due to its influence on the international self-determination norm. When something crucial happens in Tibet it flaunts in the international newspapers, which can be of influence to international norm.

Operationalization

The overarching topic of this thesis is the influence of small NGOs on international norm. To measure influence of UNPO on the Tibetan case I will use the model of Betsill and Corell. The model of Betsill and Corell is a model developed to measure the influence that environmental NGOs have on a process. It shows the degree of NGO influence on a specific subject. NGO influence is a topic that is often discussed, this can be seen in the earlier presented views on NGO influence. To measure NGO influence it is necessary to use a definition that determines what NGO influence is. Since the model of Betsill and Corell is central in this thesis I will also use their definition of influence (Betsill & Corell 2007, 26-27):

'Our definition of influence highlights two dimensions of NGO influence in international environmental negotiations: (1) how NGO diplomats communicate with other actors during a negotiating process, and (2) alterations in the behavior of those actors in response to that communication'.

To measure influence application of the model is necessary. The model is divided in two subsequent parts. The first part handles the process during the negotiations around international norm change, it is called *influence on negotiating process*. The second part is more focused on the outcome of this process and is called *influence on negotiating outcome*. Both parts handle the term influence, to measure

influence Betsill and Corell use influence indicators. The influence indicators are the basis on which influence is determined. These five indicators are subdivided within the two parts outcome and process. This are the indicators:

1. Influence on negotiating process
 - a. Issue framing
 - b. Agenda setting
 - c. Positions of key actors
2. Influence on negotiating outcome
 - a. Final agreement/procedural issues
 - b. Final agreement/substantive issues

The influence of the indicators is measured by answering questions that belong to each of the indicators. Each of the indicators has at least one question to be answered. The questions of this model are also divided in two parts. One part covers the questions that are focused on obtaining information on the influence indicator. The second part is mainly focused on the NGO itself and what this NGO did on this specific indicator. The questions assist in understanding the indicator and the role that the NGO and other actors have on the indicator. Influence on this indicator is finally determined by answering the question if the NGO had influence with a yes or a no. If yes there was influence, if no the NGO did not had influence.

The influence of the NGO on the different issue indicator is measured in figure 4 by answering the questions. The final influence determination takes place in the model demonstrated in figure 5. Figure 5 is used when the researcher has answered all the questions asked in the model. This results in five different yeses or nos. These five different answers are necessary to determine the level of influence. Betsill and Corell give three possibilities of influence namely: **LOW**, **MODERATE** and **HIGH**. Each of the three levels of influence has its own definition of influence and is assigned differently. At the end the number of yeses and nos determines the influence of the NGO. The necessary number of yeses and nos per influence level is shown in the overview below:

- **LOW**
 - NGOs do not score a yes on any of the influence indicators
- **MODERATE**

- NGOs score a yes on some or all of the process indicators
- NGOs score a no on all of the outcome indicators
- **HIGH**
 - NGOs score a yes on some or all of the process indicators
 - NGOs score a yes on one or both of the outcome indicators

The Tibetan self-determination case

The self-determination case of Tibet is one with a short but intensive history. I will first provide a short overview on this intensive history before dealing with the sub-questions that will cover the important parts of this case. These sub-questions handle important points as Tibet's status of self-determination, UNPO policies and UNPO activities to gain influence, publicity and awareness around members like Tibet.

1950-2010

The Tibetan case has been discussed for ages. Today Tibet is an autonomous republic above Nepal and Bhutan within the Chinese People's Republic. It is important to note that Tibet's request to self-determination is often wider than this autonomous region, it also covers parts of the Qinghai and Kham Province. The Tibetan leaders in exile often refer to greater Tibet when speaking of this region⁷. As stated earlier the Tibetans and Chinese have argued for years about the status of Tibet. In 1912 Tibet declared itself independent. Officially Tibet was a part of China but it had no influence in the region. During this period Britain gained a lot of influence over Tibet which it used to support the Tibetan case by pressuring China. Britain received this influence through hosting peace talks between China and Tibet in British India (Halldórsdóttir 2008, 9-10).

The independence of Tibet continued until 1949-1951. During these years Tibet was occupied by the Chinese Liberation army. In the eyes of the Chinese it was a liberation, in the eyes of the Tibetans an occupation. The Chinese claimed that they took back what was once confiscated of them. Since then the Chinese government started to reform Tibet and integrate it in the People's Republic of China which results in the run of the Tibetan government (UNPO 2006b, 80). During the first years of the occupation China imposed its power on the Tibetan people by implementing lots of tough measures. Most of them were included in the Seventeen Point Agreement. This agreement included a full transformation of the

⁷ Wong, Edward. 2010. ["China Rejects Demands for Greater Tibetan Autonomy"](#) *The New York Times*

Tibetan region with emphasis adapting to the Chinese perspectives. This agreement was signed by the Dalai Lama in 1954 (Halldórsdóttir 2008, 12).

After the so called signing of the Seventeen Point Agreement, the Tibetans claim they have never signed this agreement, a cultural revolution started in Tibet. The aim of this revolution was to close the gap between Chinese and Tibetans. This revolution was not peaceful, it was accompanied by demolishing monasteries and sanctuaries. The response was a Tibetan uprising with 90.000 deaths as a consequence. In order to prevent another disaster China strengthened its grip (Halldórsdóttir 2008, 12). After the Chinese cultural revolution, talks between Tibet and China were established and suspended over and over. A stable dialogue did never lasted long.

UNPO

A lot of NGO support the Tibetan case for self-determination. They all try to lobby at the correct institutions and organize events in order to achieve change. Self-determination is the ultimate goal for Tibet. One of the many organizations that assists Tibet in its process is UNPO. This organization is aimed at regions like Tibet. It supports non-violence, human rights, democracy and self-determination, environmental protection and tolerance. Next to this the organizations advocates for the regions and peoples that are often unheard. UNPO supports the Tibetan case and has actively supported the Tibetan government in its desires (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016).

In order to complete the image of this case will handle the sub-questions related to this case. As stated before these questions handle the definition of self-determination, Tibet's request to self-determination and the policies and activities of UNPO around the Tibetan case.

Is there consensus on the self-determination of UNPO and the United Nations?

The literature review of this thesis covered the definitions of self-determination. The definition of the UN is adopted by the UNPO but they created a number additions to it. These additions reduced the possibility of wide interpretations. Both the statements of UNPO and the United Nations are heavily subjected to different interpretations. The UNPO has tried multiple times to create a better understanding of this right. They did this by adding the points mentioned in the literature review, this provide a more understandable definition:

'Essentially, the right to self-determination is the right of a people to determine its own destiny. In particular, the principle allows a people to choose its own political status and to determine its

*own form of economic, cultural and social development. Exercise of this right can result in a variety of different outcomes ranging from political independence through to full integration within a state. The importance lies in the right of choice, so that the outcome of a people's choice should not affect the existence of the right to make a choice.*⁸

I can conclude that UNPO bases its definition on the definition of the United Nations. At the same time UNPO develops an extended definition by adding more detailed points to the definition of the United Nations. Next to this they provide a definition that is better understandable and less subjected to interpretation. The real difference is not be found in meaning but in elaboration.

What is the current status of Tibet's self-determination?

As of today the situation in Tibet has not changed. The Tibetan leaders have fled the region during the first uprisings and are still in exile. This shows the current position of Tibet, it is still an autonomous region which is controlled with iron fist. According to UNPO the Chinese have around 250.000 Chinese soldiers present in the region⁹. The real change that took place is the dialogue between China and Tibet. Direct contact between China and Tibet was established in 2002, although in their demands they directly oppose each other both were happy at least some dialogue took place¹⁰. The continuation of this dialogue did not last long. There has not been any official contact between China and Tibet since 2010¹¹. According to the political leader Lobsang Sangay China declines to talk with him¹². Over the past years Tibet acknowledged that their fight is heading to a dead end. That is why they developed the third way. This third way is a light version of the demands to self-determination. More autonomy and protection of culture, language and human rights are the demands at this moment¹³.

The status of Tibet within China is rigid. Not any notable change has taken place since 1950. The Chinese government refuses to give Tibet some space when it comes to their right to self-determination. To conclude, the status of Tibet has not been changed since the calls for independence in 1950.

What is the policy of UNPO among self-determination of states?

⁸ Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. 2006. "[Self-determination](#)".

⁹ Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. 2008. "[Tibet](#)".

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Barry, Ellen. 2014. "[Dalai Lama in Discussions With China Over Tibet Pilgrimage](#)". *The New York Times*

¹² Anand, Geeta & Tsering, Tenzin. 2016. "[Tibetans in Exile Re-elect Political Leader](#)". *The New York Times*

¹³ Buncombe, Andrew. 2008. "[The Big Question: Is the dream of independence for Tibet now a lost cause?](#)". *The independent*

UNPO tries to help all unrepresented nations and peoples. The nations or peoples have to become an UNPO member before actions are taken. The membership of UNPO depends on a number of factors namely¹⁴:

1. Believe in the equality of all Nations and Peoples and the inalienable right to self-determination
2. Adhere to internationally accepted human rights standards
3. Adhere to the principle of democratic pluralism and reject totalitarianism or any form of religious intolerance
4. Reject terrorism as a form of policy
5. Have respect for all Peoples and population groups, including minority and majority populations within territories inhabited by the participant but belonging to different ethnic, religious or linguistic groups

When a state becomes a member UNPO will be the intermediate diplomat between the people/region and the government/state under which it is governed. Negotiations will take place and UNPO starts lobbying at foremost the United Nations but also at the state that currently controls the minority and politicians. Next to this UNPO tries to hear the voices and translate them into possible policies. One of the important goals of UNPO is that the process is excluded from violence and that both parties respect human rights, democracy and independence. One of the main recourses of UNPO are the good relationships with the press. A resource which is often used for coercion or creating awareness. UNPOs main goal is fulfilling the wish of the member, unfortunately most of the time this not possible. Because of this daunting prospect UNPO continues to insist on non-violence and peaceful resolutions¹⁵.

What kind of activities does UNPO organize to support Tibet's road to self-determination?

UNPO organizes different activities which can be divided in standard activities and activities that differ per member state. Examples of activities are drawing attention at the United Nations by periodic reviews and assembling the members at the headquarters of the UN (UNPO 2011, 30-31). Other activities are the UNPO Democracy and Good Governance Program which include fact-finding and monitoring missions. Other activities are international conferences, demonstrations and effective participation training programs (UNPO 2011, 34-36).

¹⁴ Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. "[UNPO Membership](#)".

¹⁵ Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. 2011. "[What is UNPO \(Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization\)](#)". Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvksH6vZE6k>

The activities portrayed above are mostly standardized activities as well as activities that differ per member state. According to Jeroen Zandberg no current activities in Tibet are taking place at this moment. In the past UNPO organized fact-finding and monitoring missions. Despite the absence of activities the political lobby on Tibet continues. Zandberg mentions that relations with the Tibetan government in exile are very good and meetings between both parties often take place. An important point that emerges from the interview with Zandberg is the level of activity in Tibet. This is much lower than it used to be. The reason for this is that other organizations have better contacts in Tibet and are better represented in the region. Zandberg highlights that the UNPO needs Tibet more than Tibet needs the UNPO (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016). It is possible to draw the conclusion that UNPO has almost no influence on the Tibetan case. With this intention and amount of activities it is impossible to influence have any influence of the self-determination case of Tibet.

Theoretical framework

Model

	Issue indicator	Evidence		NGO influence? (yes/no)
		Behavior of other actors...	As caused by NGO communication	
<i>Influence on negotiating process</i>	Issue framing	How was the issue understood prior to the start of the negotiations?	What did NGOs do to bring about this understanding?	
		Was there a shift in how the issue was understood once the negotiations were underway?		
	Agenda setting	How did the issue first come to attention of the international community?	What did NGOs do to shape the agenda?	
		What specific items were placed on or taken off the negotiating agenda? What were the terms of debate for specific agenda items?		
Positions of key actors	What was the initial position of key actors?	What did NGOs do to shape the position of key actors?		
	Did key actors change their position during the negotiations?			
<i>Influence on negotiation outcome</i>	Final agreement/procedural issues	Does the agreement create new institutions to facilitate NGO participation in future decision making processes?	What did NGOs do to promote these procedural changes?	
		Does the agreement acknowledge the role of NGOs in implementation?		
	Final agreement/substantive issues	Does the agreement reflect the NGO position about what should be done on the issue?	What did NGOs do to promote these substantive issues?	

Figure 4 Indicators of NGO Influence

Source (Betsill & Corell 2007, 34-35)

	Low	Moderate	High
Description	NGOs participate in the negotiations but without effect on either process or outcome.	NGOs participate and have some success in shaping the negotiating process but not the outcome.	NGOs participate in the negotiations and have some success in shaping the negotiating process. NGOs' effect engage in activities aimed at influencing the negotiations
Evidence	NGOs engage in activities aimed at influencing the negotiations. NGOs do not score a yes on any of the influence indicators.	NGOs engage in activities aimed at influencing the negotiations. NGOs score a yes on some or all of the process indicators. NGOs score a no on all of the outcome indicators.	NGOs engage in activities aimed at influencing the negotiations. NGOs score a yes on some or all of the process indicators. NGOs score a yes on one or both of the outcome indicators.

Figure 5 Determining Levels of NGO Influence

Source: (Betsill & Corell 2007, 38)

At this chapter of the thesis I will explain the theoretical framework. First of all I will give a short overview on my choice for this model. This overview is followed by the expectations that I have regarding the results of this model. The chapter closes with the application of the model to the Tibetan self-determination case and the influence that UNPO has on this case. During this application each question regarding the influence indicators will be answered.

There are a couple of reasons why I chose the model of Betsill and Corell. The first reason is because of its determination of influence. The model gives three possibilities to determine influence with no exceptions, this excludes unnecessary reasoning. The second reason it is easy to operate. By answering questions correctly the level of influence is provided. No difficult calculations are necessary, there are just question to be answered. The third and last reason is the obligation of the model to obtain information that is related to the NGO and its case. The questions do not just handle the NGO on itself but also the actors around the topic. The model is very pleasant to use, still I have some critique on this model. This critique can be found in the results/analysis part of this thesis.

Expectations

My expectations are based on the concepts that are disclosed in the literature review, the explanation of the model and mostly because of recent history. I expect that the degree of the UNPO on the Tibetan

self-determination case will be **LOW**. The definition that belongs to the level **LOW** is the following: 'NGOs participate and have some success in shaping the negotiating process but not the outcome' (Betsill & Corell 2007, 38). This definition fits the situation of UNPO very well, simply because recent Tibetan-Chinese history shows that negotiations between both parties have not solve anything. Next to this NGOs are certainly not direct involved. During negotiations UNPO tries to create public awareness but fails to influence the process directly. Next to this China is a major player at international politics, they will not give Tibet away because this will damage their status as major player. It would weaken China.

Model application

Issue framing

How was the issue understood prior to the start of the negotiations?

The issue of Tibet is a long winded affair. The official negotiations started around 1950, one of the most important documents that descend from that time is the: 'Seventeen Points Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet'. A document with fierce measures which was imposed on the citizens of Tibet and contained the affirmation of Chinese sovereignty over the Tibetan autonomous republic (UNPO 1998, 201-202). This could be seen as the start of the negotiations at that time UNPO was not existing. Tibet became part of China, this formed the start for Tibet's requests to self-determination.

Was there a shift in how the issue was understood once the negotiations were underway?

The image of the Tibetan request to self-determination never really changed. The Tibetans still fight for their independence and still want to have their own state. According to Zandberg the Tibetans have downgraded their demand. They are more focused on Chinas conformation to international law, remaining an independent people which will not get absorbed by the Chinese culture and the protection of their culture, human and language rights (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016). This argumentation of Zandberg originates from the 'third way'. A diplomatic path in which Tibet tries to accomplish meaningful autonomy and the protection of their culture¹⁶. A shift has certainly took place.

What did the NGOs do to bring about this understanding?

¹⁶ Buncombe, Andrew. 2008. "[The Big Question: Is the dream of independence for Tibet now a lost cause?](#)" *The independent*

According to Zandberg UNPO did not directly influence the negotiations. Indirectly they have tried to influence the process by writing reports and news articles in co-operation with other NGOs. When publishing they try to show an independent version of the news produces by both China and Tibet. As mentioned earlier Tibet is not really dependent on UNPO, they mostly build on their own organizations. Still UNPO contributes to the matter through the reports but also by organizing conventions and creating public awareness which could help receiving more support for the Tibetan case (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016). Public awareness is created by making politicians aware of the Tibetan case. These politicians then put the case on the national political agenda, through this way it is published in national papers and so awareness can be created.

Agenda setting

How did the issue first come to the attention of the international community?

Tibet is on the agenda since the signing of the 'Seventeen Points Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet'. At that time Tibet was occupied by Chinese forces. Since then the lobby for the Tibetan case started. Organizations arose in large numbers in order to support the Tibet. International support for Tibet is huge but becomes smaller since China is gaining territory on the public relations area. China has invested more money over the past years, something Tibet cannot accomplish (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016).

What specific terms were placed on or taken off the negotiating agenda?

As stated before, the terms of the negotiating process between China and Tibet have been changed. The dialogue between the parties has been unstable and is aborted more than once. Tibet's wish to be independent was once strong but over the past few years they have realized that their demands are almost impossible to accomplish unless violence is used, something which goes strictly against the practices of the Tibetan culture (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016). This is why they have introduced the third way, a light version of their previous demands including more autonomy and protection of their culture. The quest to independence is weakened for a more accessible alternative¹⁷.

What were the terms of debate for specific agenda items?

¹⁷ Buncombe, Andrew. 2008. "[The Big Question: Is the dream of independence for Tibet now a lost cause?](#)" *The independent*

There were no real terms of debate for specific agenda items. The debate between China and Tibet depends on political stability. Since 2010 the dialogue between the two parties has been suspended and a fruitful dialogue is not on the agenda yet¹⁸.

What did the NGO do to shape the agenda?

UNPO did different things to keep Tibet on the agenda. One of those things is convincing American congressmen about the Tibetan case. Since then a lot congressmen support the case. Furthermore there are the reports with which UNPO tries to keep Tibet on the agenda. The goal of these reports is to maintain awareness on abuses in Tibet. In the interview with Zandberg he indicates that the influence of UNPO is limited since there are many other NGOs that have much more influence. Another reason for the limited influence on the agenda is the PR fight between China and the NGOs around Tibet, which China wins because they invest much more money (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016).

Positions of key actors

What was the initial position of key actors?

The main actors in this play are Tibet, China, the United Nations and different NGOs. The positions of Tibet and China are diametrically opposed. Tibet has long fought for an independent nation and China has always opposed this. The United Nations is of course a neutral party and would never interfere unless violence is used, but according to different news items it looks that the UN stands more up for Tibet than China. Examples are the resolutions 1353¹⁹, 1723²⁰ and 2079²¹ in which the UN urges to respect the human rights of the people in Tibet. The UN often raps China over the knuckles^{22 23}. The last key actor are the collection NGOs of which the UNPO is one. These NGOs are often in favor of Tibet and try to support there the Tibetan case. Famous organizations are: Safe Tibet, Free Tibet and UNPO. NGOs in favor of China are almost unfindable.

Did key actors change their positions during the negotiations?

¹⁸ Blanchard, Ben. 2015. "[China calls on Dalai Lama to 'put aside illusions' about talks](#)". *Reuters*

¹⁹ UN General Assembly resolution 1353 (XIV). 1959. "[Question of Tibet](#)". , (21 October 1959)

²⁰ UN General Assembly resolution 1723 (XVI). 1961. "[Question of Tibet](#)". , (20 December 1961)

²¹ UN General Assembly resolution 2079 (XX). 2009. "[Question of Tibet](#)". , (18 December 2009)

²² United Nations News Centre. 2012. "[China must urgently address rights violations in Tibet – UN senior official](#)".

²³ Cumming-Bruce, Nick. 2012. "[U.N. Rights Official Faults China on Tibetan Suppression](#)". *The New York Times*

One thing is clear, China did not adjust its position and the United Nations stayed in the middle. The other two key actors did change their position a little. Most of the NGOs still have a harsh tone against the Chinese position and most of them still demand an independent Tibet. Tibet on the other hand has lightened its tone via its third way, explained as the demand for more autonomy and protection of rights but no independence. Tibet seems wounded and loses lobby territory more and more (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016). In order not to get completely beaten out of the ring it adjusted its position. This third way seems the new hope for the Tibetan people.

What did NGOs do to shape the position of key actors?

The role of UNPO was mostly advocacy with a specific tactic. According to Zandberg UNPO tries to influence the swinging politicians, this is the area where profit is achievable. The UN is hard to influence because all the representatives hold on to their national viewpoints. If UNPO tries to influence the UN they should start by reforming this institution, something which takes a lot of time. Together with the other NGOs they try to influence the public awareness by organizing conferences and other public events. China is hard to influence since UNPO is not welcome in China as well as in Tibet (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016). This is one of the main points why UNPOs influence on the Tibetan case remains low. Other actor such as states are influenced by resolutions which are developed by the UNPO in co-operation with other NGOs.

Results & Analysis

In this part of the thesis I will provide the answers necessary to give an answer to the research question. At first I will determine the level of UNPO influence on the Tibetan case according to the model of Betsill and Corell. After this determination I will analyze if the level corresponds with reality and what this result means for the influence of small NGOs. These paragraphs are followed by critique on the model, case applicability and research recommendations.

Determination of influence

According to the model of Betsill & Corell, does the UNPO has any influence on the matter of Tibet?

During this first paragraph determination of the influence will take place. This level of influence is indicated by the number of yeses and no originating from the model in figure 4 combined with the influence determination of figure 5. Evidence collected on the first part *issue framing* shows that UNPO had little influence on the process since its capabilities and possibilities remained very limited. I can

conclude that they created less awareness compared to other NGOs. UNPO had no real influence on the issue framing process, so UNPO influence is **NO** on issue framing. The second point is *Agenda setting*. The possibilities of UNPO on agenda setting are also small because of two reasons. One of them is that UNPO is an organization with small possibilities to influence agenda makers such as states or organizations like the UN. UNPO tries to influence politicians but because of limited possibilities and capabilities it will never be able to influence that many politicians that is necessary for real change. The second reason is that the Tibetan issue does not really bother the public anymore, it loses territory against China. Here the negligible influence of UNPO is shown. On this matter a **NO** is assigned. The last issue are the *key actors*. Also on this issue the influence of UNPO remains small. UNPO has shown that key actors are not sensitive for an organization like UNPO. One of the main reasons why for example China cannot be influenced is because it is impossible ability for UNPO employees to visit China. The analysis on *key actors* is also assigned with a **NO** on UNPO influence.

Three times **NO** equals to **LOW** in the level determining of Betsill and Corell. The description for this level is the following: *'NGOs participate in the negotiations but without effect on either process or outcome'* and the evidence is the following: *'NGOs engage in activities aimed at influence the negotiation and NGOs do not score a yes on any of the influence indicator'* (Betsill & Corell 2007, 38). This description and evidence correspond with the evidence presented in this thesis. The influence of the UNPO on the Tibetan path to self-determination negligible.

Results compared with reality

In this paragraph I will determine if the results obtained from the model of Betsill and Corell correspond with the reality. The results show that the influence of UNPO on the self-determination case of Tibet is **LOW**. This means no influence at all. This matches with the statement of Zandberg in the interview. Zandberg mentioned that the direct influence on self-determination of Tibet is negligible. UNPO relies mainly on their indirect influence. This indirect influence means the political lobby with political negotiators outside of Tibet. Unfortunately the direct influence is missing and Zandberg highlights this by mentioning that UNPO needs Tibet more than Tibet needs UNPO (J. Zandberg, personal interview May 10th 2016). The definition which equals **LOW** influence is given in the paragraph above. The definition matches the situation of UNPO very well. UNPO tries to influence the negotiations, between China and Tibet, indirectly. Unfortunately this has no effect on process or outcomes. The Chinese government does not negotiate with actors as UNPO and Tibet does not need UNPO in the negotiations. Still UNPO

organizes activities that could affect the negotiations, examples of this are activities focused on increasing the public awareness. To conclude, the model represents the situation of UNPO very well.

Influence small NGOs

The topic of this paragraph covers the similarities between the influence of UNPO and the influence that small NGOs can have on certain norms in international relations. As stated earlier the influence of UNPO on the Tibetan case is **LOW**, does this mean that all small NGOs have limited influence on international norms? At first something needs to be said about this specific case. Zandberg mentioned in the interview that the influence on the Tibetan case is very low due to a couple of reasons. The influence of UNPO on for example Baluchistan is much higher since publicity and knowledge are lower so there are more possibilities. An example of this is given by Zandberg. He explains that a lot of people have knowledge about the Tibetan case and have positioned themselves in the debate. People are either for self-determination of Tibet or against it. This is different from the Oromo or Ogaden cases in Ethiopia. Over the past years UNPO has made politicians aware of the situations in Ethiopia and asked to support the self-determination cases of both peoples. Through this way politicians became aware of the situation in Ethiopia which had as a consequence that the lobby for both people started. This shows that organizations as UNPO do have influence on certain norms in international relations. UNPO has achieved a great victory since public awareness, knowledge and publicity is created about former unknown cases.

The example above shows that small NGOs can actually have influence on certain norms in international relations. Unfortunately the case that I chose had a different effect. The fact that UNPO has different impacts on different cases shows how difficult it is to draw a conclusion about the influence of small NGOs on international norms. Next to this it must be said that this is just one NGO, there are lots of other NGOs that are active on different disciplines. These small NGOs could or could not influence certain processes. It is hard to say on the basis of this case that all small NGOs do or do not have influence on norms in international relations. On the basis of this case and the interview of Jeroen Zandberg I can conclude some small NGOs do have influence and others do not have influence on international norms. Next to this I can conclude that if a small NGO does have influence it will never be decisive simply because small NGOs cannot make the calls on matters related to international norms. Small NGOs can raise certain questions, can identify certain mistakes and can influence important players but direct change is not done by small NGOs. Direct change is often done by states or inter-governmental organizations.

Model critique

The model of Betsill and Corell has been very useful during this thesis. I can conclude that that the results obtained from this model match quite well with reality. The influence of NGOs like UNPO is just not that big. Despite positive experiences with this model I would like to place some additional remarks regarding the use and the applicability of this model. These remarks could be of interest during future research on this topic or with this model. The first critique concerns applicability. The model uses two sections namely process and outcome. The model does not provide options for cases that have not dealt with an outcome or have not been a part in the outcome, my case is an example of this. The omission of alternatives makes the model quite limited in its use since it is only focused on process and outcome. Future researchers should be aware of this restriction. I nevertheless used only the first part since it still covers a useful part of NGO influence in my opinion.

The restriction explained above is elaborated in this section. It shows the consequences of having a case without an outcome. This problem is caused due to the second part of the model, the *'influence on negotiating outcome'* part. According to Betsill and Corell influence of NGOs is measured by the number of yeses and nos that they score on the questions asked at each influence indicator. If a NGO scores for example three yeses than its influence is **MODERATE**, does the NGO scores not one yes than its influence is **LOW**. These two determined levels do not cause problems, unfortunately the level **HIGH** does. To achieve this level, NGOs must score *'a yes on one or both of the outcome indicators'* (Betsill & Corell 2007, 38). Since some cases, my case as an example, do not have reached an outcome it is impossible to measure if their level of influence is **HIGH** since you cannot measure the influence on an outcome if there is no outcome. Especially for NGOs without an outcome that do have **HIGH** influence on processes this model is almost impossible to use.

The second party of my critique covers the terminology used in this model. In my opinion the model leans too much on three terms namely 'environment', 'negotiations' and the plural form of NGO. The term environmental is often used by Betsill and Corell simply because their research is focused on environmental NGOs. Unfortunately they also use this term quite often in the model which provokes a feeling that this model is only useful when one tries to determine the influence level of an environmental NGO. The authors do not provide information whether or not this model is applicable to other disciplines. The second term 'negotiations' is also arguable. This term asserts that negotiations took place, the reality shows that this is not always true. Of course negotiations take place but it is not the only factor of influence. When I take my case as an example, negotiations between China and UNPO

never took place. The same goes for an organizations as Greenpeace, which could change international environmental norms by one of their operations without being part of negotiations. In my opinion Betsill and Corell focus too much on this term. The last term, 'NGOs', could be misleading as well. The term NGO in itself seems correct, the plural version of this term causes difficulties. This term has the same problem as the term 'environment', it provokes the idea that the application of this model is only possible when multiple NGOs are used. The combination of the three terms causes difficulties and confusions. If I interpret the terms literally, this model is only useful when one uses multiple environmental NGOs that try to effect an international norm through mainly negotiations. When working with this model I noticed that this is not the intention but it could be interpreted this way.

The last critique concerns the absence of the term public awareness. In my opinion the term issue framing and public awareness correspond with each other. Issue framing refers to how the message is transmitted to the audience and what kind of frame is given to the subject. There is no doubt that issue framing is an important part of the process but there might be a better term that explains this factor namely public awareness. Public awareness and issue framing are intertwined with each other. The public opinion and knowledge on certain matters is created by how an issue is framed. On the other hand Public awareness creates the motivations to battle for an international norm. Public awareness is what is eventually decisive for an international norm. If the public does not care about the issue than there will not be real change. That is why I believe the term issue framing should be replaced by public awareness with special attention to issue framing.

Case applicability

The case used in this thesis, UNPO and the self-determination of Tibet, can be questioned after reading the critiques in the previous paragraph. In my opinion the application of the case in the model of Betsill and Corell still remains correct. The main problem with the application of this case was the absence of a direct negotiating outcome as well as a direct negotiating process. There were no direct negotiations between China and UNPO, negotiations between UNPO and Tibet do take place. At some points this made it hard to answer the questions correctly. Though I managed to match the answer and the question at the core. Still it needs to be said that the case does not directly match with the requirements of the model. The model points in a direction that multiple environmental NGOs are required to meet the necessary requirements. Betsill and Corell do not present this as real demand but everything points in the direction that multiple environmental NGOs are the main target. Next to this the model points in a direction where negotiations have already taken place. The first part covers the process to the outcome

the second part covers the outcome of the process. Betsill and Corell kept these two issues separated. This reduced problems with the Tibetan case since this case has no outcome, yet. I conclude by addressing that the case did not match the exact demands but that measuring influence was still possible. All of the questions asked in the first part were possible to answer with a reliable answer. The outcomes of the model will not suffer from the differences that are used in the model.

Research recommendations

This thesis is based on a single case study to the Tibetan self-determination process in relation with UNPO. This case was applied to the model of Betsill and Corell to measure the influence that UNPO could have on the self-determination case of Tibet. The determined degree of influence is **LOW**. The results of this single case study do not form the basis for a reliable generalization. The research that I conducted could not answer the question if small NGOs have influence on international norm change. To provide a more reliable research and answer to this question it is necessary to conduct a more extensive research to the influence of NGOs. One of my recommendations would be doing a case study with at least four cases preferably from different disciplines like environment, human rights, health and poverty. These cases should all be extensively elaborated to receive valuable information. This valuable information is necessary in order to complete the model of Betsill and Corell. In the paragraphs above I mentioned that I have some additions to both the structure of different cases as the model. First of all the case. To measure the level of influence it is best to use cases where the process is completed. With completed I mean the whole process from norm emergence to negotiations to outcomes. A case similar to the Tibetan case is possible but you should accept the fact that full completion of the model is not possible. In order to prevent difficulties with the case I advise future researchers to deepen themselves in different cases before they pick the cases.

Next to the extended case study I would like to make a recommendation on how to use the model of Betsill and Corell. In the first place it is always better to complete the model, this provides the most yeses and nos. These yeses and nos are necessary to determine if the NGO has any influence. The second recommendation on the model is to pay attention to the differences between issue framing and public awareness. Issue framing is represented in the model, public awareness is not. The researcher should preferably create a new indicator in the model or add an extra question at the indicator issue framing to measure public awareness. As stated before, public awareness is important since is often the reason why people start to commit themselves in order to change the international norm. The last recommendation that I have is not to put all the focus on negotiations. In this thesis I showed that measuring influence

with this model without direct negotiations between parties is perfectly possible. Negotiations are not the only factors that determine whether a NGO has influence or not. The model of Betsill and Corell focuses in my opinion too much on the negotiations but influence is more than just negotiations.

Discussion & Conclusion

'Do small NGOs like UNPO have influence on international norms?', this question formed the research question of this thesis. During this conclusion I will give a summary on the answers provided to this research question. Next to this I will discuss my answers during this chapter. At the end of this chapter I will review the statement of Burdmann once again.

This thesis did not provide a single and clear answer to the research question. The research that I conducted resulted in three different answers. The first answer covers the influence of UNPO on the self-determination case of Tibet. The model of Betsill and Corell showed that this influence could be determined as **LOW**. The determination of this level is due to a couple of reasons. One of the main reasons is the relation between UNPO and Tibet. UNPO and Tibet maintain good relations based on cooperation in the past. Nowadays Tibet does not need UNPO anymore. Tibet relies on other NGOs which are better represented in the region. The second reason is the impossibility for UNPO employees to visit China. Through this measure it remains impossible to influence the Tibetan case. The UNPO remains excluded from the dialogues between China and Tibet since it does not have access to the territory.

The second answer is also related to UNPO. As explained earlier Tibet is a case that lost its opportunities to change. This limits possible influence of any NGO. Though the influence of UNPO on itself is not that small. UNPO mainly influences cases that are unknown. Ogaden and Oromia are peoples in Ethiopia of which most politicians never heard of. These politicians are then made familiar with these peoples and asked for their support. This support is mainly putting the subject on the national political agenda. Once it is on the (inter) national agenda, more and more people get familiar with the problem and commit themselves to the issue.

The third answer is actually the answer to the research question. The case that I used makes it very hard to answer this question. On the basis of this case I would conclude that small NGOs do not have influence. Thanks to the interview I became aware of the fact that UNPO does have influence on other cases. This influences the answer on the research question. A direct answer with yes or no is still not

possible but I can state that small NGOs sometimes do have influence on certain matters. This influence depends mostly on the case the small NGOs cover. I mentioned earlier that small NGOs can have influence on the process but the final norm change or internalization is done states or intergovernmental organizations. Small NGOs can have influence but will never be the decisive actor in norm change or internalization.

The third and final answer to the research question corresponds with the norm emergence theory of Finnemore and Sikkink as well as with the constructivist theory. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, norm emergence is the first step during the norm life cycle. It covers the desire to change or suggesting a (new) norm. This work is often done by NGOs. Small NGOs are only fit for this work since they do not have the capabilities to assist in other stages such as norm cascade, the tipping point and the internalization. The constructivist theory supports the fact that NGOs do have influence during the process of norm emergence or change. According to constructivists NGOs are seen as norm entrepreneurs. They address the problems with the current international norms and come up with new norms when necessary. Next to this both Finnemore and Sikkink as constructivists acknowledge that NGOs are not the same as states. NGOs do not have the same influence as states. NGOs are not able to directly change international norms, though they can influence the process regarding these norms.

'There are efforts to break up their respective countries, are reinforced by the activities of such organizations as the UNPO' (Burdmann 1996, 31). This statement of Burdmann was the main reason to conduct research on small NGOs like UNPO. Burdmann was convinced that UNPO is able to destabilize states as Russia and China with its activities. The conclusion of this thesis shows that UNPO has not the influence that Burdmann claims that the UNPO has. UNPO is not able to create an iron fist on the Tibetan case. Although it they have some influence in other cases it will never cause a break up in states like China or Russia.

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