

University of Tartu
Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies

Master thesis

Agne Luur

**Revisiting actorness in international politics: NGOs as policy-designers
against the use of military drones**

Supervisor: Eiki Berg

Tartu
2021

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

.....

/ signature of author /

Agne Luur

The defence will take place on / date / at / time /
..... / address / in auditorium number / number /

Opponent / name / (..... / academic degree /),
..... / position /

Revisiting actorness in international politics: NGOs as policy-designers against the use of military drones

Agne Luur

Abstract

NGOs have had an increasing role in influencing international relations, policy-making processes and peoples lives in general. They have different means on how to advocate for a cause and how to highlight a policy issue they deem important. Several major NGOs have recognized the use of unmanned aerial vehicles as a problem under the current international law and are, therefore, working in order to influence nation-state policy makers and through that also international law. There are several indicators in which one could conclude that the non-governmental organizations have been successful. Yet there are also many indicators that suggest otherwise. This work will examine the NGOs rise to be an actor in international arena. This work will also examine whether several major NGOs are influential and powerful enough to warrant a change regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in a conventional and non-conventional battlefield. The work concludes that at the moment, there are several improvements the NGOs could make in order to become more influential because at the moment, they do not have enough power and influence to call for a change in an international law that would take into consideration their research, positions and findings.

Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	5
INTRODUCTION	6
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – NGOs AS ACTORS AND POLICY DESIGNERS IN INTERNATIONAL STAGE	8
The rise of NGOs as international actors	8
NGOs as influencers of policy-making processes in international level	10
NGOs actorness in international relations	14
EMPIRICAL WORK – NGOs AS ACTORS INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL REGARDING THE USE OF UAVs	16
Research method and design.....	16
U.S. and UAVs: pros and cons	17
United Nation’s and the United States of America’s policies regarding the use of UAVs.....	21
NGOs and UAVs: arguments against the use of UAVs.....	22
Compatibility with international law	23
Creating more fear and terror.....	24
Sovereignty and territorial integrity	24
Civilian casualties and false reporting	25
Efforts to influence public opinion and decisionmakers.....	26
High resonance of goals.....	26
A patron government	26
Sufficient funding	27
Media friendly topic.....	27
Short time-frame and self-selection process for participants in the decision-making process	27
International Committee of the Red Cross.....	28
Amnesty International.....	29
International Committee of the Red Cross.....	30
NGOs accountability in international relations.....	31
Non-governmental organisations cooperation with the United Nations	32
What more could be done?	34
CONCLUSION.....	38
Reading and references	42

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NGOs – Non-governmental Organizations

UAVs – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

UN – United Nations

ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross

AI – Amnesty International

HRW – Human Rights Watch

USA – United States of America

INTRODUCTION

International laws, rules and regulations are agreed upon, signed by, and adapted by nation states and international organizations that nation states are members of. But nations states and international organizations are not the only influencers and policy-makers. There are several different actors in both national and international policy-making processes, including nation-state politicians and representatives on international arena, but also ordinary citizens, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), lobbyist et cetera. The number of NGOs has significantly increased since the 1980s. So have increased expectations places on NGOs. They are expected to advocate for and safeguard the environment, speed up development in several parts of the world in order to reduce poverty, but also advocate for human rights and democracy in regions where these are not seen as a norm. Moreover, NGOs have an increasing role in international arena as a policy influencer. NGOs have clear sets of goals that they work towards in order to increase the quality of life to humans and environment as well. Usually, these goals are formulated in collaboration with locals in a region that would be affected by any policy change. If NGOs work towards a larger goal that does not affect only one region but the world as a whole, they expand their territory and use any means available and necessary to influence policymakers in an international arena. To achieve that, NGOs have to be visible and the causes they work for have to be relevant and appeal to people, raise interests and cause reactions.

This paper will revisit the actorness in international politics and examine if NGOs are influential in international policy-making processes, how do they achieve their influence, and if they are able to achieve their coals. In other words, the thesis this work seeks to examine is as follows:

Are non-governmental organizations powerful and influential enough to request a change in international law regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in conventional and non-conventional conflict zones?

In this work, the role that NGOs have in influencing policy-making processes from influencing citizens of nation-states to policymakers on an international level in arenas such as the United Nations regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles will be examined. The reason this topic was chosen is because UAVs have an increasingly large part in military operations and armed drone attacks which affect people in regions where these attacks have been carried out, as well as people carrying out these attacks. Moreover, there are currently no international laws that specifically regulate the use of military UAVs, which leaves states to interpret existing laws differently, often in accordance with their own agenda. There are previous researches carried out regarding the use of armed military drones and their legality. There are also many NGOs reports and journal articles published regarding the topic of armed UAVs. However, there seem to be little to no work done with regards to the NGOs efforts to influence international organizations to develop new or complement existing laws with regards to the use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles in conventional and non-conventional conflict zones.

The aim of this work is to evaluate if NGOs are influential in international arena when it comes to policymaking or policy changing. In order to do that, this paper will be divided into two main parts. First, a theoretical framework will establish the historical positions of NGOs and give a brief overview of their rise to international actors. In addition to that, it will be examined what are possible actions an NGO might take to become an influencer of policies in international level. Second, an empirical part is created for in depth focus on NGOs actorness and their position regarding the use of UAVs in conflict. In order to do that, a brief overview of United States of America's arguments for the use of UAVs is provided. Then, United Nations stance and current international laws are examined to determine, if and what might be changed. Next, NGOs main arguments against the use of armed UAVs in a conflict are presented. Thereupon, NGOs efforts to influence the public's opinion and decisionmakers will be observed. And lastly, NGOs work in international level will be examined to determine whether they are actors in international politics similar to nation-states or not. Lastly, a relevant conclusion is made in which all the previous findings are highlighted and an empirical question – whether NGOs have enough influencing powers to propose policy changes in international arena or not? - will be answered.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – NGOs AS ACTORS AND POLICY DESIGNERS IN INTERNATIONAL STAGE

The rise of NGOs as international actors

Non-governmental organizations are often regarded as a diverse group of organizations ranging from small informal groups to large international organizations. NGOs in principle are groups that's main focus is on social issues and their actions are usually not driven by monetary gains but rather the need to improve social inequalities. Of course, there are exceptions to this, such as organizations who receive significant government funding or organizations whose purpose is to raise funds in order to carry out their work. Moreover, NGOs can differ in structure, they might be small or large, formal or informal, bureaucratic or flexible, affluent or fragile. All these aspects play a crucial role in non-governmental organizations' position and power. While an NGO is small local group of people, often volunteers, they tend to focus on local issues and usually have less power or influence to make significant changes. Some of their main focus might be to only meet people's basic needs. Whereas if an NGO has grown and gathered support from different regions and people, they tend to receive more funding, either from governments, other international or national organizations or from their members and volunteers, they also tend to be more powerful and influential and have an impact in social issues that they advocate for. Such NGOs also tend to take a long-term views and try to find solutions and alternative approaches to issues. Morris-Suzuki (2000) has noted that "NGOs may pursue change, but they can equally work to maintain existing social and political systems". Such NGOs are, for example, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Amnesty International (AI). All of these NGOs are international actors and have enough opportunities to highlight any social issues they deem necessary for attention. For this reason, all three of these organizations are taken as case-studies in

this work to examine if they have enough power and influence to change policies in an international level.

For example, the ICRC has based its work on the Geneva Convention of 1949 and is “an independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. It takes action in response to emergencies and at the same time promotes respect for international humanitarian law and its implementation in national law”(ICRC, The ICRC’ mandate and mission). HRW describes their organization as “roughly 450 people of 70-plus nationalities who are country experts, lawyers, journalists, and others who work to protect the most at risk, from vulnerable minorities and civilians in wartime, to refugees and children in need. [...] To ensure our independence, we refuse government funding and carefully review all donations to ensure that they are consistent with our policies, missions and values”(HRW, About us). Amnesty International is “a cross-sectoral platform of 25 international civil society organizations. We [...] seek to meet best-practice standards on public accountability and transparency, including in good governance, ethical fundraising, responsible advocacy and multi-stakeholder participation. Amnesty international [...] seeks to address the biggest challenges the human rights movement is facing today” (AI, INGO Accountability Charter). From this, it is clear that all of these organizations have some common goals, and they work towards similar outcomes.

In order to become an international actor, it is clear, NGOs need a clear purpose. If an NGO has no clear goal, it will be difficult to garner any kind of support, let alone become an international actor. All of the three aforementioned NGOs have a purpose, a goal they act towards, an objective they try to reach that tries to solve or at least reduce social issues that affect different regions and groups of people. One could argue that having such wide-reaching goals automatically converts an NGO to an international actor. Moreover, in order to become an international actor and be taken seriously and as a reliable source of information, and NGO has to be independent, uninfluenced by state policies, and transparent. All these NGOs claim to be such organizations. In order to prove that, they refuse government funding or heavily monitor their donations. AI even goes as far as to publish INGO Accountability Charter Global Compliance reports in which, for example, its programmes effectiveness, financial management, human resource management, ethical fundraising¹ et cetera are outlined and explained. All of these things ensure that an organization

with an international social issue purpose and transparent governance might become an international actor and be taken seriously. And all of the aforementioned organizations are considered serious international actors.

NGOs as influencers of policy-making processes in international level

There has been previous researches carried out to distinguish between power and influence that NGOs possess. Scholars have generally agreed that power is one's ability to make others do something they otherwise might not have done (Dahl, 1957), or „general capacity of a state to control the behaviour“ of others (Holsti, 1985). Influence, however, has been proven more difficult to define and determine, because it is often defined as being part of power. Some others defined power as the aggregate of political resources available to an actor“, and influence as the „modification of one actor's behaviour by that of another. Therefore they see influence as something that „derives from the relationship between actors“ (Betsill and Corell ed., 2008). Sharp (1999), on the other hand, argues that diplomacy is better understood in terms of representation; diplomats are actors who act on the behalf of a clearly identified constituency. On the other hand, one could argue that if influence is an actors ability to control others behaviour and make them do something one wants, it might be difficult for NGOs to achieve that level of power. Not because they cannot, in theory, influence others actions, but in practice, it has proven quite difficult to achieve to an extent that NGOs could claim that the outcome agreed upon is what they initially proposed. That is because most of the time, NGOs can advocate for a cause through their reporting and lobbying but the outcome, in most cases law, rule, or regulation, is often not agreed upon from NGOs point of view, because they stand for justice for all people, but from nation-states point of interest, because their main goal is to increase or keep their power in world politics and not necessarily equal and just world for all people to live in. That is a point many authors and scholar have pointed out in their work as well, that NGOs do have clear policies and positions regarding some issue, and they even have ideas on how to change or improve the current policies, but they do not possess enough power in an international level to make enough nation-state representatives agree with their proposals, so they are often not adopted. In order to evaluate NGOs as influencers in policy-making processes in international level, this work will focus on previous cases that

indicate that NGOs in fact do have influential powers. Those previous cases are related to environmental security and banning landmines. That case was chosen because it was initiated and mostly carried out by a group of non-governmental organizations that successfully made all nation-states adopt a policy change that they deemed dangerous to environment and all humans as well, regardless of if the person was part of a fighting force or a civilian.

NGOs have been more involved in international decision-making processes since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, in which representatives of more than 250 NGOs attended, representing their “constituencies bound by common values, knowledge, and/or interests. These NGOs served as technical experts, helped develop the rule for NGO participation, participated in plenary sessions and committee meetings, and engaged in several parallel forums designed to strengthen their connections with one another”(UN, Office of Disarmament Affairs, Landmines). All of these actions are usually carried out by state representatives who shape policy-ideas. Since Stockholm, there has been an increase in NGO involvement and participation in international decision-making related to environment and sustainability. In 2002, more than 3200 NGO representatives accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, where NGOs were central to the creation of partnerships for sustainable development (Gutman 2003; Speth 2003). The dramatic increase of NGOs has been well documented, as well as the fact that these organizations increasingly participate in international political processes. There is a growing body of evidence which indicates that NGOs influence domestic and international policies. Betsill and Corell (ed. 2008) claim that the increased NGO participation reflects broader changes in diplomacy and that “in multilateral negotiations on the environment and sustainable development, NGO representatives act as diplomats who, in contrast to government diplomats, represent constituents that are not bound by territory but by common values, knowledge, and/or interests related to a specific issue”². They go on explaining that unlike previously, NGOs engage more and more directly in formal international negotiations, and perform many of the same functions as state delegates: they represent the interests of their constituencies, they engage in information exchange, they negotiate, and they provide policy advice (Aviel 2005; Jönsson 2002)³. One could therefore argue that these are the most basic indicators with which NGOs involvement and influence related to international politics could be measured.

One could say that it is quite difficult to determine how to measure NGOs influence in international level. As stated before, influence is often thought as part of power and not as a separate indicator. Therefore, to determine NGOs influence it is necessary to come up with a set of measurable indicators. In order to evaluate how influential NGOs are in influencing international policymaking process is regarding the use of military drones in a conflict and no-conflict regions is to determine whether they have been included in the policymaking process in different levels. To be included in the policy making process, an NGO has to have a clear position regarding the issue that they are advocating in trying to change. that means that NGOs have to come up with a sufficient position regarding the issue, and also, they have to have an idea on how to change the current policy or law. Without that it would be difficult to regard NGOs as sufficient partners while advocating for or against a policy. As stated previously, there are many authors and scholars, such as Dahl, Holsti, Cox, Jacobson, who have stated in their writings that NGOs have at least some influence. Yet there are also authors and scholars who claim that even though NGOs have managed to get access to the policy making process they are not very influential meaning that even though NGOs can be partners while the discussion about a certain issue is taking place, it is extremely difficult for NGOs to influence policy making process is in the way that they want it to go (Dür, Bievre, 1999). Yet examining NGO's participation in policymaking processes, there are many instances in which NGO's have been an influential partner to the nation states or other international organisations. Such examples are usually related to environmental policy changes. One of the most successful policy changes that NGO's initially orchestrated and had a significant role in is banning landmines. To examine what role NGOs had in the case of banning landmines a brief overview of this process will follow.

United Nations define two types of landmines: anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines. Both variants have caused great injuries, suffering and even death to people and objects. More than 150 countries have joined the treaty of Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction adopted in 1997. The adoption of this treaty has had many advantages and such as virtual halt in global production of anti-personnel mines, millions of these mines have been destroyed, leaving behind an environment where those affected by these mines are provided with assistance, vast numbers of previously dangerous and affected areas “have been declared free of landmines and released to productive use”⁴. But what all that have to do with NGOs?

The Ottawa Process is, according to some academics, “a stunning example of a new form of diplomacy” (Short, 1999). That is because the Process arose from two meetings between states and NGOs organized in January 1995 and April 1996. The original aim of these meetings was to establish a core group of countries that would ban the use of APMs. Two NGOs are primary significance to the Process: the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) with the latter being more paramount. Initially there were six NGOs who worked on this issue informally and saw itself as a collection of self-organized national campaigns. During the campaign, the membership of ICBL grew to about 750-1000 organizations from 44-50 countries (HI/ICBL, 1997). The campaign was so successful because they had come up with some easily understandable goals, mainly to ban AMPs, and had also linked together several organizations that shared similar views, such as demining organizations, rehabilitative organizations, humanitarian relief organizations, and human rights organizations (Canada, 1997b). Moreover, not only NGOs work together but also state representatives cooperated with NGOs in order to achieve a common goal. Nicola Short highlight several different aspects of NGOs positions and contributions in his paper “The Role of NGOs in the Ottawa Process to Ban Landmines”. Three main components that guaranteed NGOs a position in the negotiation and decision-making table were: “they highlighted and often reiterated the shortcomings of the CCW, they called for a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines, and they demonstrated their capacity for public relations and raising public awareness”. Moreover, Short claims that the NGOs had two main roles during the Process, both mainly distant from direct decision-making process, but nonetheless important, because ICBL had a right to speak and argue against different definitions that were discussed related to the document (p. 486-487). Short also highlights NGOs tangible contributions to the Ottawa Process, which involved “influencing the treaty text, organizing forums that involved Southern countries, and creating public awareness materials that supported the call for a treaty” (p. 488). The most effective of these three contributions was raising public awareness because NGOs working on this treaty had first-hand experience with the aftermath of landmines and how they affected people, especially innocent civilians, so they used their photo material as well as people’s contributions from affected areas to create postcards et cetera to send to the public. Such a personal approach guaranteed stronger public support for the Process. Moreover, NGOs were able to show that the use of AMPs does benefit only the militias and counterinsurgent groups and they do more harm than good, which also raised public’s support.

Sharp also highlight several elements that contributed to the circumstances in which NGOs could gain an influential role in the negotiations. Those elements include having a high resonance of goals, a patron government, sufficient financing, media friendly topic, and short timeframe and self-selection process for participants (p. 491 – 494) meaning that in order to efficiently and effectively focus on policymaking, NGOs need to have clear goals that they advocate for and advertise to people and politicians, a government that supports NGOs causes and ideas for policy-change, enough funds to operate without having to focus on fundraising, a topic or a cause that would be widely covered in the media and that would sympathize to people, and a time-frame in which policy-change could be adapted and not dragged along or really short that the cause would look superficial.

It could be concluded that all these factors played a significant role in Ottawa Process and their presence allowed NGOs to play such a significant role in the first place. Moreover, one could even argue that the existence of these elements would be beneficial to the NGOs and lead to their success in other policy- changing processes in the future.

That case is a good example of NGOs cooperating with each other to achieve a common goal. Yet at the same time, it is important to keep in mind that this process was rather an exception to how things are carried out in an international arena. The use of landmines was successful mostly because had they been allowed to be used further, all sides of the conflict, and civilians as well, would carry losses, meaning that landmines were dangerous to everybody. That was also the main reason why NGOs even wanted to ban them, and why different nation-states were as eager and willing to accept the ban. In many cases, such as the use of UAVs, the case is not as simple and black and white. There are people who might view them as dangerous and threatening not only to military personnel or militias and terrorists but to civilians as well. But there are also people, nation-states even, who view the use of unmanned aerial vehicles as a future of warfare and a positive outcome to avoiding casualties in a conflict as well as decreasing military spending.

NGOs actorness in international relations

International relations scholars have examined NGOs influence in policy-making processes in different areas and have raised questions on how to measure NGOs accountability and actorness. NGOs accountability will be examined further in the next part of this work. NGOs actorness is evaluated through their ability to formulate their policies and forward them to wider audience through media (W. E. DeMars and D. Dijkzeul ed., 2015). In order to pique the interest of media outlets, NGOs, again, need a clear policy that they advocate for, and their actorness is evaluated through their ability to publish articles and spread information through media that would support their position in a certain policy-position. If an international NGO is able to use different media outlets to promote their view, they are most likely able to garner wider support from the public, who in return spread the views and demand actions from their representatives. Thirdly, NGOs actorness is evaluated through their access to UN policy-making processes (Willets, 2011). It has been quite a recent phenomenon that NGOs are able to take part in UN policy-making processes and discussions. Even before its first meeting in 1946, the UN had received first applications from the NGOs to take part in its work. From there on onwards, the UN has allowed Economic and Social Council to have consultative agreements with NGOs, but these organizations had to go through a rigorous selection process and prove that they are involved in selected areas to be able to participate. The UN has three levels in which NGOs can take part in UN matters, and to this day only nine ‘organizations which have a basic interest in most of the activities of the Council’ were placed in Category A, whereas a majority of the eligible organizations, 56 NGOs, were placed in Category B as ‘organizations which have a special competence’, and four ‘organizations which are primarily concerned with the development of public opinion’ were placed in Category C (Willets, 2011). Even though Categories B and C receive less extensive participation rights, organizations in any category have only consultative status and they cannot take part in drafting or adopting said policies. It could be claimed that since it is a rigorous process to get a special status from the UN, NGOs who have this position are bigger and more influential actors in international arena than NGOs without the UN position. These claims will be examined further in the following parts of this work.

EMPIRICAL WORK – NGOs AS ACTORS INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL REGARDING THE USE OF UAVs

Research method and design

The research will be an empirical work based on data and results of different NGOs influence regarding the use of military drones. That is, the research will focus on NGOs as actors in international politics, and in order to carry out the research, specific NGOs such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Committee of the Red Cross, and other relevant non-governmental organizations positions will be examined. The thesis will examine the actions taken by these organizations to draw attention to the effects of the use of military drones, as well as the claims made by the organizations about military drones compatibility with International Humanitarian Law and questions raised regarding the authorization of drone attacks, and if and how all that has influenced international policy-making processes.

In order to carry out the research, previous policy analysis will be done to determine what has been the official position of specifically the United Nations regarding the use of military drones from when they became more widely used since ‘the war on terror’, and how it has changed after NGOs started reporting on the issues mostly after 2010. Moreover, document analysis will be carried out in order to determine how specific countries in the UN have perceived the issue when military drones were first widely used in a conflict and if there has been any change caused by the attention raised and received by the NGOs and actions the organizations have carried out in order to influence the policy-making processes.

The thesis will examine the information provided by different NGOs related to the use of military drones. That includes reports and media publications, as well as video materials. Moreover, the data will be gathered by examining previous and current policy positions of the United Nations as well as print and other media outlets reports and developments on the issue.

The sources of data include NGOs publications, any relevant United Nations policies and adopted actions as well as academic sources which will be preliminary sources, and different media outlets

publications that are used as secondary sources. This indicates that the topic examination will be covered from different viewpoints.

A problem based on all the data that might arise is that the actions of the NGOs do not single-handedly influence policy-making processes, therefore it might be a possible issue in determining how influential NGOs really are in influencing the policy-making processes. Yet, this problem could be overcome by examining what the position of the UN and, if necessary, its member states was before NGOs raised the issue, and how it has changed afterwards, meaning that there still might not be an official UN policy regarding the use of military drones, but some of the UN member states might have adopted a stronger or a different stance regarding the issue after the actions taken by the NGOs.

U.S. and UAVs: pros and cons

The development and usage of unmanned aerial vehicles is by no means a new concept and there are many countries in the world that use UAVs. UAVs are mostly associated with military in which they have a range of different applications, most commonly intelligence gathering and targeted attacks that can be carried out in one remote location without the need to send troops into a conflict zone. UAVs have become an essential part of the United States' military more so in the 21st century, but they have aided military personnel in different combat and peacekeeping missions around the globe since the 1950s (Glade, 2000). Moreover, there seems to be a steady or even growing support for the use of military drones by the public. In order to make any evaluations, it is necessary to understand why different decisionmakers claim unmanned aerial vehicles are a more viable option compared to 'boots on the ground' approach, and why that approach seems to have such a widespread public support. Moreover, it is necessary to examine current rules and regulations under which the use of UAVs is considered legal and justifiable.

The U.S. has a history of using unmanned aerial vehicles dating back to the 20th century. UAV operations have previously been carried out in active conflict zones such as the Balkans in 1995 and Afghanistan in 2000 (Walsh & Schulzke, 2018) mostly in the form of intelligence gathering through tracking GPS-coordinates of possible targets or providing images of different locations et

cetera. But that all changed in a matter of years and the first targeted killing carried out by the joint operation of the CIA and the U.S. military against a Taliban leader Mullah Omar was in October 7 2001(AI, 2013), and the first CIA operated targeted killing without any military support was carried out in February 4 2002 with the intended target being Osama bin Laden (AI, 2013). Both of these attacks were carried out in Afghanistan, a country with whom the United States was officially at war with (AI 2013). But the CIA and U.S. military both carried out UAV operations and targeted killings also in countries with whom they had not officially declared war with, such as Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia⁵. All of these countries have been targets of U.S. drone attacks for more than a decade, and since the U.S. is only looking to expand its UAV approach and reduce having to send troops into conflict zones, one would only assume these attacks would only continue in different parts of the world, should the U.S. decisionmakers feel like their national security, interests or allies face any significant threats.

There are three main arguments that UAV advocates use to make their cases. Firstly, it is argued that the use of UAVs in conflict is much cheaper. Also, it is argued that the development of UAVs is cheaper than regular military aircrafts and is more cost-effective in the long run. Secondly, it is argued that UAVs are more precise and provide better options for information gathering. Thirdly, it is argued that the use of UAVs reduces the number of casualties. All of these arguments will be explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Unmanned aerial vehicles are cheaper than their piloted counterparts. Lt. Col. David Glade has divided military aircrafts into two categories – manned and unmanned aerial vehicles, and divided unmanned vehicles into remotely controlled vehicles and autonomous (p.13). Remotely controlled vehicles are ones that do not have a pilot on board but are controlled from a remote area whereas autonomous vehicles are those that are pre-programmed to fly on a certain route and carry out pre-programmed actions without any human input or control over the vehicle during the flight. Glade argues that both of these options are cheaper than piloted aircrafts. UAVs costs, according to Glades, depends on their ‘range, persistence, and altitude capabilities’, as well as their size, weight, endurance and communication systems (Glade, p. 14). All these aspects decrease the drones price compared to piloted aircrafts which must be equipped with different cockpit systems for the pilot as well as seating and security systems for the pilot and possible co-pilots. This same argument is made by Wayne McLean, who argues that in today’s political climate, the cost of military drones

is largely absent because it has been proven time and time again that operating a drone is cheaper than operating any other military fighter aircraft, especially when the end result of an operation is an attack on a specific target instead of ‘hearts and minds’ strategy (Brunstetter). Moreover, Glade argues that the use of UAVs is also more cost-effective than standard military operations because they reduce the need to carry out expensive operations to conflict zones therefore reducing the cost to life (p. 13-16).

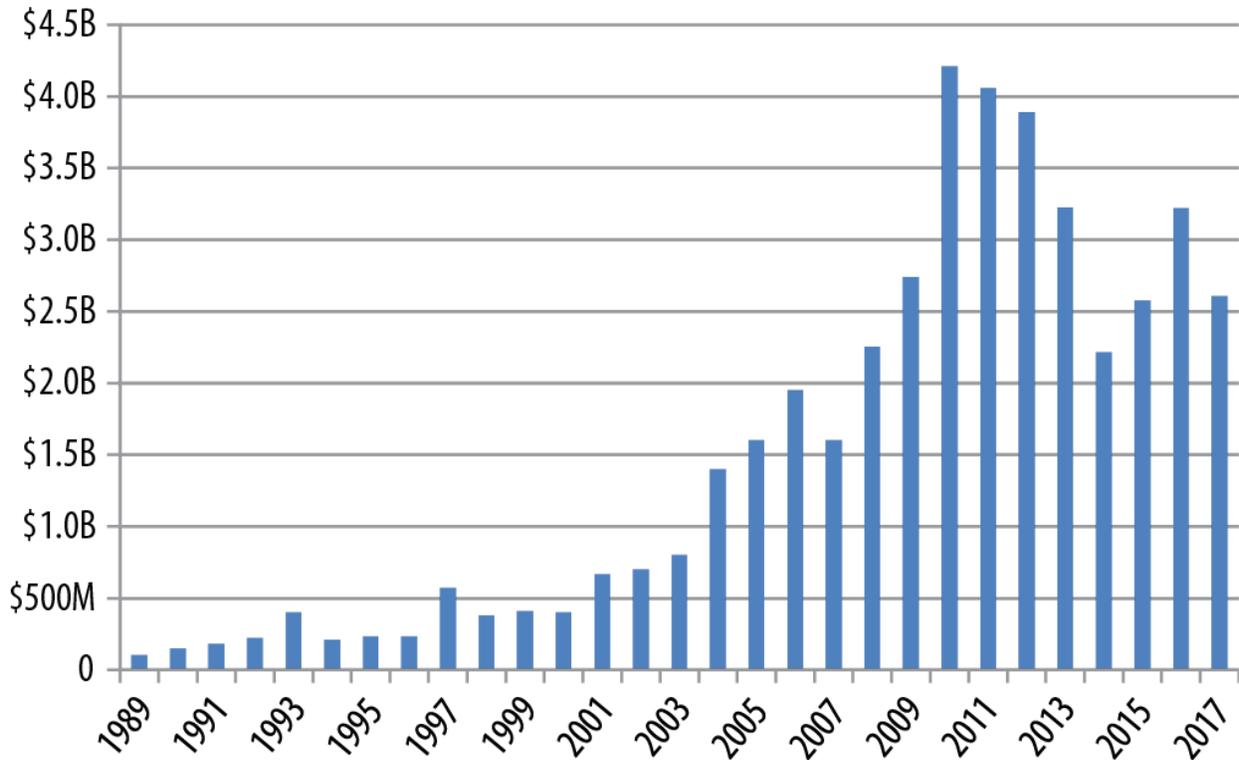


Table 1. Total Unmanned Aircraft System Procurement budget in Millions of Then-Year Dollars (Graphic by Maj. Zachary Morris, U.S. Army)

Further, UAVs are seen as more precise and reliable options for information gathering (Glade, p. 13, 15) than the ‘boots on the ground’ approach. This is mostly because UAVs can be equipped with high-resolution cameras and GPS-systems that provide more precise information about a region or an intended target. That information is often used in planning out different attacks, whether by personnel on the ground or by UAVs themselves. Clear images as well as specific GPS-coordinates of certain locations, areas and targets are crucial in planning an attack and reduce the change of being surprized by an unexpected or previously not reported subject.

Finally, one of the most important arguments for the use of UAVs is the claim that they reduce the possibility of casualties to the military. UAVs have no pilots on board, they are operated remotely or are flying on a pre-programmed route, therefore there is no threat to the operator's life should the vehicle become under attack. Moreover, the use of UAVs in military operations reduces the need to send military personnel to a conflict zone⁶ and risk their life in the line of fire. This is the most influential argument policymakers and lobbyist bring up when hoping to gain public support for any highly publicised or talked-about military operation or when trying to silence the critiques of UAVs.

The use of UAVs does not come without criticism. There are several counterarguments made about the use of UAVs in the U.S. military. It is argued that UAVs are cheaper than sending troops to carry out a certain mission but at the same time the cost of UAVs does not reflect the real cost of operating one, leaving out all the operational systems, bases, personnel costs⁷ et cetera that are needed on the ground to carry out a UAV missions. New UAVs with more reliable and high-end operational systems are developed constantly which means that in order to keep their influential capabilities the U.S. military needs to renew their UAV base with better drones constantly. Moreover, it is argued that UAVs are more precise and reliable but at the same time they reduce the human contact when carrying out a mission. This means that "human controllers have very little information about how the mission is succeeding or how the vehicle is performing" (Glade, p.16). Moreover, even though the military uses very high-end technology, UAVs are still susceptible to programming errors and are incapable of notifying a person should they come under fire during a mission which often leads to a loss or destruction of the UAV which, in return, means rise in costs to repair or replace said UAV. Lastly, it is said that the use of UAVs reduce the number of casualties because troops are not in the line of fire. At the same time, there are many studies made about the consequences of remotely controlling an UAV. It has been noted that even though troops are not killed in a combat, they still suffer from PTSD and other trauma from controlling an UAV as troops in an actual conflict-zone⁸.

All in all, the U.S. has a military that is relying more and more on UAVs. There are arguments for continuing this system, such as the lower cost of UAVs compared to sending troops to a conflict or using piloted aircrafts. Also, it is said that the UAVs are more reliable and precise in information and intelligence gathering than any other system. Military drones provide clear images of targets

or places and areas, as well as GPS-coordinates that are often essential in carrying out a successful operation. Moreover, UAVs have reduced the number of casualties among military personnel. This is often the most compelling argument when garnering support for the continuous use of UAVs. Some scholars, military personnel and journalists have also highlighted counterarguments, such as increasing costs to keep UAVs and their support systems up to date, the risks of removing human contact from missions with increasing UAVs and therefore causing a situation where there is hardly any information about the mission while it is under way, or the how controlling UAVs in missions affects people and their mental health. Again, these counterarguments have not been widely publicised and therefore they have had hardly any impact on the lobbyist or policymakers while discussing the use of UAVs as weapons in conflicts.

United Nation's and the United States of America's policies regarding the use of UAVs

United Nations does not have an official policy regarding the use of military drones. Since the UAVs became more widely used, the UN has stated that any use of military equipment not mentioned in international humanitarian law is still held accountable under that same law. The fact that military drones are not mentioned specifically leaves countries with an option to interpret international humanitarian law in accordance with their own policies and stances. Although, in recent years, especially after 2010, when UAV usage became more prominent in the news and different NGOs started reporting on UAV missions, there have been some changes. For example United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has requested a special rapporteur to provide a report on the use of UAVs and their legalities and outcomes under international laws (UN HRC, 2020). Moreover, in recent years the UN has raised its focus on the use of UAVs by militaries in conflicts in conventional and nonconventional battlefields and has made some calls for action. For example on October 24 2018 the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) hosted an event entitled „The Expanding Use of Armed UAVs and the Need for international Standards“. During this event some of the key claims also made by NGOs were raised, mainly „the lack of transparency; the need for a common understanding of use and proliferation; and compliance with international law“. Moreover, the participants of the same event have published several new publications regarding the same issues which indicated that in

recent years, the UN and its panels and institutions have paid increasingly more attention to the use of UAVs and are making similar claims that the NGOs have done for a long time. It would be interesting to examine in the following chapters whether NGOs have had any influence in such positions and statements.

One of the obstacles in carrying out this research is to find official data and laws regarding the use of UAVs in military. There are several articles that mention some laws, there are also laws available regarding the use of drones for personal or commercial use, there are also military personnel and even politicians mentioning the United State's laws regarding UAVs but these laws are hard to come by. In fact, the author could not find a single document that would outline United State's policies and laws regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in military capacity. There are defence expenditure spreadsheets that mention UAVs but no certain laws that would indicate what the official stance of the U.S. is. On the other hand that is not surprising since the U.S. has classified or deemed secret a number of documents and reports related to the use of UAVs that not finding their official policy was even expected.

NGOs and UAVs: arguments against the use of UAVs

As stated previously, UAVs are increasingly important in nowadays military operations. They carry out intelligence gathering missions, provide high-resolution pictures of different targets and areas, gather specific targets data and GPS-coordinates, aid in planning a military mission or carry out missions with little human involvement. Yet there are people and organizations both in national and international level who argue that UAVs are not as reliable and beneficial as they have been made to seem. This section of the thesis will examine what are NGOs main arguments against the use of UAVs as weapons in military operations.

Firstly, the main concern different NGOs share is UAVs compatibility with international law when used in a conventional or nonconventional conflict zones. There are claims by several NGOs that some of the UAV missions might have violated international laws. Secondly, NGOs argue that the use of UAVs creates more fear and terror than it helps solve. It is claimed that most of the UAV missions attack low-value targets and rely heavily on meta-data of said targets which has led to

great destruction and even civilian casualties with little to no harm done to the actual target. Thirdly, NGOs are concerned with UAVs use in countries where the attacker is not officially part of the conflict, and therefore might violate other countries right to sovereignty. Fourth, NGOs have seen a surge in official reporting of UAV missions in which civilian casualties are listed as insurgents or not listed at all. That, according to NGOs, causes problems of accountability and transparency which might lead to incorrect decisions and conclusions. All of these arguments will be explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Compatibility with international law

It is important to mention that drones are not expressly prohibited by international humanitarian law, nor are they specifically mentioned in weapon treaties or other legal instruments of international humanitarian law, meaning they are no different from weapons launched from any other manned combat aircraft. Moreover, armed drones are not considered to be weapons themselves, but rather platforms that deliver a weapon (McLean, 2014) which means that the use of UAVs is regulated by the IHL rules governing the „conduct of hostilities, namely the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in attacks as well as the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks“. This means that parties to conflict must distinguish between civilians and combatants as well as civilian and military objects, there must be a proportionality between the intended target and the force used to carry out the attack, and also feasible precaution must be taken in order to spare any civilians or civilian objects from the attack.

Why NGOs see compatibility with international law as a problem when examining UAV missions and attacks is because IHL does not specifically mention armed drones and therefore the law is left open for interpretation. Moreover, armed drone strikes by the U.S. have been carried out both in conventional and non-conventional conflicts such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen or Somalia (AI, 2013), some of which the U.S. is not officially a parti to the conflict but rather interprets international law to its own advantage and claims that all of the UAV attacks have been lawful because non-state parties in conflicts pose imminent threat to United States' national security or are carried out in accordance with the war on terror (McLean, 2014). Such claims might have dangerous consequences and lead to a notion that the whole world is a battlefield since non-state

parties such as individual terrorists or terrorist groups might move around and cross state borders which in turn might become targets of UAV attacks.

Creating more fear and terror

Armed drone attacks are claimed to be more precise and should diminish the number of civilian casualties. According to official reports that might be true to an extent. Yet Amnesty International has published several reports on the effects that drone strikes have had on the communities and people where UAV missions have been carried out. In official reports military and, if necessary, civilian casualties are mentioned, as well as any other environmental damages that UAV attacks might have caused. Besides that, UAV attacks leave behind a more serious problem, they create more fear and, in some cases, even more terror in communities. For instance, the U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan in 2012 and 2013 left behind a scarred regions where at least 19 people were killed through drone attacks because there were alleged Taliban fighters in the region before the attacks based on the official reports which conflict with Amnesty International's findings (AI, 2013). One could argue that such instances lead to locals resentment and hate towards the attackers and fuel their need for revenge, which might be expressed in sympathy and support towards insurgents.

Sovereignty and territorial integrity

Every country has a right to sovereignty under international law. That means that each country has their own rules and regulations, they are governed by a local government and are independent from any outside influences which are not coordinated or cooperated with local governments. In order to carry out any armed drone strikes in another states territory it is necessary to obtain "consent to armed drone strikes being carried out in its territory, obtaining a specific mandate of the UN Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, or compliance with the specific requirements of the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter"⁹. Moreover, even if one state has consent from the other to carry out UAV attacks in its territory, the attacks must still be in accordance with IHL and international human rights. For example the U.S. has previously

carried out UAV attacks against Al-Qaida in 2012 and 2013 in sovereign states territories claiming an imminent threat to its own security and counteractions in ‘war or terror’ while the international community had deemed Al-Qaida as not a viable threat, and according to Emmerson’s report “the united States considers itself to be involved in a non-international armed conflict with Al-Qaida and associated forces that is transnational in character [...] Accordingly, the United States does not appear to recognize any express territorial limitations on the applicability of the targeting rules of international humanitarian law”. The president of ICRC in 2013, Peter Maurer indicated already in May 2013 that the territorial sovereignty is an issue in armed drone attacks.

Civilian casualties and false reporting

International law says that all military attacks against “civilians and civilian objects are prohibited”¹⁰. Moreover, it is important to make distinctions between civilians and combatants and should there be doubt, a person should be treated as a civilian¹¹. Nevertheless all NGOs closely evaluated in this work have expressed most concerns about the reporting of civilian casualties and discrepancies between their findings through field work or secondary sources such as newspaper and journal articles, and official sources. NGOs have called it false reporting in order to gain public trust and support for ongoing or future missions. However, they are still urging officials to release reports where all civilian casualties are counted for and stop withholding information¹². Moreover, a letter written by human rights and civilian liberties groups to president Obama in 2013 has even indicated that the U.S. “administration may be employing an overbroad definition of ‘combatant’ or ‘militant’ that would lead it to undercount civilian casualties” (The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2013).

All these arguments have been present in the works and reports of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International Committee of the Red Cross, and other publications by different NGOs, journalists as well as scholars. These arguments have been prominent in the discussion of the use of UAVs during the last decade and continue to be prominent until states are required by international laws or governing bodies to conduct their actions accordingly.

Efforts to influence public opinion and decisionmakers

NGOs have released reports and articles about the use of UAVs in conflict for years and years. Until recently it seemed like those reports for only for public consumption yet they had little to no effect on decision-makers. NGOs have had four constant arguments against the use of UAVs in conflict. Those arguments are civilian casualties and reports that conflict with NGOs findings regarding the attacks; sovereignty and territorial integrity of a state; UAVs creating more fear and terror than they are solving; and the compatibility with international law. NGOs report on these issues constantly and provide their own views. Amnesty International has even gone as far as to submit a call for action to the international community in several of its articles. But all these actions lead one to wonder, what NGOs really have to do to influence and inform the public and rise their issues and positions so high that they would reach policy-makers. Well, coming back to Sharp's earlier claims, in order to be successful international policy influencers NGOs should have high resonance of goals, a patron government, sufficient funding, media friendly topic, and short time-frame and self-selection process for participants. Moreover, it would be useful if NGOs are able to create public awareness materials that support the call for a treaty or policy-change.

High resonance of goals

NGOs examined in this work have not exactly formulated a clear goal for their calls for action. AI has mentioned its goals to ensure that all UAV missions are in compliance with international laws, and all cases resulting in civilian casualties should have an independent investigations carried out¹³. Other NGOs mentions previously have made similar claims but they have not provided a clear policy change to implement.

A patron government

Again, NGOs mentioned in this work are working more as independent organizations and not as a group towards the same goal, which means that supporting ones cause and not the others would

prove difficult for different governments. Moreover, as the U.S. is one of the main UAV users and they also have a permanent seat in the UNSC, that means that any policy changes regarding security will have to appeal to the U.S. representatives and politicians. Since the NGOs criticize the use of UAVs and through that, the U.S. security policy, it would be difficult for these NGOs to garner the support of U.S. or any of its allies.

Sufficient funding

It is difficult to examine and determine what constitutes as sufficient for an NGOs actions to be carried out. Even though, one would conclude that since all of these three non-governmental organizations have established that they do not receive government funding or their funding is rather transparent and highly controlled, yet they operate in many different fields and carry out several social missions throughout the world, that their funding is rather sufficient to focus on one case more seriously.

Media friendly topic

The use of UAVs is, no doubt, media friendly. It is controversial, it creates debate and influences people. Although, one has to keep in mind that these debates are not received equally well in all parts of the world. For example, an article criticizing the use of UAVs would receive a warm welcoming and praise in regions like Pakistan, Yemen or Somalia. Yet in Estonia, for example, it would leave people rather indifferent because it does not affect our daily lives. Moreover, in the U.S. such articles would definitely raise support and cause counterattacks because it would seem as an attack on the U.S. military and security. People value their own people more than insurgents in some remote area.

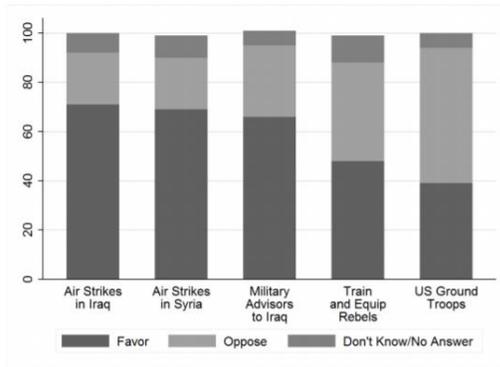
Short time-frame and self-selection process for participants in the decision-making process

This claim is insufficient when it comes to the debate regarding the use of UAVs. This debate has been going on since mid-2000s and continues to this day, meaning that it is not short by any means. Moreover, NGOs do not have the ability to self-select participants that would participate in the decision-making process. It could be argued that the decision has been made more than a decade ago when the U.S. started relying more heavily on the use of UAVs and NGOs have jumped onto the bandwagon.

Next, a short study will be carried out to determine whether one of the NGOs mentioned in this work have had any ability to influence the public or policy-makers with regards to the use of UAVs.

International Committee of the Red Cross

ICRC ha been steadily vocal about the unlawfulness of the UAV attacks and targeted killings. They have produced several materials, papers, and articles related to the issue. Similarly, several scholars, including James Igoe Walsh and Marcus Schulzke have published different articles and books where they evaluate the publics support for the use of force through drone attacks¹⁴.



Notes: Data from CBS/*The New York Times* public opinion survey released September 17, 2014. Totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.

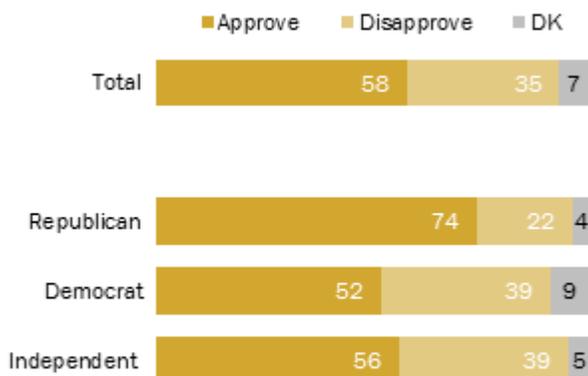
Table 2. Support for military actions, September 2014

There are also many journalists and news outlets that have conducted surveys to understand how much public supports the continuity of drone attacks. The following table conducted by Pew

Research Center in May 2015 indicates that majority of survey participants support U.S. drone

Majority Supports U.S. Drone Strikes

U.S. drone strikes to target extremists... (%)



Survey conducted May 12-18, 2015.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

attacks.

Table 3. Survey among 2002 adults indicating that 58% approve of the U.S. conducting missile strikes from drones in countries as Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia

In comparison, a survey conducted by the ICRC in 2019 questioned more than 16,000 millennials in 16 countries, indicates that 47% of responders believe „it’s more likely than not that there will be a third world war in their lifetime“, yet 74% also believe that „wars are avoidable“ and 75% think „that limits must be imposed on how wars are fought“¹⁵. This leads one to believe that the work NGOs have done over the years have affected the public in being against conflict and demanding change. Unfortunately, there are still no policy adaptations made in the UN, therefore, it could be concluded that although NGOs have advocated for policy changes, their lack of clear goals, ideas and recommendations have not been beneficial.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International has been one of the most vocal organizations when it comes to the use of military drones in both conflict and non-conflict zones. They have published different reports, papers, opinions, stories, et cetera for a long time, the first stories they published were in 2010. From

that time on words they have continually kept publishing different articles and reports clearly stating their own policy that the use of armed military drones in conflict and non-conflict zones should be banned, and also stories where UAV's have been used and what have been the consequences. number of reports Amnesty International has published has been somewhere between four to six stories annually from 2013 to 2018 and has increased up to 10 stories a year in recent years. That is an indication that the problem has not gone away, the problem has not changed, the policy has not changed during that time, the use of UAV's still affects people and their everyday lives, and that Amnesty International still, to this day, deems the use of UAVs a problem. One could claim that 4 to 10 reports or articles a year is not such a significant amount, but when considering that Amnesty International publishes one annual report for every continent regarding this continent evaluation of human rights then four to ten articles or reports is quite a substantial number.

International Committee of the Red Cross

One of the most influential organizations that has raised an issue regarding the use of military drones has been the International Committee of the Red Cross. ICRC is one of the organizations that works closely with no combat zones and has first-hand experience and regions where military drones have been used to attack people, and therefore they have first hand knowledge of what the results are after such attacks. In order to make the public aware of what happens after a military drone attack, ICRC has published many papers, articles, opinion pieces, reports, et cetera. Again, one could say that that is exactly what NGOs do, publish different stories, pick one should also keep in mind that all these stories are written and published based on what the NGO deems important and valuable enough to invest their effort in. therefore, every single story published about military drones and their use in conflict and non-conflict zones is ICRC's attempt to bring awareness to this issue in both national and international level. When looking at the number of reports, ICRC has published approximately four to five reports annually regarding the use of military drones. That is a significant amount that again indicates that this organization deems the use of military drones an issue and is actively seeking ways to solve it. Since NGOs can only advocate for different causes through commercials, reports, articles et cetera, and working directly together with different companies, national and international politicians, lobbyists, and policy

makers is not always possible, publishing reports to make their stance known regarding certain issues is sometimes the only way.

NGOs accountability in international relations

NGOs accountability has become increasingly important in global governance. Since international NGOs are related to and dealing with many areas, their importance has also grown, which has made people more aware of their actions and the reasonings behind it. NGOs are mostly working to improve environmental or human conditions that are common with nation-state desires, but from time to time, NGOs have their own agenda they promote and work towards that is separate from nation-state policies. With that in mind, it is important to note that no clear accountability holder exists for NGOs, but that does not mean they are accountability-free, since they are still internally accountable to management, directors et cetera.

When questioning the accountability of NGOs in international arena, authors and their opinions differ. For example, Kenneth Anderson (2000) argued that the lack of accountability allows NGOs to not work from the ground up, but 'allow them to be a pressure groups' that will speak horizontally to other global elites, and goes on to claim that NGOs may even be dangers to democratic processes, whereas Marthe Scweitz (1995) explained that NGOs participations in world governance is legitimate and that there is a myth to dispel, the myth being that 'NGOs must be representative organizations in order to be legitimate partners'. Gary Johns (2000) raises concerns about NGOs becoming subjects to 'a policy of heavy-handed regulation of private associations' when they are claiming to be the greatest expression of democracy. Johns suggests that NGOs should 'claim no more than to represent a view' instead of claiming to be new forms of democratic legitimacy, and that the only scrutiny needed for the NGOs is 'the ordinary scrutiny of any group or person who seeks to make claims on the public' which is 'the integrity and truth of the proposal'. Moreover, in 2004, the Panel of Eminent Persons on united Nations-Civil Society Relations suggested that the UN should define 'standards of governance, such as those for transparency and accountability', particularly 'possible codes of conduct and self-policing mechanisms to heighten disciplines of quality, governance and balance' (UN, 2004). With all that in mind, it could be claimed that NGOs accountability has been in the focus of several different

authors and international actors for several decades, but there is no consensus on to whom the NGOs should be accountable for, except their own management, directors and the public whose interests they represent.

The lack of external bodies to evaluate NGOs accountability does not diminish their actorness in international politics. In fact, there are three main arguments that experts use to determine actorness. Those three are following:

- a clear policy;
- ability to forward their views through media;
- access to UN policy-making processes.

Nicola Short (1999) has highlighted in his work that for the NGOs to be successful in advocating for or against a policy they need a simple and clear policy-position. That would allow NGOs to promote their position in a national and international level and offer changes to current legal documents. Without a clear policy the NGOs vision would be too broad and, one might even claim, too vague to attract wide-spread interest and support.

Non-governmental organisations cooperation with the United Nations

United Nations has a long-standing tradition of working together with different NGOs. The number of NGOs working with the UN has increased year by year. Today the UN has a three-tier status list of all the NGOs that are able to work with different UN committees. Those three tiers are consultative status with ECOSOC, association with the UN department of Global Communications, and UN-NGLS. The first position gives NGOs a “consultative status with the Economic and Social Council provides NGOs with access not only to ECOSOC, but also to its many subsidiary bodies, the various human rights mechanisms of the United Nations, ad-hoc processes on small arms, and special events organized by the President of the General Assembly”, the second position means that “the NGO Relations Section of the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC) is the link from the Organization to the approximately 1,300 NGOs

associated with the UN and support its efforts to disseminate information on the priority issues on its agenda”, and the last option means that “The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) is an inter-agency programme of the United Nations mandated to develop constructive relations between the UN and civil society organizations” (UN, 2014). There are currently 5593 NGOs that have a active consultative position in the UN (UN, NGO Branch) including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. It is difficult to find how many times NGOs have had a chance to stand in front of the General Assembly and talk about the issues they feel the most passionate about but from different UN reports endpapers it is possible to see that the issue of military drones and its compatibility with international law has been raised already back in 2014, and as late as 2020 human Human Rights Council has had sessions regarding for use of military drones and are calling for actions that would increasingly regulates the use of military drones and bring those regulations in accordance to international laws. from all that one could draw conclusions that even though NGOs have continually advocated to increasingly regulate the use of military drones and make this regulations compatible with international law, not my chest changed at least within the last five years. That brings up the question if NGOs really do have any influence in international level power whether they are just a consultant that raises certain issues but the decision-making process is still left for the nation states. Looking at the results regarding the use of military drones and the fact that not much has changed over the years and the nation states are still the ones that decide when, where, and with how much force UAVs are used, it could be concluded that even though NGOs have highlighted the issue, they really do not have the influential power to warrant a policy change in an international level. When it comes to the use of military drones, as mentioned earlier in this work, NGOs need to have a certain policy that they are advocating for, they need to have a chance to publish different articles regarding that issue, and they need to have enough power to warrant a change on an international level, that generally means within the United nations, it is clear that even though NGOs do fulfill the first two requirements, they cannot or are not able to fulfill the third requirement successfully.

What more could be done?

NGOs have a certain role in international politics. They have been a part of it for quite a few decades and will probably be part of it in the future. It could be even claimed that since NGOs are getting more involved in international policy-making processes, in the future they might have more power to actually achieve some change without being dependent on nation-states and policy-makers. Yet currently, as this work has demonstrated, NGOs are not as effective in influencing policy-change in an international level. That begs the question, why is that?

There are several reasons why non-governmental organizations are still highly dependable on nation-states and policy-makers and cannot really influence a policy change on their own. One of the reasons is that, as highlighted in the example about landmines previously, a policy change initiated by a non-state actor has to be swift. If it is carried out within months or a few years, all of the meetings, negotiations, follow-ups, changes, et cetera have to be done in a short period of time. On the one hand that means that policy-makers have to work closely together with different NGOs who have valuable information about the issue and how to solve it. That is often because NGOs work with topics and issues that they feel are affecting the most people, and in order to change that affect into a positive, they highlight an issue long before it is even brought to the attention of a policy-maker to change. Second reason, why working within a short time frame might be positive is that that prevents policy-makers and lobbyists from working together and developing counter-policies or other changes or demands to the ones proposed in an initial meeting. That also means that if a nation-state wants to make changes to initially proposed policy or policy-change, they need the support of other nation-states and within a short time frame that might be difficult to acquire. All of that means that if an NGO wants to be a part of a policy-change or initiate one, they have to make sure that they can carry it out within a short period of time in order to be successful in initiating it, because otherwise nation-states will have time to start working together with each other and they might push NGOs and their knowledge aside.

Another point that is evident from this research is that if NGOs want to be a part of a policy change, they need to make sure that firstly, they have a clear policy regarding the topic they are advocating for, and, secondly, that the topic is relevant to a majority of nation-states. As it was highlighted in this work, NGOs examined here did have a clear policy regarding the use of unmanned aerial

vehicles. That is necessary because without a clear policy it would be extremely difficult to convince others that the topic one is advocating for, is even an issue. That same idea was also highlighted in the successful example of how NGOs worked to ban landmines. All the NGOs related to that case had a clear policy regarding that topic – they deemed the use of landmines dangerous to all people and wanted an immediate worldwide ban. That indicates to any third-parties that the topic is important enough for an organization that they have worked to come up with a policy. Secondly, if NGOs want to be successful in influencing policy change, they need to make sure that the topic is important to a majority of nation-states. That is extremely important because that would ensure that most nation-states and their representatives take time to actually listen and work together with NGOs to initiate the change. When it comes to the case of using unmanned aerial vehicles in a traditional conflictzone as well as in a non-traditional conflict zone, that topic, harsh as it may sound, is not high on an importance list in many nation-states. That is mostly because not all nation-states are connected with the issue, they do not feel the effects of it, or they simply have other, more pressing issues to focus on. For example, using military drones is not a severely important agenda in Estonia, Colombia, or Australia and many other countries. That is because these countries do not feel the effects of such vehicles. There are no military drone attacks in Estonia for example, and that is the reason Estonians and Estonian policy-makers are not very concerned with this topic. Estonian policy-makers do keep an eye on the topic because Estonias allies use unmanned aerial vehicles in different parts of the world, but not here. Moreover, if NGOs want to assure the success of their policy change, they need to make sure that the nation-states that are involved with the same topic, actually want to pursue a change in politics. That is extremely important, as highlighted in this case with the use of military drones, because if a nation-state that is involved in the topic, wants to keep the laws and policies as they are, and have power to do so, NGOs have little to no chance of actually carrying out a successful policy change in an international level. That is the case, for example, UAVs and the United States of America. NGOs have tried to work with the US government and policy-makers, but since US's official stance is that drones are the future of warfare and they bring more benefits to the user than negatives, they are strongly against any kind of international policy change that would regulate the use of military drones and would take away the autonomy nation-states currently have to decide when and where they use UAVs.

Moreover, for NGOs to be successful in influencing international policy changes, they need to work together with each other. In this current case, every NGO that has been mentioned in this work, has developed its own policy regarding the use of UAVs, they have their own methods on how they raise the topic to different actors attention et cetera. But what these NGOs, and other working with this issue, are lacking is cooperation with each other. Again, as seen from the example regarding the ban of landmines, those NGOs worked together to develop a common goal. They all wanted to ban landmines, so they developed a single policy that they all shared, they initiated and organized different forums to talk about their positions. Moreover, they approached nation-states as a one single entity, not several separate actors. All that indicates, on the one hand, that more organizations are sending out and spreading the same message with the same goal in mind, and on the other hand, that they are more influential in approaching nation-state representatives and lobbyists. That is because the single shared message reaches far more people and therefore also influences more people's approach to the issue, as well as working with a one single entity is far more favourable for nation-states than working with several different ones because one actor has one set of requirements that nation-states have to accept and keep in mind while discussing a policy-change compared to the multiple different ones when working with several different NGOs at the same time. All that means that if different NGOs could come together and work out a single proposal to the nation-states and to the UN, they would have a much stronger and more exhaustive position to work with, which would probably give them more chances to be heard and actually reach their goal of changing international laws to provide more international oversight with regards to the use of UAVs in any conflict or non-conflict zones.

And lastly, deriving from the previous proposal for NGOs to have one clear policy that they all share regarding this topic, NGOs should also advocate that policy to a wider audience. At the moment people who know about the use of UAVs in conflict and non-conflict zones could be separated into four broad categories: the ones affected by the attacks, the ones reporting the attacks, the ones researching this topic, and the ones who have been told that this is beneficial for the nation. That means that there is a wide number of people who might not know, or know very little, about the use of UAVs and what the NGOs stand for when trying to initiate policy-change. Moreover, that means that NGOs actually have a chance to advocate their position to people who, in turn, might demand a change in position or a course of action from their representatives. In addition to this, NGOs also have to realise that if they are advocating their position and calls for change to

people who are affected by UAV strikes, these people will not be the best audience, because they already know the results of an attack and are more than likely already calling for a change in policies, whereas the people who are reporting the attacks, might not be heard as much because their publisher might not want these stories published should they be related to in any way to a person, company or nation-state that deems the use of UAVs a positive thing. Also, people who research this topic mostly do so because it is somehow related to their work or they want to know more about world affairs. But that does not mean that they are actively calling for a change in policies. And lastly, the people who know about the use of UAVs because they have been exposed to information claiming it to be a more favourable option than traditional military operations, do see this as a positive thing. These are the people NGOs need to influence. As seen from the example of banning landmines, people started calling for a change in policy and supporting NGOs in their endeavor after seeing the outcomes because NGOs used commercials and pictures in their campaign and brought the issue to peoples doors who were not initially affected. NGOs should do similar campaigns regarding the use of military drones and their attacks to show people that targeting one individual or one group of people without any oversight might have severe effects on civilians and peoples lives in general. With such campaign NGOs would influence people to see the results and aftermath and make them think if this is worth it and probably seek ways to change the situation. And that would lead to demanding change from policy-makers that NGOs could then influence directly on a more greater scale.

All in all, NGOs do have some power when it comes to influencing international decision-making processes. Where they struggle is cooperation with other NGOs that share the same goal. Moreover, they could develop a common agenda and then approach decision-makers in different levels with the same idea, which leads one to believe, would have a greater effect than every NGO working by themselves and hardly achieving anything. In addition, NGOs need to develop an approach to bring the topic to people who might not know about it. That would initiate greater knowledge in people and therefore greater changes that people would seek change as well. When examining different topics in which NGOs are working with and have any chances of making their position known in an international arena, there are very few that actually do bring about change, and many topics in which NGOs do have a great knowledge and clear policy-change proposals, but since the topic is not favourable to some nation-states, NGOs do not have a change to bring about change.

CONCLUSION

NGOs have become increasingly important in the current international politics. They have adopted advocacy of social, environmental and human rights issues as their main focus. NGOs have established themselves as international actors with the issues they focus on being more international and more influential than local cases.

The main aim of this work was to offer an overview of NGOs as actors and policy-designers in an international arena. Several non-governmental organizations such as International Committee of the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International were focused on more closely. A historical overview of NGOs gaining their international position was provided. Moreover, an example of how NGOs have played crucial role in international policy-making process was provided through a brief overview on NGOs and environmental issues and NGOs and the case of landmines.

The empirical part of this work sought to examine if and how influential are NGOs in affecting international actors regarding the use of military drones. In order to do that, an overview of U.S. arguments for the use of UAVs was highlighted. Then, UN and U.S. official laws and policies were examined. Thereupon, NGOs main arguments against the use of UAVs was provided. Lastly, the author tried to examine NGOs efforts to influence public and policy-makers opinions regarding the use of military drones.

All in all, it can be concluded that if one compares previous successful cases in which NGOs have influenced international policies and the case of UAVs, there are significant differences. When comparing the case of banning landmines to the case of non-governmental organizations' efforts to supplement laws so that they would provide more international oversight to the use of UAVs, the author can identify clear differences. Firstly, the case to ban landmines was carried out within a two year period, whereas the case against the UAVs has been carrying on for almost two decades. This makes it more difficult for NGOs to bring about any changes because the nation-states that use UAVs have developed strong positions against any change in international law. Furthermore, such nation-states have developed their military in a way that UAVs are a crucial part of it, providing decreased military spending, decreased risks to personnel and their lives, which in change causes more public support to such devices. Moreover, landmines were clear hazard to all

parties involved, whereas UAVs are beneficial for at least one party involved in a conflict – the one using them. That means that even though NGOs have clear indicators that the use of UAVs is harmful to people when used as a weapon, it is extremely difficult to convince some nation-states that more international oversight provides more stable instances in which UAVs are used and prevents any state from using them just because they feel like it is more effective than boots on the ground missions, whereas there are clear indicators provided by the NGOs that they are, in fact, not. In addition, public opinion towards landmines was negative, but it has proven increasingly difficult to influence public opinion to demand regulations to the international law so that UAV missions can not carry on like they have so far. It could be said that that is because people are not as closely affected by the use of UAVs as they were with landmines. This means that if a person does not live in a conflict zone where UAVs are constantly used, or the only thing they see in the news is that an attack has been carried out and a target was reached, or they have been told by the military leaders and nation-state representatives that UAVs are more secure, accurate, and effective than traditional means of warfare, it is extremely difficult to convince that person otherwise. A way to do it would be to bring the results of a military drone attack to people and make the outcomes visible like it was with landmines when NGOs used pictures of injured people as a campaign measure. That way people might feel more related to and influenced by these attacks and realize that even though UAVs are beneficial for the party using them, they are certainly not for the party receiving these attacks.

To answer the question - whether NGOs have enough influencing powers to propose policy changes in international arena or not? – the author would conclude that to be negative. Based on the evidence NGOs do not have enough influencing powers to propose policy changes in international arena when it comes to the use of UAVs. In addition to reasons mentioned above, the author also believes that NGOs have not been successful in influencing policy changes in international arena because nation-states that use UAVs the most are also in a position in international forums to ban or veto such discussions. Moreover, there are only a handful of countries that use UAVs regularly and it would be hard to believe that they would want to limit their military advantage with international laws and regulations. In addition, NGOs have worked separately so far, and that means that they have similar, but not same, policy change ideas, and therefore it might seem like there are too many different sides competing for the same thing. Should NGOs cooperate and develop a single distinct policy regarding the use of UAVs, the author

believes, it would be much easier to approach nation-state representatives as well as any international forums, and make their positions and ideas heard. As long as these NGOs continue to work separately, they will most likely not have any success in influencing policy changes in an international arena because they cannot compete with the positions of nation states, that especially when they do not have the same powers in an international arena as nation-states have. Moreover, this author believes that since NGOs have worked to initiate policy change for so long without success, there are actors who do not see these organizations as anything more than just consultants and do not take their positions and ideas seriously. This author believes that unless a majority of the nation-states are not involved in this issue or do not see this as a major concern, no change will be coming. That is, of course, unless any of the major nation-states that are using UAVs themselves come forward and ask for a change in international law. Should such a thing happen, it is more than likely that NGOs currently advocating for this change will be included in the development process as well, but in that case, it would be arbitrary to claim that NGOs actually had any power and influence to cause these changes.

Obstacles and improvements

This topic seems to be widely reported in different materials, including academic books and journals as well as more mainstream news outlets. That was one of the reasons for the author for choosing this topic. Yet it proved to have many challenges that from time to time prevented the author from carrying out a research. When doing research on this topic, the author could not have prevented that previously available materials would not be available when writing this thesis. Moreover, it proved to be much more complicated to find official laws of the United States of America that regulate or approve the use of military drones and UAVs. There were several journal articles and news articles, but the official laws remained inaccessible. In addition, when choosing this topic, there did not seem to be any shortage of official materials created by the non-governmental organizations, but when trying to evaluate their influence, it became difficult to find official data on public surveys et cetera. Furthermore, there are many previous researches carried out regarding NGOs and their role regarding different topics, but it proved to be extremely difficult to find any indication on how to measure influence when it comes to the NGOs work. There are scholars who mention power as a measurable variable, but then move forward by saying that that

variable can only be applied to nation-states and not to non-state actors. Since finding previously used measurable variables when regarding NGOs influence became difficult, the author had to develop their own method of how to measure it. All in all, the author concludes that the conclusion and analysis of this thesis can be improved should any official data become available. Moreover, the author believes that this research can be improved and updated should any of the changes mentioned previously happen or should any official international laws be changed or improved regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles. That means that if an official international change in policy happens, it could be revised what role did non-governmental organizations play in it, whether their recommendations have been included or at least weighted during discussions, and if they are not included then find out reasons why they are not. All in all, the author believes that this topic and research is not definitive and could be researched further should any materials become available or international laws change.

Reading and references

1. A. M. Clark, E. J. Friedman & K. Hochstetler, „The Sovereign limits of Global Civil Society: A Comparison of NGO Participation in UN World Conferences on the Environment, Human Rights, and Women“, World Politics Journal, 1998
2. AI, Accountable Now, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/about-us/how-were-run/ingo-charter/>, accessed 17.10.2020
3. AI, INGO Accountability Charter, Amnesty International 2014 Accountability Report to the INGO, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/IOR8000032014ENGLISH.PDF>, accessed 17.20.2020
4. Amnesty international, “Key Principles on the Use and Transfer of Armed Drones”, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT3063882017ENGLISH.PDF>, p. 7-8, accessed 25.12.2020
5. Amnesty international, “UN: Amnesty urges international action on armed drones”, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/un-amnesty-urges-international-action-on-armed-drones/>, Oct 2017, accessed 15.04.2021
6. Amnesty international, “Will I be next?: US drone strikes in Pakistan”, 2013, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/12000/asa330132013en.pdf>, p. 18-27, accessed 25.12.2020
7. B. Emmerson, UN HRC, „Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedomas while Countering Terrorism“, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/751002>, 2013, accessed 6. 04. 2021
8. C. Jönsson, “The Essence of Diplomacy”, Jan 2005
9. Congressional Budget Office (CBO), *Options for Enhancing the Department of Defence Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Programs* (September 1998), ix, accessed 11. 11. 2020

10. Council on Foreign Relations, “The U. S. War in Afghanistan”, (1999-2021), <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan> , accessed 13.11.2020
11. D. Bruntstetter, “Drones: The Future of Warfare?”, E-International Relations, <https://www.e-ir.info/2012/04/10/drones-the-future-of-warfare/> , accessed 28.10.2020
12. D. Cortright, R. Fairhurst, & K. Wall, “Drones and the Future of Armed Conflict”, The university of Chicago Press, 2015
13. D. Glade, Lt Col, 2000, “Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: Implications for Military Operations”, Occasional Paper No. 16, Center for Strategy and Technology, Air War College, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA425476.pdf>, p. 2, p. 13, Sec. C 7, accessed 21.11.2020
14. Dag Hammarskjöld Library, “UN and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): A Quick Guide”, <https://research.un.org/en/ngo> , accessed 14.04.2021
15. Dür & D. De Bievre, Jan. – Apr. 2007, „Inclusion without Influence? NGOs in European Trade Policy“ in Journal of Public policy Vol. 27 No. 1, p. 86-87
16. E. Betsill, F. Corell, 2008, “NGO Diplomacy: The Nongovernmental Organizations in International Environmental Negotiations”, p.1, p. 2, p. 17
17. G. Dvaladze, A. Jansen & W. Zwijnenburg, „Human Rights and Human Realities“, Open Society Foundation, 2018
18. H. Holmen & M. Jirstrom, „Second Thoughts about NGOs as Representing Civil Society“, SAGE publications, 2009
19. How does Law protect in War?, General Assembly, The use of drones in counter-terrorism operations, “Drones”, <https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/general-assembly-use-drones-counter-terrorism-operations> , accessed 25.12.2020
20. HPCR Manual, “Manual on international Law Applicable to Air and Missile Warfare”, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/8B2E79FC145BFB3D492576E00021ED34-HPCR-may2009.pdf> , may 2009, p. 10 point 11, point 12 (a), accessed 13.03.2021
21. HRW, About Us, <https://www.hrw.org/about/about-us>, accessed 17.10.2020
22. [https://pdf.zlibcdn.com/dtoken/e7d87e472087c08ae8a309e6e9550af9/NGO_Accountability_Politics_Principles_and_Innov_684290_\(z-lib.org\).pdf](https://pdf.zlibcdn.com/dtoken/e7d87e472087c08ae8a309e6e9550af9/NGO_Accountability_Politics_Principles_and_Innov_684290_(z-lib.org).pdf) p 21

23. ICRC, “Majority of millennials see catastrophic war as real possibility, and believe there should be limits”, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/majority-millennials-see-catastrophic-war-real-possibility> , accessed 15.04.2021
24. ICRC, “The use of armed drones must comply with laws”, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/interview/2013/05-10-drone-weapons-ihl.htm> , May 2013, accessed 11.03.2021
25. ICRC, The ICRC’s mandate and mission, <https://www.icrc.org/en/mandate-and-mission>, accessed 17.10.2020
26. J. F. Aviel in J. P. Muldoon Jr, E. Sullivan, E. Sullivan, J. F. Aviel & R. Reitano, “Multilateral Diplomacy and the United Nations Today”, Routledge, 2005
27. J. G. Speth, “Perspective on the Johannesburg Summit”, Environment Science and Policy for Sustainable Development No 45, Jan 2003
28. J. I. Walsh & M. Schulzke, 2018, “Drones and Support for the Use of Force”, University of Michigan Press, p14-15
29. J. Sifton, “A Brief History of Drones”, The Nation, Febr. 2012, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/brief-history-drones/> , accessed 23.10.2020
30. K. J. Holsti, “The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory” London, 1985
31. M. Wareham, „International Committee of the Red Cross Backs Killer Robot Ban“, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/13/international-committee-red-cross-backs-killer-robot-ban> , May 2021, accessed 15.05.2021
32. Maj Z. Morris, “U.s: Drones: Smaller, Less Capable Drones for the Near Future”, Military Review, May-June 2018, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/May-June-2018/US-Drones-Smaller-Less-Capable-Drones-for-the-Near-Future/> , accessed 25.11.2020
33. N. Short, „The Role of NGOs in the Ottawa Process to Ban Landmines“, International Negotiations Journal No 4, 1999
34. ODS, Open Element, <https://documentsddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/478/77/PDF/N1347877.pdf?OpenElement> , points 56, 59, 60, p 18/24 point 62, accessed 24.10.2020

35. P. Maurer, „Principese, survey chapter” in “Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures Online” ed. By S. M. Michaelis, P. Maurer, M. Martin & H. Huber, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, 2013
36. P. Sharp, 1999, “For diplomacy: Representation and the study of international relations. International Studies Review 1”, p. 43
37. P. Willetts, „Non-Governmental Organizations in World Politics: The Construction of Global Governance“ in „The Hague Journal of Diplomacy“, 2011, Routledge
38. R. A. Dahl, “The Concept of Power”, Behavioural Science, 1957
39. R. W. Cox & H. K. Jacobson, “The Anatomy of Influence: decision making in international organizations” 1973, Yale University Press
40. S. Ahmed & D. M. Potter, „NGOs in International politics“, Kumarian Press, 2006
41. S. Krähenmann & G. Dvaladze, “Humanitarian Concerns raised by the Use of Armed Drones”, Geneva Call, <https://www.genevacall.org/humanitarian-concerns-raised-by-the-use-of-armed-drones/> , accessed 25.12.2020
42. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, “Letter to Obama on targeted killings”, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2013-04-18/letter-to-obama-on-targeted-killings> , April 2013, accessed 11.03.2021
43. The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2009, “Manual on International Law Applicable to Air and Missile Warfare”
44. UN Human Rights Council, “Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counterterrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law”, https://www.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Documents/Issues/IEMinorities/armed_drones_conceptnote.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1 , Sept 2014, accessed 28.04.2021
45. UN Human Rights Council, „Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions“, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session44/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session44/Documents/A_HRC_44_38_AUV.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1 , July 2020, accessed 14.03. 2021

46. UN, Office for Disarmament Affairs, “The Expanding Use of Armed UAVs and the Need for International Standards”, Nov 2018, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/the-expanding-use-of-armed-uavs-and-the-need-for-international-standards/> , accessed 12.12.2020
47. UN, Office of Disarmament Affairs, Landmines, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/landmines/> , accessed 20.10.2020
48. United Nations, NGO Branch <http://csonet.org/> , accessed 14.03.2021
49. W. McLean, “Drones are cheap, soldiers are not: a cost-benefit analysis of war”, The Conversation, June 2014, <https://theconversation.com/drones-are-cheap-soldiers-are-not-a-cost-benefit-analysis-of-war-27924> , accessed 23.11.2020
50. Walsh, J. I. & Schulzke, M., “Drones and Support for the Use of Force”, University of Michigan Press, 2018 p 12.

Non-exclusive license for reproduction of thesis and providing access of thesis to the public

I, Agne Luur (personal code 49301064218), herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to: **Revisiting actorness in international politics: NGOs as policy-designers against the use of military drones**, supervised by Eiki Berg

- 1.To reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making available to the public, including for addition to the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright.
- 2.To make available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright.
- 3.I am aware that the rights stated in point 1 also remain with the author.
- 4.I confirm that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe the intellectual property rights or rights arising from the Personal Data Protection Act.

Tartu, 16.05.2021

_____ (signature)
