Agenda Setting in the OECD

NGOs influence on OECD’s development agenda

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Abstract

The proliferation of NGOs with an international agenda has been one of the most profound trends in international relations during the past years. Their role in the outcome of international politics has however been insufficiently theorized. The aim of this research was to fill this gap by explain how and under what conditions NGOs were able to influence the agenda of OECD in development policies. The empirical focus of this study is on the two international meeting that were held in 2005 and 2008, organized by OECD development committee, DAC. The method used in this study is process tracing (studying causes that led to an outcome). The employment of the method evidently generates an analytical framework constituted of framing processes and political opportunity theory.

It was concluded that NGOs by arranging several meetings were able produce joint action frames, hence creating a broader alignment for their claims. The notion of “democratic ownership” was developed to a master frame, generating a consensus among NGOs and increasing their credibility among the members of DAC. Their frames would however not been legitimizied if the sufficient political opportunities were not created. The analysis of political opportunity concluded that NGOs were able to legitimize their frames by gaining access to the OECD, through the creation of DAC’s Advisory Group. The increased access was the result of the internal restructuring of the OECD which generated a more inclusive partnership towards non-members. The political alignment with some of DAC’s member-states further enhanced NGOs credibility in order to legitimize their frames in the agenda of DAC.

Keywords: Agenda-Setting, Influence, NGO, OECD, Framing process, Political opportunity, Paris declaration,
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# Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>AG-CS/AE</td>
<td>Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness</td>
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<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian Council for International Cooperation</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>OECD Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>EPC</td>
<td>Economic Policy Committee</td>
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<td>EPOC</td>
<td>OECD Environmental Policy Committee</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>HLF</td>
<td>High Level Forum</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IO</td>
<td>International Organization</td>
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<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relation</td>
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<td>ISG</td>
<td>International Steering Group</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OEEC</td>
<td>Organization for European Economic Co-operation</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>RoA</td>
<td>Reality of Aid</td>
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<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
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<td>TC</td>
<td>OECD Trade Committee</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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1 Introduction

The introductory chapter is composed by a general preamble to the area and a problematization of the subject. This is followed by the specific purpose of the study. The chapter is concluded by a presentation of specific research questions that are to be addressed. The purpose of the introduction is not only to present the reader to the problem of the study, but also to orient the reader through the field of NGO activism in global politics.

1.1 NGOs in Global Politics – an era of multiplicity

In the post world war era there has been a significant increase of international cooperation among states. Creating a path for the emergences of international organizations and consequently lifting governance beyond the nation state. Although still dominated by intergovernmental actors, the consolidated autonomy of international organizations has over the past two decades provided growing mechanisms for participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Tallberg.2008). The term NGO denotes a broad range of non-governmental organized actors that operate whether domestically or across borders, including; non-governmental organizations, advocacy groups and non-governmental organized foundations. Active with a transnational agenda, these actors are conceptualized as the global civil society (Betsill and Corell.2008; Jönson.2008).

The escalating amount of NGOs with a transnational agenda and the expanded cooperation between international organizations (IO) and NGOs has been well documented during recent years. There is a growing consensus in recent literature, that civil society groups make a difference in world politics. Studies have showed that NGOs can have substantial impact on the creation of causal knowledge and international norms (Betsill & Corell. 2008; Boli & Thomas. 1999; O’Brien et al.2000; Princen & Finger.1994; Willetts.1996).

Despite the growing evidence that NGOs make difference in global politics, their participation and activities (e.g. how and under what conditions they influence IOs) has nonetheless been insufficient theorized. Moreover, studies that have problematized how NGOs influence international politics, have primarily directed their attention to the field of human rights and environmental issues, thus instigating a deficit in the conceptualization of NGOs contribution in the fields of socio-economics. This research therefore ought to fill this gap by using a conceptual framework that can explain how and under what conditions NGOs influence the
agenda-setting in an international organization, whose primary mandate is socio-economical claims, namely the Organization for Economic and Co-operation and Development, OECD. Covering a broad range of areas, the OECD is one of the largest IOs (see chapter 4). However, in order to conduct a comprehensive research it becomes evident to delimit the influence of NGOs to one area of the OECD’s work, mainly their work in international development¹.

While some scholars have highlighted the ongoing globalization process as a driving force behind NGOs transnational agenda shifting, emphasizing the role of the technical developments, others highlight the negative aspects of globalization as reason for transnational networking. Thus, in this view NGOs transnational activism becomes a reaction to the ongoing globalization process itself (Joachim and Locher.2009). Whatever the reasons may be, there is however a strong consensus between the scholars regarding the remarkable proliferation of NGOs working across borders (Boli and Thomas.1999). According to Tarrow (2005) the international society consists of triangular relations with overlapping interests among states, international organizations and transnational actors. Hence, employing Tarrow’s identification of the international society; NGOs should be treated as independent variables with the power to influence the output of international politics.

This emerging multiplicity perspective, where transnational actors are regarded as relevant actors in international politics is in many ways challenging the state-centric notion that states are the only decisive actors in global politics. Traditional studies in international relations have mainly focused on states. While states have been the center of analyze in economical, political and military matters, the importance of further actors such as international organizations and NGOs have been neglected. The growing amount of NGOs with international agendas should however not be seen as necessarily in opposition to the inter-state structure of the world. According to Risse (2002), the work of NGOs often conforms to the interest of states and international organizations. However little is known about their increasing contribution to global politics. The consolidation of international organizations as powerful actors in international politics and the proliferation of a global civil society have generated the need for further analysis and clarification concerning NGOs difference in international politics. It is nevertheless with this multiplicity environment in mind that this research will center on the influence of NGOs in the work of the OECD.

¹ The motivation for the choice of IO and the subject of matter is further discussed in the Methodological chapter (Chapter 3)
1.2 NGOs and International Organizations

Although primarily created by the initiative of states, international organizations have wandered from their original mandate into new terrains and territories. Transformed into autonomous actors, international organizations such as the UN, EU, OECD or WTO can through their authority create social realities, thus transforming the organizations to important actors in the outcome of international politics (Barnett, Finnemore. 2004). Even though considered as influential actors in international politics, these organizations have traditionally been dominated by state influences. However, as discussed earlier, over the course of the past two decades, the trend in global governance has been the profound quality of social interaction between international organizations and NGO, while states are surrendering their privileged monopoly regarding their influence on international organizations (Tallberg.2008).

Followers of the neorealist approach have traditionally argued that NGOs are just bypass of international politics due to their absence of military capacity. In order to have any concrete impact in global politics, NGOs must influence stronger states. However there are several studies that have presented evidence that challenges the realist proposition. Studies in human rights area shows no form of evidence that NGOs were forced to convince strong states in order to influence international affairs. Furthermore, in the case of international treaty banning landmines, civil society groups succeeded even though several great powers opposed against it, among them United State (Risse.2002).

There is however, in contrary to the neorrealist position, a growing consensus among scholars indicating that NGOs are via their influence on international organizations contributing to and reshaping global governance through causal knowledge and norm construction. (Boli and Thomas.1999; Steffek. Kissling Nanz (edt).2008;). Norms matter in international politics because they reflect on actual patterns of behavior and give rise to expectations, prescribing a certain action for a certain situation. These prescriptions are followed by an attitude of common criticism when a particular norm is being violated, hence as Hurrell describes it, “(norms) carry a sense of obligation, a sense that they ought to be followed” (Hurrell.2002:143).

International organizations provide arenas and forums that enable civil society groups to interact with nation-states. Although far from uniform, many international organizations rely on NGOs assistance regarding consultative matters and implementing agreements. While some organization such as the UN or the EU has offered mechanism for transnational participation, other organizations such as NATO and the G8 summits has remained completely closed to transnational actors. The OECD which is the subject of analysis for this study can in many ways be placed as something in between these two extremes (Steffek and Nanz.2008). However, it is
important to distinguish the difference between participation and influence. International organizations providing NGOs forums where their activities are allowed to flourish does not necessarily constitute influence (Risse, 2002). The influence of civil society groups as this study argues depends substantially on how the NGOs are able to frame their claims to get a broader support and the political context which they are embedded in.

1.3 NGOs and International Development

The role of NGOs in international aid and development matters has been dynamic and contested. The view of governments regarding the role of NGOs and the perception of NGOs regarding their own role has not always been uniform. Until the 1970s, governments took NGOs most seriously for their emergency efforts. Their ability to quickly organize and reach out to affected areas was regarded as a valuable source in matters of emergency and disasters. However by the mid 1980s, NGOs were getting further attention and supports from governments. Their ability to organize and mobilize communities and their nature as citizen based organizations was recognized as a basis for better governance and democracy building, especially in fragile states where social justice is threatened. NGOs however view themselves in different ways. They do not perceive themselves as merely instruments in development programs, but rather as development actors in their own right. They perceive themselves as self providers with the ability to raise money, organize, coordinate and monitor development programs. (Smillie, 1999)

The divergence of perception regarding the role of civil society groups has often generated a negligence feeling among NGOs, feeling that their voice is often neglected in high level forums. Although the 1990s and the following years of the new millennium disbursed more attention to the work and strengths of civil society groups, the search for a formal recognition as development actors in their own right is yet not over (Smillie, 1999).

The high level forum (HLF) in Paris 2005, where the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness was signed by both donor and recipient countries, indicated that NGOs still had not reached that level of recognition, as there was no vote or formal endorsements by NGOs. Three years later, in the follow up meeting of the Paris declaration in Accra, Kenya 2008, NGOs had succeeded in receiving a wider recognition by both donor and recipient government². The empirical focus of this study will thus be on the time from the signing of the Paris declaration to the third HLF in Accra.

² The Paris declaration and NGOs efforts to influence the follow up HLF in Accra is discussed more extensively in chapter 4.
1.4 The Purpose of the Study

With regards to the aforementioned introduction, the specific aim of this study is to explain **how and under what conditions NGOs were able to influence the agenda-setting of OECD’s development policies**. To facilitate this problem the research employs conceptual tools from social movement literatures, consistent of framing processes and political opportunities and agenda-setting literatures. The paper argues that the influence of civil society groups in the work of the OECD is the result of the interaction between strategic issue framing and political opportunity that are created for them.

Therefore in order to understand how NGOs influence the agendas of international organizations, we need to acknowledge how these involved actors produce their frames. Moreover, whether these frames evidently advance to the agenda of the OECD depends largely on the political environment. In a constructivist tradition this approach will illustrate that NGOs claims and issue framings are the result of social constructed problems. How and under what conditions these frames will be recognized as legitimate, depends on the dynamic political opportunity structure which the NGOs are embedded in. Furthermore this research will highlight that NGOs are not static “common good” contributors, quite the opposite, they engage in the processes of issue framing in a strategically calculating matter in order to create alignment and generate a broader public support.

1.5 Research questions

The main questions raised in this research are as follows:

- How did NGOs frame their development and aid claims in order to engage the agenda of the OECD?

- Through what political opportunities were the NGOs able to raise their frames to the OECD?

By addressing the above mentioned questions the study will be able to acknowledge civil society groups participation in the OECD and how they define the agenda of the organization. The first question conceptualizes the general engagement of the NGOs, how they engage in the production of meaning and frame their problems and solution, consequently building coalition and generate greater mobilization. The second question focuses on the political and institutional environment in which the NGOs
were embedded in, examining the opportunities that evidently made it possible for NGOs to raise their formulated frames to the OECD.
2 Theoretical Framework

The following chapter introduces the theoretical framework that is one of the fundamental elements of this study. The chapter begins with a discussion of how to define NGOs and, more importantly, how to define their influences through agenda-setting. Thereafter are the theories of Framing processes and Political opportunities presented. By linking these theories together an analytical instrument is formed which is used to meet the purpose of the study.

2.1 Assessing the Influence of NGOs

In considering whether NGOs matter in global politics, it becomes evident to establish a vivid understanding of the term influence and to clearly define what an NGO is. Without having a defined understanding of influence analyst is left without any guidance as to what type of evidence should be collected. More importantly the validity of the research can be challenged due to the research’s gap in explaining whether the evidence actually is measuring influence. The implication of clearly defining what is meant by influence is therefore a pivotal necessity for the validity of the research. Progress in our understanding of the influence of NGOs in OECD’s development agenda depends therefore on careful identification of what this research means with NGO influence.

2.1.1 What are NGOs?

Academics and practitioners use the term NGO to refer to a vast range of organizations that are not bound to any government or state. Several scholars have differentiated NGOs in terms of activities and issue areas, for example solely focusing on organizations that are involved in environmental and ecological issues or human rights questions (Betsill & Corell.2008; Joachim.2007). Additionally, other scholars have distinguished them in terms of their geographical scope, specifically examining international NGOs or domestic grassroots organizations (Boli & Thomas.1999). Other categorizations have been to distinguish NGOs by their internal structure, dividing NGOs to formal organizations and “loose networks” (Risse.2002).

In this research, the term “NGO” (occasionally referred to as civil society groups in this study) refers to a broad range of actors covering advocacy groups rooted in the civil society, (1) that is not formed by governmental or intergovernmental agreements, (2) expresses opinions and claims that are independent of national governments, and (3) has interest and expertise in the matters of the OECD (Betsill &
This broad inclusion of the term NGO is suitable for the purpose of this research as it distinguishes NGOs from state actors.

2.1.2 Agenda-setting as Influence

Although being one of the fundamental concepts in the fields of political science, the definition of influence has traditionally been very contentious, mainly due to its linkage to the concept of power. In their classical study of influence, Cox and Jacobson (1973) distinguished these two concepts in an elegant manner. They defined power as; “the aggregate of political resources available to an actor” (Cox & Jacobson. 1973: 4).

Consequently, influence was defined as the “modification of one actor’s behavior by that of another” (Cox 6 Jacobson. 1974: 3). Hence, power is defined as the capabilities of the actor to influence another actor. As such, the interaction of power does not necessarily lead to the exercise of influence (Betsill & Corell. 2008). In their study regarding the influence of NGOs in environmental questions, Betsill and Corell define influence as following; “when one actor intentionally communicates to another so as to alter the latter’s behavior from what would have occurred otherwise” (Betsill & Corell. 2008:24).

This research builds on the same definition as Betsill & Corell (2008), mainly that NGOs achieve an indirect “effect” by intentionally “manipulating” the policymakers. By defining influence as such, we can start investigating how the participation of NGOs is transferred to influence. However in the intergovernmental structure of IO bodies the decisive authority is exercised by member-states while the non-members more often than not fulfill a consultative mandate. Thus, seeming as NGOs do not have any voting authority in nearly all of the international organization, studies have constitutently verified that the strength of the civil society is rooted within their capacity to raise an issue to the agenda of international organizations (Joachim.2007; Joachim & Leachner. 2009; Risse.2002; Steffek, Kissling & Nanz.2008; Willetts.1998).

The structure of the OECD is no exception from other IOs. The established institutional rules of the OECD dictates that only member states have the formal decision making power, thus giving NGOs no voting authority (OECD.1960). This actuality generates evidently an extremely limited possibility for civil society groups to participate in the actual decision procedures. Thereby, this research will conceptualize how NGOs influence the content of OECD’s agenda regarding development issues.
2.1.3 Agenda Formation

Agenda formation in IOs is the first step to the emergence of new norms. The agenda of IOs has a “collective legitimization” function, signaling to member-state which actions that are appropriate in global politics and which are not. Consequently giving support to domestic active NGOs to exert pressure on governments to either follow through with their international commitments, or shaming their politics by highlighting the gap between international agreements and their practices. This form of externalization of claims which is often referred to as the “boomerang effect”, (Keck & Sikkink. 1998) becomes an important tool for weak domestic actors in order to make their grievance heard. Thus, a reason why NGOs find agenda-setting salient rests on the backing of the international community which gives weight to the demands of an otherwise insufficient resourced actor at the domestic level (Joachim. 2007; Tarrow. 2006).

According to Risse (2002) the fact that NGOs are primarily active within the agenda formation of global politics is not surprising as they provide moral authority. By representing the voice of the people, NGOs become the natural source for generating new agendas. Although not as impactful as decision-making, agenda formation is nevertheless politically salient as it is a gateway for what that evidently turns global norms and politics. Finally it is evident to note that agendas do not just simply exist out there, rather they are the result of social constructions, created through a dynamic political process. This study uses the “garbage can” model developed by Cohen, March and Olson (1972) to seize how agendas evolve.

According to the model agendas evoke from four independent processes; problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunity. Problems are the condition when individuals find a situation or issue intolerable and require a change from the decision makers. Solutions are answers that are independent from the problem. As Cohen, March and Olson notes, in many cases solutions are formulated even before the problem has been identified. Participants drift in and out depending on the problem and the solution. Participants’ may have a problem or a solution that they are specifically interested in, and they might carry it around with them until they find others that can assist them to either resolve the problem or develop the solution. Finally, choice opportunities are moments when an opening is created for a change to occur, often as a consequence of changes in the political climate, political discourse or unexpected events (Cohen et al. 1972).

These processes exist independently from one other. However at a various point these processes randomly interact and couple, evidently forming new agendas. In summary, agendas are the function of a particular mix of “garbage”, determined by; the problems that individuals are concerned with, the solutions that are proposed, and who that participates. The strength in the “garbage can model” is that it captures the
interaction between actors and the structural settings changes that are crucial for a change to arise (Cohen et al. 1972). In this study NGOs are identified as “participants” as they exert their influence by framing problems and solutions. However, being rational actors, NGOs frame their problems and solutions in a strategic manner in order to seize the choice opportunity.

With the clarity of “influence” and “agenda-setting” as a way of influence established, we now turn to the analytical model that is conducted in this research. The analytical model which through it the empirical material will be assessed is formed by “Framing processes” and “Political opportunity theory”. The two theories will be conducted in order to meet the purpose of the study.

2.2 Linking Framing Processes and Political Opportunity

The employment of framing processes and political opportunity theory will illuminate how and under what conditions NGOs were able to influence the agenda of the OECD in matters concerning development and aid. By linking framing processes and political opportunities together this research will be able to create a strong analytical tool that captures the dynamics of NGOs attempt to influence IO, thus yielding a greater understanding for subject. The functions of framing processes will acknowledge how civil society groups framed their grievances and claims and how they succeeded to expand and mobilize a broader public.

However, the structure of political opportunity will explain the conditions that the NGOs were able to influence the OECD. It is thus important to note that this triangulation of theories should not be regarded as competing, but rather as completing. Hence, while framing processes encourages mobilization and makes people act on their growing awareness of the vulnerability of the system, the outcome concerning the legitimization of these frames are conditioned by the political opportunity. The following text will further discuss the two theories in regards to the subject of this study.

2.3 Framing Process in Social Science

Although derived primarily by the work of Goffman (1974) it was nonetheless in the mid 1980s that the theory of framing processes proliferated in social science scholars as researchers turned their focus to the production of mobilizing ideas and values. The
theory has become relevant in answering questions regarding social movements, mobilizations and identity creations (Entman.1993; Johnston & Snow.1998; Snow et al. 1986). Framing processes emphasize on the actors’ subjectivity and reality interpretation in order to acknowledge how activism occurs, how it is extended and how it is externalized across borders. Furthermore, the theory aims to provide an explanation of how movement claims and grievances are negotiated and sustained in the political cycle (Benford & Snow.2000). It is thus an active process engaged in the production of meaning for its participants, observers and antagonists. The strength of the theory is that it generates the possibility for the researcher to capture the process of how certain claims and grievances in social movements are facilitated and mobilized.

The verb *framing* denotes an active evolving process, involving interpretation of reality and the construction of new frames that challenges the existing frames. Meanwhile the term *process* refers to the evolving activities of identifying problems and evidently asserting certain solution to identified problems (Benford & Snow.2000).

### 2.4 Framing and Social Movement Strategies

Social movements employ collective action frames as a way to gain support and mobilization for their claims and grievance. Frames can thus be defined as a system of interpretation that enables movements to “locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large” (Snow et al.1986:464).

Its process refers to the “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimates and motivates collective actions” (McAdam, McCarthy, Zald. 1996:6) It is thus an intersubjective process, belonging to the receivers’ knowledge of the world. NGOs formulate collective action frames that call attention to particular aspects of reality, which logically means that frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects. Movements that engage in constructing a particular frame will consciously construct a point of view that promotes others to interpret the fact of a given situation in accordance to their interpretation of it. Hence, by forming a certain frame, NGOs selects some aspects of reality and make them more salient then others (Entman.1993).

Furthermore, framing processes highlights that social movements are not merely carriers of mobilizing ideas that are raised within the existing structural arrangements. They shall rather be considered as “significant agents”, engaged in the production of meaning. They seek to consciously and deliberatively interpret conditions to gain and mobilize support. Social movements construct meanings in a strategic approach in
order to mobilize potential adherents, gain more allies and demobilize antagonists (Benford & Snow.2000).

In its strategic functions collective action frames are constituted by three independent processes, namely diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing processes. Diagnostic framing corresponds to the recognition of a certain condition that is considered as unacceptable, hence identifying a problem. Rather than individual blaming, the condition is identified as a structural failure that needs to be changed. Meanwhile, prognostic framing involves the identifications of possible approaches and strategies to mobilize action among participants, thus offering a solution. Finally motivational framing refers to the motivations for acting against the certain condition. It provides the rationale and justification for why movements should engage in collective action against a particular issue. These processes and their usage as an analytical tool in this study will be more thoroughly discussed in the next section.

Although these processes exist independently from each other it is important to note that evolvement of a frame is not an automatic process. It is rather a dynamic process involving multiple actors, determined by negotiation and consensus mobilizations. The construction of a certain frame occurs in a variety of arenas. Movements enter debates with countermovement’s in order to contest their claims and gain further support (McAdam et al. 1996). Action frames that resonate with a wide range of actors and across a variety of cultural contexts are called master frames (Joachim. 2009).

The three abovementioned processes are thus complemented by the formation of master frames. In general the more comprehensive and flexible frames are, the more likely they are to evolve into master frame (Benford.1997; Benford & Snow. 2000). Master frames induces consensus and enables movements to surmount their ideological differences, hence creating a stronger pillar for the legitimization of the frame. The following text pays a deeper attention to the three above mentioned processes, together with discussion regarding the elements of master framing.

2.4.1 Diagnostic Framing

Social problems are the results of individuals’ interpretations. Before any claim or grievance is framed it has to be recognized by individuals. Consequently, social problems are of subjective nature and therefore exist only to the extent that certain issues are interpreted and recognized as such by individuals. Furthermore, the process of diagnostic framing necessitates a movement away from individual blaming and towards a system critical blaming, holding the existing structural conditions responsible for the deprivation. A concrete example of such scale movement is as described by Joachim (2007) the rapid spread of AIDS in African countries. Initially attributed as an irresponsible act of gay men and use of narcotics, the problem with
the spread of AIDS is now increasingly understood in socioeconomic terms, related to
poverty and underdevelopment (Joachim.2007).

Diagnosing a problem ought to identify the actors who are entitled to have an opinion
of it, and identifying those responsible for it. For this research it is therefore evident
to capture, (1) when the process of problem identification started and, (2) how NGOs
succeeded in formulating joint problems.

2.4.2 Prognostic Framing

Prognostic framing involves the formation of solutions to a certain problem. Prognostic
framing also refers to the strategy NGOs choose to employ, whether they
want to work within the institutional formal frameworks such as through lobbying or
meetings, or through “voice strategies”, such as demonstrations or sit-ins. It is
however important to note that prognostic framings takes place in a multi-
organizational environment. Consequently it is during prognostic framing activities
that NGOs differ from one another. When a problem is constructed, there is not
necessarily a clear consensus regarding the strategy to attack the problem as some
actors might act as opponents (Benford & Snow. 2000).

Prognostic framing process is therefore constituted by several actors whom all have
different interests. Hence, it is not a surprise that this phase of framing processes
often includes refutations of the logic and efficiency, as actors might advocate for
their own interests and remedies (Benford & Snow. 2000). The matter of importance
for this research is to address how and when NGOs formulated their joint solution in
order to tackle the identified problems.

2.4.3 Motivational Framing

Motivational framing provides a rationale behind the engagement of a collective
action. It generates a reason or a motive for why people should take action according
to the particular claim. They can be framed either on normative or moral grounds
depending of the organization and the issue. Human rights organizations might for
example invoke the human rights declaration when they are fighting against political
prisoners granting individuals freedom independent from their political or religious
orientation (Walgrave & Manssen. 2005).

Likewise, NGOs engaged in developing issues might justify their demands
concerning aid from Western countries by invoking to social justice. Motivational
framings can also be formulated more catastrophic; for example NGOs involved with
the nuclear disbarment issues might refer to apocalyptic possibilities as a result of
nuclear confrontation (Joachim.2007). It should however be noted that the boundaries
for prognostic framing and motivational framing are sometimes very hard to
distinguish. The empirical analysis will therefore not feature this distinction. The
analysis of the motivational framing is integrated with the section that analyzes the
prognostic framing.

2.4.4 Master Frames

The evolving of master frames is constituted through the process of frame alignment
with the purpose to internationalize a domestic claim (Benford & Snow. 2000;
Tarrow 2005) Movements seek actively to connect and align their claims with those
of relevant publics in order to reach out to a broader public. The core function of
master frames is that it enables movements to put aside their differences in interests
and ideologies. By using social networks and political opportunities, movements seek
to boost their claims and campaigns to a broader public. The linkage of two or more
matching but structurally unconnected frames generates a greater moralization, thus
making the frame more dominant and lifting it from micro to macro level (Benford &
Snow. 2000). By addressing the three above mentioned processes this research will be
able to understand how NGOs transferred their claims and grievances into master
frames, and consequently how they succeeded to mobilize their cause.

However, whether the master frames developed by NGOs ultimately become
accepted and legitimized is contingent primarily to the political environment which
the NGOs are embedded. Hence only acknowledging the framing of NGOs will be
insufficient. In order to vividly understand how certain frames are accepted in the
agenda of OECD’s development committee, we have to conceptualize the political
environment which NGOs are embedded. The upcoming section will therefore focus
on the political opportunity theory and how it will be employed in this research.
Figure 1. Summary of framing processes

Framing Processes

- Diagnostic Framing
- Prognostic Framing
- Motivational Framing

Externalization & Transformation
Movements boosting their claims to seek a broad support

Frame alignment
Diagnostic, Prognostic and Motivational framing. Finding new allies

Master frames
Frames that resonate with a wide range of actors and across a variety of cultural contexts
2.5 Political Opportunity Theory

The political opportunity concept is a theory within social movement scholars which aims to understand the structure of political opportunity and constrains confronting social movements. The core aim of the theory is to map the opportunities and constrains that the broader political systems generates for social movements. The theory was developed among others by Eisinger (1973), Tilly (1978) and Tarrow (1998) for the mobilization of social movements. It was developed as a criticism against the lack of attention for the political environment of mobilization theories (McAdam et al. 1996). In contrary to the traditional strong focus of internal factors within the movements, political theory emphasizes on the exogenous factors, arguing that social movement activities can be explained through the context which activists are confronted with. The authors established a link between institutionalized politics and social movements, defining political opportunities as the degree which social movements were likely to gain access to the political system and manipulate it (ibid.1996).

The theory was firstly asserted for domestic level, however it involves features that also make it suitable to employ at an international level (Koopmans. 2007). The general argument of the theory is that the broad political environment which social movements are embedded constitutes a set of opportunities and/or constrains that evidently affected the movement’s development (McAdam et al. 1996). As defined by Meyer and Minkoff in their paper regarding the practice of the theory; “The basic premise is that exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization, for particular sorts of claims to be advanced rather than others, for particular strategies of influence to be exercised, and for movements to affect mainstream institutional politics and policy” (Meyer & Minkoff. 2004:2).

Thus, the explanatory premise of the theory stresses that conventional political activities and protest outside of conventional political activities, such as social movements, are closely related. In order to clearly acknowledge the mobilization of social movements it becomes evident to not only understand how they frame their claims, but also the external political opportunities and constrains that they face. The political environment, in which the social movements are ingrained in, is essential for the fortune of their mobilization. It creates opportunities and constrains for social movements to legitimize their claims (Meyer & Minkoff. 2004). Political opportunities are often generated when a change of alignment or a structural transformation occurs.

The theory has several strengths which makes it suitable for this research. Firstly, the theory is broadly defined. It is compromised by both formal and informal elements. Formal elements involve elements such as participation rules and voting system.
Meanwhile informal elements capture the impact of norms, discourses, common practices and institutional culture. Secondly, the concept of political opportunity considers the context which NGOs are embedded as dynamic rather than a static context. The formal and informal elements are all changeable over time, making it visible to acknowledge when and under what conditions systematic factors matter.

Consequently, the Achilles heel of the theory is within its strength. The broad ranges of variables have also been the main source of critic for the theory. If conceptualized too broadly the theory will lose its explanatory value. As Zald (1996) states, the problem with political opportunity is that analysts use it to serve a variety of functions, defining the analytical tool accordingly. The challenge of political opportunity is therefore to acknowledge which exogenous factors that affect social movements (Meyer & Minkoff. 2004). It is therefore evident for analytical clarity to pay more attention to questions of operationalization and to the specification of the analytical model. The following section will therefore define how the analytical framework of political opportunity theory has been developed and used for this research.

2.5.1 Specifying the Analytical Instrument for Political Opportunity

Mindful of the problem with broad and irrelevant variables, this research has delimited its analytical model to two variables; access to institutions and political alignment. These two variables have in several studies (e.g McAdam et al. 1996; Joachim & Locher. 2009) been identified as the most pivotal variables in political opportunity theory. McAdam (1996) states that defining the analytical tool too broadly will deprive the analytical value of the research. A narrow definition of political opportunity will generate the possibility to better acknowledge the relevant factors for a movement’s fortune. Access to institutions and political alignment will thus serve as analytical tools in the employment of political opportunity theory in this research. The following test is a schematic presentation regarding the usage of the variables.

Access to institutions emphasizes on the relative openness or closure of the institution. It attributes the formal and legal framework which the organization is regulated by. As Joachim and Locher (2009) state, in general, the more open the political system of the institution is the more possibilities are there for the NGOs to influence the agenda setting. Access points to institutional buildings, regular committees, workshops and official documents are evident for NGOs in order to be able to raise their claims and grievances. Without access to institutions introducing new issues and making their claimed understood would be very difficult for NGOs. It is therefore evident to acknowledge the access NGOs have to the different institutional bodies of the organizations. Furthermore the level of access to institutions is also affected by norm and discourses that surround the institutions. As
Joachim and Locher state, institutional discourses generate beliefs among the members of the institution regarding how politics should be conducted, acting as a gatekeeper for the organization (Joachim & Locher. 2009). Changes within the institutions discourses and norm can thus change the level of NGOs access to the institution.

This research will therefore focus on what access NGOs had to the OECD and how their participation was regulated. Traditionally the OECD has been regarded as a confidential organization restricted to relatively wealthy states. However, during late 1990s the organizations changed its internal discourse towards a more inclusive and cooperative engagement with civil society groups (Woodward.2009). Although the NGOs do not have any formal membership in the OECD, the restructuring changes that the OECD underwent during 1990s have nevertheless generated an interesting environment to study the influence of NGOs.

The second variable, political alignment, can take many dimensions, depending on the subject of research. This study however focuses on NGOs relationship with member-states in OECD development committee, DAC. Influential allies can further facilitate NGOs mobilization and enhance their cause. Moreover, influential allies can provide access to the institution which the movements seek to influence and increase their credibility. However, alignment with government does not always generate fortune for movements, instead it might compose constraints on NGOs (McAadam et al. 1996). The support of governments may prevent others from supporting the claims of the NGOs or may result to undesired consequences for movements. Many of DAC’s members work separately with aid and development issues through their own governmental development agencies, such as the Swedish, SIDA or the Canadian, CIDA. Through their everyday work these agencies have established relations with NGOs. As active and influential actors in DAC these members play an evident role in the agenda-setting of DAC. Investigating the relationship between some of DAC member-states and their relationship with NGOs is therefore evident in order to understand the political opportunities that were generated for NGOs.

Together these two dimensions will generate an analytical tool for understanding the political opportunities that were created for NGOs to influence the agenda of the OECD concerning development issues.

2.6 Summary of the Analytical instruments

The triangulation of framing process and political opportunity theory will generate the possibility to examine both the internal factors that mobilized the NGOs, and the external conditions that made it possible for the NGOs to raise their points and
objectives to the OECD, thus generating a proper tool for analyzing how NGOs were able to influence the agenda of OECD’s regarding development and aid issues. It is important to not regard these two theories as competing but rather as completing. Framing processes encourages mobilization as NGOs act on their growing awareness of the systems absences and vulnerabilities. However mobilization solely does not lead to influence, nor does political opportunity prerequisite action. These processes although in their nature two independent processes, must however be understood together in order to sufficiently understand the influences of NGOs. The following figure will summarises the analytical framework for this research.

*Figure. 2 Summary of the analytical instruments*

![Figure. 2 Summary of the analytical instruments](image-url)

Agenda of DAC

Political Opportunity

Access to the OECD
- Openness or closure of the institution
- Access points to institutional building, regular committees, workshops and official documents

Political Alignment
- Member-states in DAC. Their relationship with NGOs
- Increase the credibility of NGOs and enhance their causes.

Framing Processes

Master Frames
- Frames that resonate with a wide range of actors and across a variety of cultural contexts

Diagnostic framing
- Recognition of a problem. Moving from individual blaming and towards a system critical blaming.

Prognostic framing
- Formulation of a solution to a problem. Choice of strategy to tackle the problem

Motivational framing
- Rationale behind the engagement of a collective action.
3 Method and Research Design

The following chapter will present the methodological implications of this research. Sharing the traditional outline of what, why and how, this chapter is initiated by a discussion concerning the choice of the subject followed by a presentation of the research strategy of the study. This is continued by a discussion regarding the epistemological stance of this study and the method used in order to investigate the gathered data. The chapter finishes with a discussion regarding validity, reliability and the delimitations of the research.

3.1 Choice of Subject

The field of international relations has in academia traditionally been dominated by a state-centric perspective. However, scholars agree that the proliferation of NGOs with transnational agenda has indeed had an influence on international organizations (Boli & Thomas. 1999). The influence of NGOs however, has been insufficiently theorized, creating a gap in the fields of international relations.

Furthermore, in studies were attempts have been made to fill this gap, the primary focus has been on human right activism or environmental issues, consequently leaving other areas in gloom. Therefore, steering the attention on an international organization whose primary focus is on socio-economical issues will further enhance the knowledge regarding NGOs in international relations. Furthermore, the OECD has traditionally been depicted as a secretive organization exclusive for wealthy states, with the objective of promoting liberal policies (Woodward. 2009).

However during the 1990s the organizations went through several strategically structural changes, making the organization more open towards NGOs and non-member organizations. Consequently, due to its restructuring and transformations during the 1990s the OECD is currently regarded as one of the most accountable performers among IOs (Blagescu & Lloyd. 2006). These “structural” changes which generated openness towards NGOs creates yet another basis for why the OECD is an attractive subject for analyze.
3.2 Research Design- Case Study

A research strategy can simply be explained as a blueprint for the research. The research strategy constructs a framework for the entire study, affecting what questions to study, how the study is conducted, and how to collect and analyze the data depending on what kind of strategy the researcher applies (Silverman.2005). In order to decide the relevant research strategy for the study, one has to consider and identify different situations. According to Yin, when considering which research strategy to apply for ones study, the aware researcher most consider three conditions, (1) the type of research question, (2) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and finally (3) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (Yin.2003:5).

With regards to Yins three conditions, this study is conducted as a case study. The use of a proper research strategy ought to be derived from the study’s research questions. Notably a case study is most likely to be conducted when the study has an explanatory purpose, driven from “how” and “why” questions, making it possible to get a profound understanding and go deeper in the specific subject (Yin.2003).

In accordance to the mentioned research question, case study proves to be most suitable for this study since the research has a explanatory value and is conducted by “how” questions. Furthermore, a case study seems most appropriate as it generates a holistic and descriptive picture of social mobilization and identifies the specific contextual element within the OECD. In summary, generating a massive amount of data, the case study strategy constructs a dependable blueprint for a profound and compelling research in respect to the specific questions raised in this study.

3.3 Theory of Science

This research takes the constructivist epistemology stance developed in the discipline of IR. The core element in constructivism is that reality is socially constructed and is therefore contingent of history and social interactions. We belong to history in the sense that we inherit its experiences. Factors such as experiences and traditions does not lock actors to the past, it characterizes the present and redefines the future (Adler.2002). Thus, the international society is continually being produced and reproduced by both state and non state actors (Hjelmar.1996).

Through its consideration on non state actors, the constructivist epistemology distances itself from the traditional state-centric perspective in international. Instead it highlights the importance of actors such as NGOs and IOs for their ability to
construct and deconstruct norms. Norms are regarded as prescriptions for actions and standards. It is through the dynamic process of norm construction that identities are shaped and reshaped (Hurrell.2002). Actors in the international arena may be utility seeking agents, however, their interests is continuously redefined in relation to their identities. In such construction, the knowledge of identity becomes evident as it both defines the actor and sets its preferences. Hence, it is the identity of actors that implies their consequent actions, which is evidently constructed and reconstructed by current norms (Hopf. 1998). Constructivism rejects the positivist claim that reality is objective and given. Nor is reality an unchangeable element. It is rather constantly reshaped during the event of time, formed by ongoing processes of social interactions and history (Zehfuss.2002). Due to its interpretation of reality as the result of subjective understandings, issues such as framing, idea mobilization and political opportunity becomes important sources for the acknowledgment of “reality”.

3.4 Methodological Implications

The research is conducted in qualitative research traditions. The methodological implications of a research are closely related with the formulation of a research problem (Flick). The determination of the research method is therefore derived from the identification of the research problem and specific research questions. In order to develop a sufficient analysis on NGOs influence this study has employed process tracing method. The method is conducted on single case studies in order to study causality, the relation between a causes and effects. Process tracing is best described as “detective work” where data is gathered, investigated and evidently put together in sequences in order to generate a clear explanation of a certain outcome (Bennett & George.1997). In order to adequately follow the declared objectives of this research, process tracing proved to be the most suitable method. The method enables the analytical instruments of this research to understand what causes (NGO actions and opportunities) that evidently led to a certain outcome (influence on the agenda setting of the OECD).

The general application of process tracing is to generate and to analyze data on processes and actions that link supposed causes to observed effects. By tracing potential processes the researcher is able to narrow the list of potential causes, hence acknowledging the mechanisms behind a certain outcome. In their famous domino metaphor, Bennett and George state that the observer is able to understand the fall of the dominos by mapping out potential causal paths evidently led to certain outcome (Bennett & George.1997).
In this research an analytical instrument composed of framing processes and political opportunity theory is developed to analyse the gathered data in order highlight the particular causes that evidently led to the studied outcome.

The establishment of a clear link between a certain cause (NGO actions) and a certain outcome (influence on the agenda-setting of the OECD) is one of the main methodological difficulties encountered in this study. Furthermore, processes that might at first glance fit the evidence even though they are not causal for the outcome produce false premises. In order to avoid such pitfalls, an operationalization of the analytical model is evident. This also accounts for the concept of influence. In order to gain acknowledgment of NGOs influence, one is required to firstly make the concept of influence “measurable”, evidently defining what that is considered as influence.

The analytical framework is derived from social movement literatures and agenda-setting literatures. The definition of agenda-setting in the OECD derives from previous studies regarding the structure of agenda-setting (e.g Cobb & Elder. 1972; Joachim. 2007). Agenda-setting is thus defined as issues that are actively or/and seriously discussed in at least one of the three bodies of the OECD³. It is however not possible to examine the influence of NGOs in all agendas. In order to conduct a fruitful analysis one has to narrow its research on a specific agenda. As recognized earlier, this study aims to understand the influence of NGOs in development issues. The primary focus will therefore be on the agenda of DAC, which is OECD’s development committee. The definition of the concept of influence for this research has been discussed in the former chapter. This chapter will instead focus on how influence is measured in this study. Influence is measured by how successful NGOs are in raising their frames to the agenda of DAC.

Regarding the linkage between agenda-setting and influence, this research finds it foundation in earlier studies which have stated the importance of agenda setting for the construction and reconstruction of norms (e.g. Joachim.2007; Joachim & Leachner. 2009; Risse. 2002; Steffek, Kissling & Nanz. 2008; Willetts. 1998). Although arguably not as impactful as decision making, agenda-setting is nevertheless politically salient. According to Porter and Webb the agenda of OECD defines what actions member states ought to engage in (Porter and Webb. 2008).

The analytical instruments are constituted by framing processes and political opportunity theory. The analytical instruments are developed in order to make it possible to trace the processes that evidently led to the outcome which this research aims to acknowledge. Framing processes will thus illuminate how NGOs engage in

³ The three bodies of the OECD is the Council, the committees and the secretariat. The structure of the OECD is discussed more thoroughly in chapter 4.
the production of meaning, how the identify problem and solutions, which evidently leads to action. Political opportunity will acknowledge how these frame where legitimized and evidently reach the agenda of the OECD. Together these two theories will in accordance to the process tracing method create a powerful analytical instrument that explains how and under what condition certain actions led to a specific outcome.

3.5 Material

Given the extensive yet detailed analytical inquiry that characterises process tracing, there is a great demand on the empirical material. The aim of this research has been to employ several sources. As discussed above, the empirical material is evident for the outcome of the research as it determines the fortune of process tracing. The empirical data is collected through literature review from primary and secondary sources. In order to obtain correct material, before using any of the material they were analyzed in accordance to Esiasson et al (2007) four source evaluation rules, constituted of authenticity, tendency, credibility and concurrency to determine their quality and relevance for this research.

The primary sources consist of NGO and OECD draft papers and guidelines, meeting documents from high level meetings, forums and published materials regarding the subject in question. Secondary sources consist of literature and researches regarding the OECD in general, its structure and relations towards non-members, and its contribution in the fields of international development. The analytical framework is derived from previous academic studies from social movement and agenda-setting literature.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

In order to achieve a reliable result, it is important to proceed mindfully in regards to the validity and reliability of the research. Together these two notions create the conditions for a reliable research. Validity is defined as the condition where there is concordance between the study's theoretical definitions and the operational indicators, meaning that we actually are measuring what we claim we are measuring by creating the proper analytical tools (Flick.2006) It is therefore salient that the validity pervades the entire research. Specific for this research, there are a set of challenges, in addition to the issues discussed earlier, that has to be plainly considered in order to conduct a trustworthy research.
The first step in collecting proper data is by formulating proper research questions, thus the first phase in the quest of fulfilling the aim of the research is to formulate appropriate questions. The research questions for this study have therefore been formulated by a great deal of consideration in respect to the aim of the study.

A second challenge for achieving high validity is the theoretical definition of key notions used in the research. Notions such as NGO, influence, and agenda setting have been carefully defined in previous chapters, as well as the composition of the analytical framework in order to reduce possible misinterpretations and misguidance. Furthermore, as a final validity challenge, it is evident to demarcate the relationship between the evidence found through framing processes and the evidence found political opportunity theories. One might consider to what extend the analyses presented through framing processes is correlated to the analyzed variables in political opportunity structures. Mindful of the theoretical challenges, this study has deliberatively used same variables as previous reliable studies in social movements’ scholars (e.g Joachim.2007; Joachim and Locher.2009) in order to demarcate the correlation between framing processes and political opportunity

3.7 Delimitation

As mentioned in the introductory chapter the aim of this research is to highlight the influence of NGOs in the agenda setting of the OECD. However, it is important to note that the OECD is one of the largest IO and its professional concern covers a multiplicity of fields (see chapter 4). In order to be able to thoroughly fulfill the aim of this research, this study has deliberatively chosen to focus on one aspect of OECD’s many areas, mainly development. Furthermore, the organization has been working with development issues since its creations days in the 1960s. Therefore, time delimitation is evident in order to properly conduct this research. This research will therefore focus on NGOs activities to influence the agenda of OECD from the formation of the Paris declaration in the second HLF, 2005 to the third HLF in Accra (see chapter 4). The empirical focus has deliberatively been on the time after OECD restructuring towards a more open relationship with non-members.
3.8 Summary of the analytical model

Figure 3. Summary of the research’s analytical model.

Research questions
- How did NGOs frame their development and aid claims in order to engage the agenda of the OECD?
- Through what political opportunities were the NGOs able to raise their frames to the OECD?

Method
Process Tracing

Empirical Focus
Data gathering and processing

Political Opportunity

Analysis
- Defining the problem,
- Solution finding
- Problematization

Conclusion
4 Contextual Background

The following chapter will present the empirical body of the study. Composed by gathered data from primary and secondary sources the chapter is divided in two parts. The first part presents the structure of OECD and the internal changes that the OECD underwent during the 1990s. The second part discusses the relations between NGOs and the OECD’s development committee in relations to the high level forums concerning international development that were held in 2005 and 2008. The presented data will evidently serve as background for the analysis of this study.

4.1 The Origin and Development of the OECD

On 20th September 1961 the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development was formed in Paris. Constructed on the institutional foundations of its predecessor, the OEEC which was created in 1948, the OECD became a unique forum where democratic market economy countries could share their experiences and address the social and economical challenges of the ongoing globalization process. Put in place during the Cold War and the “triumph of liberalism” the organization was similar to the World Trade Organization designed for specific political reasons, mainly consolidate a market economy system in European countries and act as means against Soviet expansionism (Woodward.2009). It is one of the largest international organizations with policy areas covering economics, environment, education and development. The organizations internal discourse has often been regarded as dominated Anglo-American trained economics, consequently the think tanks of the organization often reflects the trends popularized in those countries universities (Mahon & McBride.2008). The aim of the organization is as stated in Article 1 of the OECD’s convention to promote policies designed;

[…] to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in Member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy; (OECD.1960);

The aim is to be followed by institutionalizing international cooperation between member states, and to some extent when it is appropriate with non member states and civil society groups. This is reached by keeping other members informed and providing the organization with the data and expertise needed in order to accomplish its tasks. Indeed not much of the organizations concerns have altered since the foundation days. The 2006 Ministerial Council Meeting communiqué included “the importance of open markets”, “implementing economical reforms for growth and
Being one of the largest international organizations, the OECD is the working place for approximately 40,000 state officials whom participate in the work of the organizations different committees. In respect to organizational features, the OECD distinguishes itself from other international organizations in several features. The main distinctive features are the organizations restrictive membership, the wide range of activities and concerns of the OECD, and the close working relationship between the organizations staffs and state officials. At the time of writing the organization currently have 30 members in contrast to WTOs 153 members. Furthermore, the organization is formed by a homogenous group of member-states, all market economy countries with relatively high HDI. Moreover the organization has an extensive portfolio of subject areas and professional concerns. In fact, comparing with the responsibility areas government departments have within states, the only areas which the OECD does not cover, is military and defense, sport activities and cultural activities (Porter & Webb. 2008; Woodward. 2009).

The organization policy recommendations are decided through consensus reaching. However, during 2006 a new decision system was introduced which allowed the organization under certain circumstances to take decisions in accordance to qualified majority voting. Using majority voting is however very rare, designated for special cases where consensus cannot be attained. Decisions are therefore foremost taken through clear consensus among the member states (Woodward. 2009).

4.2 OECD and Global Governance

The OECD serves as an institution where countries meet to generate appropriate domestic policies objectives and less as an organization for uncovering international policies (Woodward.2009). The organization fulfills foremost a consultative purpose, a knowledge and idea bank with normative aims which is directly attached to the identity of its members (Nelson.1970). According to Woodward (2004) the OECD fulfills three core functions. Firstly it promotes cooperative solutions to joint problems by offering a forum for policy dialogue. Moreover the organizations consensus decision making generates a strong unanimity among the members. Secondly the OECD collects, analyzes and distributes information.

The organizations expertise has entitled it a highly trustworthy source for statistical data and economical forecasting, supplying both member-states as well as other international organizations with service and foundation. Finally the OECD is regarded as an international standard setter. The organization habitually generates best practice standards which countries should aspire. However the role of OECD as
an international standard setter should not be overstated, after all the organizations
decisions are foremost for its own members, moreover the organizations have no
regulatory function. Although the OECD supervises the implementations of its
guidelines and polices it is not entitled to enforce these “rules”. The organizations
main responsibility is to generate policies and recommendations that the member
states can follow if they want to (Woodward.2004).

Contrasting other international organizations that legislates multilateral binding
treaties, the OECD has no regulatory responsibilities and no money to lend. The
organizations core function is oriented towards outline what policies governments
should pursue and what policies governments should abandon. The organization
rarely negotiates international agreements that have visible benefits for the states, nor
is this the reason why states involve themselves in the work of the OECD (Porter &
Webb. 2008). States involvement in the organization is due to the norms and values
the organization represents. As Porter and Webb argues, the organization “defines
standards of appropriate behavior for states that seek to identify themselves as
modern, liberal, market friendly, and efficient” (Porter & Webb. 2008: 44).

However, as a global “standard setter” the OECD has taken the initiative for high level
meetings and global forums, bringing together ministers and relevant stakeholders.
One of these events initiated by organization is the High Level Forum, HLF, on
international development. The HLFs is prepared by OECD’s development
committee and brings together both recipient and donor governments as well other
stakeholders to coordinate international development policies. As organizers of the
forum, DAC plays an important role in steering the agenda of the HLFs (Odén. 2008).
Before moving on to discuss the complex relationship between DAC and NGOs in
relation to the HLFs a brief presentation of the different bodies of the OECD is
evident. The next section will therefore briefly focus on the internal structure of the
OECD.

4.3 The OECD’s Structure and Functioning

As mentioned earlier although many other actors such as non-member and civil
society groups intrude in the work of the organization, the OECD is foremost an
intergovernmental organization whose member-states are at the rein. Since its
formation, the OECD has expanded geographically (see appendix 1). Formed with
transatlantic origins the organizations spread during the 1960s and 1970s to include
Japan, Australia and New Zealand. During the 1990s the organization welcomed its
first Latin American country, Mexico and during the second half of the 1990s and in
the beginning of the new millennium the OECD received four new European
Republic (2000). The internal structure of the organization is built on a complex
relationship between three main bodies, the Council, the Secretariat and the Committees, along with their respective sub-groups (Woodward. 2004; 2009). The following text is a clarification on the complex labyrinth of the organization and their main responsibilities.

4.3.1 The Council

The Council is the executive chamber of the OECD where collective decisions and the direction of the OECD are decided. The council is composed of representatives from all member states and representative from the European Commission (whom are not entitled to vote). It is the highest decision making body in the OECD, responsible for the overall output of the organizations work. Its duties include decision making, accepting new members and observers and making recommendations for the future priorities of the organization. The Council meets regularly at permanent representative level. Once a year, usually in April-May the Council is held at ministerial level where foreign and finance ministers of member countries meet to address the current economical and trade situation and highlight the areas that the organization should draw further attention to the coming year. The work that is mandated by the Council is carried out by the Secretariat (Woodward. 2009).

4.3.2 Secretariat

The secretariat is an essential nod in the work of the organization. Recruited principally from member state the secretariat furnishes the committees with administrative support, covering statistical data, analysis and proposals. The staff includes a large cadre of professional economist, lawyers and scientists divided in several independent departments whom together form an impartial body that advocates and assistance committees in the preparation of their peer reviews. The head of the secretariat is the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General has the permission to make recommendations to the council about what the secretariat should focus and research about. The secretariat is however foremost a servant of the member state and it is the member states that determine the choice of the subject-matter through council meetings (Woodward. 2009).

4.3.3 Committees

As presented earlier the OECD covers a broad range of issue areas. The organization has a committee for each subject. There are approximately over 200 committees and subsidiary bodies in the OECD. Some of the prominent committees are Economical Policy Committee (EPC), Trade Committee (TC), Environmental Committee,
(EPOC) and the Development Committee (DAC). Committees are the place where the policy advices are created. The final work of the committees is delegated to the Council for ratification (Woodward. 2009).

The committees are composed of representatives of the secretariat, senior officials nominated by member governments and experts from the organization and increasingly, members from civil society groups and non-member governments. All OECD member-states are entitled to participate in the work of the committees, however in reality smaller, and less developed OECD-members opt out of committees that they find inconsequential to their interest or where they lack personnel. So while countries such as France, Sweden and Germany belong to over 230 OECD bodies, countries such as Poland and Iceland are members of 177 and 195 bodies respectively (Woodward.2009).

4.3.4 Non-members – Civil Society & Non-member Governments

The OECD is foremost an intergovernmental organization where the member states steer the organizations work. The focus of the organization has traditionally been on the member-states solely. However during the past two decades the organization has increased its partnership and initiated several forums were other stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, IOs, non-members-states) were invited to participate and take part in the policy creation. During the 1990s the organization initiated several of structural changes in order to establish further relations with non-members. The organization started a campaign of “reaching out” stakeholder and promoting communication with the civil society (OECD. 2005c; West. 2005; Woodward. 2008).

Among the bodies of OECD, the committees have been mostly affected by these structural changes. Nonetheless over the last decade dialogue and participation with NGOs has become a feature in most of OECD’s committees (West. 2005). However not all committees have been equally eager to work with the civil society. While Agriculture, Development and Environmental committees have been actively engaged in working with NGOs, Economical Policy committee is still distant from NGO consultation (Woodward.2008).

These reforms did not seriously challenge the member-states as the main actors in the OECD, as decision making is still restricted to member-states within the pillars of the Council. With that in mind, the internal structuring has undeniably diversified the range of voices in the creation of OECD’s policy making and generated a more heterogeneous range of actors in the work of the organization (Woodward.2008). With the general introduction to the structure of the OECD prepared, the next section will specifically focus on DAC’s relations with NGOs in association to the Paris declaration and the follow up HLF in Accra.
4.4 DAC and the Paris Declaration

As presented in former section, OECD’s aid and development policies are coordinated under the work of DAC. Formed in 1961 the committee soon developed to an important forum for generating norm and definitions of what should be accounted as aid among member-states. At writing moment the committee is composed by 23 member-states and the European commission. The committee’s primary mission is to evaluate member-states aid programs, provide proper statistics and data to states and organizations, and develop instruments that rationalize aid and assistance (Odén. 2008; OECD.2010).

During the 1990s a consensus regarding aid efficiency began to take shape among DAC member-states. The result of the consensus was presented in DAC’s policy recommendations from 1996 which stated that in order to create a more efficient and result oriented aid, coordination and harmonization between both donor and recipient countries was vital (OECD. 1996). The UN’s “Millennium Goals” for poverty reduction presented in 2000 further reinforced the discourse of aid-harmonization and coordination of development programs. A HLF initiated and organized by DAC regarding aid-harmonization in Rome 2003 brought together different stakeholders to discuss aid ownership issues. This was followed up by a roundtable conference in Marrakesh in 2004. With two successful meetings and DAC’s policy paper and UN’s millennium goals in the baggage, the patterns for a second HLF was created (Odén-2008; Valot & Wood. 2009).

4.4.1 The Paris declaration and NGOs road to Accra.

In March 2005, DAC together with the World Bank organized a second HLF in Paris. Donors, international organizations, recipient countries governments and NGOs where invited to further discuss aid coordination and harmonization. The outcome of the forum was the creation of “The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness”, commonly referred to as the Paris Declaration. The declaration was signed by over 100 ministers and representatives from international organizations. While NGOs where invited as observer to the HLF, they did not have any formal endorsement nor a voice in the construction of the declaration (Odén. 2008). The Paris declaration outlines five primary principles which ought to shape aid delivery and make it more efficient (see figure 4).

The intention with the Paris declaration is to reform the delivery and management of aid in order to improve its effectiveness. In contrast to the UNs Millennium goals, as whom sets normative direction for poverty and development reduction, the Paris declaration focuses mainly on the methodological aspects of aid and how it should be delivered. It aims to give recipient states more responsibility for their own
development and to make the result of aid more measurable. The supervision and administration of the Paris declaration was to be coordinated by DAC. Furthermore DAC decide to hold a third HLF in Accra 2008 where stakeholder would meet in order to evaluate the implementations of the declaration (Valot & Wood. 2009)

Although received as a great and welcomed paradigm shift in international development policies, many NGOs regarded it with certain causation. The declaration itself hardly mentioned the civil society. In fact the declaration contains only a single reference to the civil society, which is regarding their participation in aid coordination. By such civil society networks argued that their role has been neglected, especially NGOs established in recipient countries (Odén.2008)

In their own quest to gain more recognition for their work, NGOs organized several meetings to discuss the absences and limitations of the Paris declaration. During the meetings NGOs started to lay plans with the intentions to reform the Paris
declaration. The obvious target for the NGOs was the third HLF which was planned to be held in Accra in 2008 (Dake. 2008; Valot & Wood. 2009).

Simultaneously as NGOs were carving their plan, DAC held meetings with the aim to discuss the monitoring aspects of Paris declaration. As such, several NGOs were invited to participate in the discussions. The meeting became the starting point for a continuous dialogue between NGOs and DAC. As a result of NGOs influence, DAC members decided to launch an advisory group composed by donors and recipient government as well as several NGOs from both north and south. The initiating mandate of the advisory group was to coordinate an ongoing dialogue with the civil society and to find proper ways to reconcile the role of the civil society in the Paris declaration (OECD. 2007a).

The advisory group held several regional and national meetings with NGOs and other stakeholder. What that consequently came to the agenda of the advisory group was how to integrate the voice and space of NGOs in the processes set off by the Paris. In order to integrate NGOs, the advisory group concluded that civil society groups must be recognized as independent development actors in their own right. The outcome of the advisory groups work was three papers involving recommendations on how to reform the Paris declaration in order to give a more inclusive role for civil society groups. The three papers were to be prepared for the minister meeting in the third HLF, 2008 (OECD. 2008).

In 2008, the time had finally come for the third HLF, this time in Accra, Kenya. In contrast to from the second HLF the core issue of this HLF was the inclusion of NGO to the principles of the declaration. The recommendations presented at the meeting by the advisory group became the main source for discussion regarding NGOs engagement. The outcome of the HLF in Accra generated a new agenda for aid effectiveness, referred to as the “Accra Agenda for Action” (AAA). The AAA which is a continuation of the Paris Declaration highlighted the NGOs role as independent development actors in their own right and incorporated many of the claims that the NGOs had brought up to the surface (Valot & Wood. 2009). It is nevertheless salient to acknowledge that in order to get a formal voice in the third HLF, NGOs were essentially required to influence DAC. The creation of the DAC’s advisory group was thus the result of NGOs influence, as it raised the claims of the NGOs to the agenda of DAC.

The following chapter will thus examine how and under what condition the NGOs succeeded to influence the agenda of DAC by using the analytical framework presented earlier in the study.
5 Analysis

This chapter will analyze the empirical material presented in the former chapter by using the analytical framework of the study. The chapter is outlined in three sections, (1) “defining the problem”, which involves diagnostic framing processes, (2) “solution finding”, which features prognostic framing process and motivational framing and finally (3) political opportunities, which involves the opportunities the NGOs had to raise their claims to the OECD.

5.1 Defining the Problem

5.1.1 Paris Declaration and beyond – Planting the seed for dialogue

Although the Paris declaration contained numerous promises, many NGOs were nonetheless critical against the declaration and expressed concerns regarding its narrow interpretation and limitations. Already after the second HLF in Paris where the Paris Declaration was signed, many NGOs stated their concerns regarding the absence of democratic and human right references in the declaration. However at that time the diagnostic framing process regarding the identification of a joint problem had yet not taken its form. Although NGOs were critical against the limitations of the Paris Declaration, these critiques were mostly framed independently by various NGOs or umbrella organizations. Hence, a combined and united definition of the problem had yet not been framed.

During the processes of the Paris declaration, DAC had invited several networks to take part as observers. NGOs invited were given the opportunity to speak but did not receive any formal endorsement as they were not involved in the negotiation or the signing of the declaration. Among the NGOs that were invited by DAC was the Reality of Aid network (RoA). RoA had after the formation of the Paris declaration tried several times to establish a formal dialogue with DAC, but the attempts were nevertheless unsuccessful. However, even though RoA had not succeeded in establishing a formal channel it had still managed to generate an informal dialogue with DAC that would prove to be very beneficial. Among the civil society groups that were involved in RoA were; AFRODAD, UK Aid Network, IBON and EURODAD (Valot & Wood. 2009).

DAC saw in RoA a potential ally composed of both southern and northern NGOs with the ability to offer critical and constructive thinking regarding aid issues. In November 2006, DAC organized a meeting for monitoring implementation of the
Paris declaration. Together with RoA, network representatives from other NGOs were invited as well. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss strategies for monitoring the implementations of the declaration. NGOs were invited to consult their views concerning the issue. However, NGOs participating used the opportunity to raise their grievances regarding the limitations and absences of the Paris declaration. The meeting made it evident that there was a clear consensus among the NGOs about some of the deficiencies and limitations of the Paris declaration and that the civil society wanted to have a formal recognition in the international aid architecture. The meeting became a starting point for NGOs framing process as the seed for a more sustained dialogue was planted. Before the meeting was over, a date for a second meeting with DAC was settled where NGOs were invited for consultation regarding aid effectiveness and the upcoming HLF in Accra, Kenya 2008 (Valot & Wood. 2009).

5.1.2 The Creation of ISG

Meanwhile, other NGOs and umbrella networks not involved in the dialogue with DAC began to mobilize and frame their grievances against the Paris declaration. Two NGOs, Alliance 2015 and the Danish NGO IBIS, took the initiative to convene a meeting concerning the Paris declaration and aid efficiency in general at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, January 2007. The meeting was attended by 18 NGOs, both from southern and northern countries. Among the participant NGOs were also NGOs active in the RoA network. Thereby the meeting brought together the NGOs that were involved in a dialogue with DAC (mainly the RoA network) with other NGOs that were critical towards the absences of the declaration (Dake. 2008).

The meeting generated the opportunity for the NGOs to formulate their concern and critique regarding the Paris declaration. It became a forum where NGOs could correspond to certain issues they found unacceptable and “diagnose” mutual problems. The problem was that NGOs felt neglected in the process and outline of the Paris declaration. Although received as a welcomed paradigm shifts in development aid policies, many NGOs were nonetheless critical against the delimitations of the declaration and expressed concerns regarding the declaration’s narrow interpretation of democratic values, human rights and the role of the civil society in aid processes (Alemany et al. 2008).

NGOs stated that the declaration contains only a single reference to the civil society, which is regarding the participation in aid coordination. The declaration focuses mainly on improving the capacities of the state and ignores the roles of the citizens and the civil society. By such, civil society networks argued that their role has been neglected, especially NGOs in southern countries that due to their work might get in conflict with their own government and therefore relay on international institutions recognition for their existence. Ownership is an important aspect for achieving
effective aid. However, ownership must be democratic and include all citizens and organizations. By making governments the only legitimate source for development strategies, vulnerable groups in the society such as; women, children and minorities might get excluded from the aid. Moreover, NGOs highlighted the absence of references to human rights and the definition of good ownership in the declaration. The absence of such references and definitions might jeopardize the democratic aspects of the aid. The declaration fails to tackle obstacles that have traditionally stood in the way for effective aid, such as involving marginalized and vulnerable groups. NGOs stated their concerns that some recipient governments might neglect civil society groups that are in general regime critical. (Alemany. 2008; Hochgesang. 2008; Valot & Wood. 2009). The absence of human rights references and definition of good ownership was therefore framed as a critical deficiency in the declaration.

Although the declaration notes the importance of ownership, it does not attain any indications regarding the reduction of donor countries’ conditionality policies. NGOs argued that the conditions put up for receiving countries were still far too many. Conditions arranged by donor countries’ such as implementing trade-liberalizations and privatizations were close to the recipient countries macroeconomics, and endangered the practicalities of the ownership policy. Governments can never truly be accountable to their parliaments and citizens when policy conditions are still prescribed by donor states (Mahmud. 2008).

Moreover, civil society networks stated that NGOs in overall channeled approximately from 20-25 billion dollars of their own resources to developing countries in 2006, hence, their function as fundraisers should not been overshadowed by their work as implementer of development programs. As such, NGOs demanded a greater recognition and involvement in the international aid process (OECD.2008).

The meeting in Nairobi became the first phase in the diagnostic framing process. The meeting created a consensus regarding the limitations of the declaration and brought the main problems to the surface. The participants decided to create a facilitating group where NGOs worldwide could get in touch and discuss their opinions regarding the limitations of the Paris declaration and future aid reforms. The core problem was that NGOs role had been excluded from the paragraphs of the Paris declaration. NGOs further argued that the consequences of such exclusion would evidently lead to an undemocratic development process. The problem was thus identified as structural dilemma, with structural conditions foremost responsible for their deprivation. When the meeting was over, participants concurred that the Paris declaration was formulated through a state-centric perspective and therefore enhanced a state-centric approach to development policies, and thereby neglected NGOs as development actors of their own.

In March 2007, as previously decided DAC invited thirty NGOs from both south and north to discuss NGOs positions regarding aid effectiveness. In addition to the NGOs
that were invited to the previous meeting, NGOs represented at the World Social Forum in Nairobi 2007 were also invited. During the meeting NGOs had prepared three briefing papers in which they presented their positions regarding the implementations of Paris declaration and the declarations limitation. The meeting created the opportunity for NGOs to formally present the “diagnosed” problem to DAC. After the meeting with DAC the participating NGOs took the opportunity to meet on their own in Scotland during “CIVICUS World assembly” and formalize the facility group to an international steering group (ISG) and broaden its membership. The ISG would serve as a platform for all the NGOs worldwide that wanted to get involved in the process and state their position regarding the Paris declaration and its implementations (Valot & Wood. 2009).

The formation of the Paris declaration although perceived as a paradigm shift, was nevertheless criticized by NGOs for its limitation and absences. During the meeting in Nairobi the idea of a NGO coalition with the aim of formulating common frames was shaped and later consolidated in a side meeting in Scotland in March 2007. The ISG became a platform for both southern and northern NGOs to state their grievances. As for the meetings with DAC, although not serving so much directly in the creation of joint problems, they still played a rather important role in NGOs diagnostic process. The meetings with DAC more or less made it vivid for NGOs that they were obligated to formulate common problems if they wanted their voice heard. It indirectly “forced” NGOs to cooperate together. The creation of the ISG would therefore increase NGOs legitimacy.

Furthermore, NGOs identified the problems as structural problems. The absence of references to NGOs and their role as independent development actors in the Paris declaration was the result of a dominating state-centric view. The problem was therefore not the declaration solely, but also the actors that created them and their unawareness of NGOs importance in international development. The dialogue with DAC made it further possible to notice these “structural problems”, hence elevating the problem from individual blaming to structural blaming.

The production and identification of joint problems was thus nothing that came to life over a night. It was rather the result of a longer process involving both formal and informal participation that obtained a global range through the creation of the ISG platform. The following text will thus analyze how and under what conditions NGOs framed the “solutions” to the identified problems.
5.2 Finding the Solution

5.2.1 Choosing Strategy and the Arena.

Through their participation in the World Social Forum in 2007, along with the two meetings with DAC, NGOs were able to “diagnose” and frame mutual problems. The prognostic framing process however, involving the formation of strategies and choices NGOs employ in order to meet the problems identified, proved to be a more complex issue to frame. Formulating common objectives proved to be hard as a large diversity of NGOs from all corners of the world participated and wanted their claims and grievances to be documented. As Snow and Bedford (2000) states, when a problem is constructed, there is not necessarily a clear consensus regarding the strategy to attack the problem, since different actors might have different preferences and solutions to the same problem.

Although NGOs (mainly through the RoA umbrella) had generated a dialogue with DAC, it was nevertheless during the World Social Forum in Nairobi that NGOs set their target on the third HLF in Accra. The HLF was as described, the forum where decisions makers meet to discuss the implementations of the Paris declaration. The forum aimed to stock the progress of the Paris declaration and to bring stakeholders together for further evaluation. In order to reform the Paris declaration, the third HLF would be the most suitable forum to do so. In the second HLF in 2005, the NGOs were invited but did not have any formal voice. At the meeting during the World Social Forum NGOs decided that pattern should not get repeated again (Valot & Wood. 2009).

The ongoing relationship with DAC proved to be the most relevant forum for NGOs to get a greater role and recognition in the third HLF. Having the responsibilities for the organization of the forum and as an important source of knowledge creator in the international arena, raising their solution frames to DAC was an evident matter. By raising their frames and influence the agenda of DAC, NGOs would get a formal voice in the third HLF.

5.2.2 Framing Common Solution

During the CIVICUS World Assembly the newly formalized ISG discussed how NGOs could enrich and deepen the aid effectiveness concept. Participating NGOs decided to create a platform called “Better Aid”. In order to not act as a single spokesperson for “the civil society” and to instead get a wide range as possible, the ISG prepared both regional consultation meetings and a website. The website “betteraid.org” was launched and served as a platform were NGOs worldwide could be engaged and get informed. Through the website the ISG expanded its range and
initiated a global engagement. Through its transparent communication, the ISG was soon developed to a credible source for NGOs. In the process of formulating joint solution strategies the ISG organized several regional and national consultation workshops where local NGOs were invited to share their ideas and claims, providing a broad framing of issue. In September 2007, a draft paper (Better Aid: A Civil Society Position Paper for the 2008 Accra High Level Forum on Aid) was initiated by the ISG which stated some of the NGOs common objectives. The draft paper retained 16 recommendations, involving both reformation of the Paris declaration and specific recommendations for the HLF in Accra. The final version of the paper was endorsed by over 700 NGOs (Valot & Wood.2009).

The recommendations demanded recognition of NGOs as development actors in their own right. Hence, the Paris declaration should create the condition where NGOs could play a more influential role in development. The solution framing of the NGOs was mainly attributed by one important concept, democratic ownership. The recommendations stated that NGOs should not only be perceived as fund raisers and program implementers, but also important pillars of democracy. In a democratic state, the existence of plurality of opinions is vital. However, as mentioned in NGOs problem framings, the state-centric perspective of the Paris declaration has made this plurality difficult to achieve in some fragile states, where the government becomes the only source of opinion. By formally recognizing NGOs as development actors in their own right and evidently giving them a more inclusive role the democratic ownership of the aid will increase. As stated in the Better Aid paper;

“Setting national and local development priorities in a country is a complex and ongoing political process, involving many stakeholders. This process must allow for real input and leadership from poor and marginalized populations and take into account specific national and local contexts” (ISG.2008:3)

Moreover, the position paper stated that NGOs have a greater possibility to reach out to vulnerable groups, such as poor countries or minority groups in poor countries, hence making the aid more democratic. Another feature in the position paper was the accountability and the transparency of aid. The recommendations stated that there has to be a clearer framework when dealing with concerns of transparency as both donors and recipient governments are accountable to civil society groups and the citizen of the country. The draft paper further urged for donors to abandon policy conditionality and instead adhere to highest openness and transparency (ISG.2008).

The key issue in the NGOs prognostic process was the concept of democratic ownership. The democratic ownership frame created a consensus among the NGOs as it was regarded as one of the most evident absences in the Paris declaration. The framing of democratic ownership and human rights evolved an alignment among the NGOs and was accepted by a broader public, evidently making the frame more
dominant. Furthermore, the concept of a democratic ownership was a factor that other stakeholders could not take a position against. As such, through the framing of democratic ownership, other issues such as conditionality and technical assistance could be reframed by NGOs. As recognized by Snow and Bedford (2000) the prognostic process is a very complex process since actors have different preferences. A key framing strategies coordinated by the ISG was to identify and focus on issues with common concerns, generating a “harmony of interests”. Notions such as human rights, donor transparency and conditionality were therefore deliberatively targeted while other issue areas where NGOs had differences were overlooked (Dake. 2008; ISG. 2008; Mahmod. 2008; Valot & Wood. 2009).

The processes of motivational framing which created a rationale for action, was closely related to NGOs perception of themselves, the role they have, and the role which they should have in international development issues. It was nevertheless embedded in moral and normative terms. The moral terms was achieved by connecting NGOs action to moral and value systems. By utilizing value-charged terms such as social solidarity, human rights and social empowerment NGOs were able to “call to arms” and frame reasons for why they should take actions. Their own perception as “pillars of democracy and good governance” and their view regarding their responsibilities in development questions created a reason for NGOs to get involved and stay engaged during the process (ISG. 2008). The motivational frames were further enhanced by normative terms. Perceiving themselves as important actors in international development issues, the state-centric view of the declaration collided with the NGOs perspective. As such, the motivational frames were also formulated in the since that NGOs should due to abovementioned reasons have a louder voice in international development.

5.3 Political Opportunities

The analytical instruments constituted by framing processes concurred that NGOs through strategically framing were able to produce joint problems and solutions, evidently creating frames that triggered action. While diagnostic framing made it visible to acknowledge how the NGOs diagnosed problems, prognostic and motivational framing highlighted how NGOs were able to produce reasons and solutions to tackle the identified problems. However, in order to understand how these frames were legitimized in the agenda of DAC, one has to understand the political opportunities that were created for the NGOs. The following text will therefore employ political opportunity theory to acknowledge these opportunities.
5.3.1 The creation of the AG-CS

The participation of non-members (e.g. NGOs, IOs and non-member states) is regulated under article 12 of the OECD convention. Stating that the Council decides the terms and conditions regarding how the organization should establish communication with non-members (OECD. 1960). Traditionally, non-members grant an observer status rather than direct participation in the work of the committees. However during the 1990s, an internal restructuring of the OECD had generated a discourse change in the work of the organization creating a more open and inclusive policy towards non-members (West. 2005).

Simultaneously as the ISG was expanding its range and holding regional workshops in order to frame their common objectives, within DAC, member state were discussing ways to find a more inclusive role for the civil society in the third HLF in Accra in. However the ways to implement these intentions was yet not clear. DAC members were yet, not post 2005, prepared to formally engage with NGOs. The main reason was that DAC foremost identified itself as a donor institution (Valot & Wood. 2009). Therefore a dialogue with NGOs was perceived to be more fruitful within the UN system. However, during 2006 several rapport reports were published by the OECD that initiated an upraising will to cooperate with NGOs and a stronger confidence on the work of civil society groups (OECD. 2007; OECD. 2009a) The involvement of NGOs in development issues was clearly in the upraise

The initiative for discussions regarding NGOs involvement was taken by Canada. The Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, had a long tradition of relations with NGOs in the formation of its development strategies. CIDA’s intentions were to reconcile this view with the state-centric perspective of the Paris declaration. In May 2006, CIDA organized a meeting with several NGOs regarding its partnership with civil society groups. Among the themes discussed in the meeting were principles of partnership, aid effectiveness and aid accountability. The participating NGOs brought up the seeming absences of the Paris declaration and further urged CIDA to be the defender of civil society groups in DAC, with the aim to make other DAC members acknowledge the importance and role of NGOs as development actors in their own right (CCIC. 2006; OECD. 2007c).

Further discussions with likeminded members in DAC’s working party, such as Sweden, motivated the formation of a formal dialogue structure with civil society groups. Acknowledging the claims of the NGOs from previous meetings, likeminded members from DAC began to confer ways to approach the civil society and create a more inclusive condition for them with regards to the Paris declaration. Ultimately, those discussions generated the formation of DAC’s “Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness” (AG-CS), with Canada taking on a chair role. The
AG-CS was launched in January 2007 with the aim to bring the civil society into international aid effectiveness agenda and give them a formal voice in the upcoming HLF. As described by the advisory group concerning its position;

“the role of the Advisory Group was not to substitute itself for the voice of CSOs, who speak with their own voice, but rather to secure a seat at the table for them” (OECD. 2008a:1)

Furthermore the advisory groups were given the mandate to consult DAC on how to carve space for dialogue with the civil society and to enrich the principles of Paris declaration to involve more civil society perspectives. The result of their work was to be presented at the third HLF in Accra (OECD. 2009b).

5.3.2 The linkage between the ISG and the AG-CS

The advisory group was decided to be composed by three donor, four recipient countries and three NGOs each from both north and south. For the NGOs membership in the advisory group, DAC was in close consultation with the ISG. Besides the six NGOs from both north and south, two NGOs representing women’s right and gender equality were later added as members (Valot & Wood. 2009). During October and November in 2007, the advisory group organized five regional consultation workshops worldwide, involving NGOs and other stakeholders. Two separate meetings with NGOs only were held in Brussels and Nairobi along with two international conferences in Sweden and Canada. The meetings emphasized to understand the role of civil society groups as development actors and to explore the limitations of the Paris declaration. The meetings presented the opportunity for the ISG to present its framed claims to the AG-CS.

Although in the first instance, the work of ISG and the AG-CE can seemingly be understood as overlapping, nevertheless, the relationship between these two was very constructive for NGOs as it provided them a formal voice. Moreover the NGOs involved in the advisory group emphasized to consult back to the ISG on the progress of the AG-CS and then channel the opinion of the ISG back to the advisory group. Hence, the formation of the advisory group created a dual strategy for the NGOs as they were participating both from the “inside” through membership in the AG-CS and from the “outside” through the ISG. The result of the advisory groups work was presented in two core documents (Concept paper and Issue paper) and one concluding report (Synthesis and Finding Recommendations) with guidance and recommendations presented at the ministerial meeting in the third HLF in Accra.

The recommendations were evolved through close consultation with NGOs and other stakeholders during the workshops and meetings that were held during the previous years. The foundation for the advisory groups recommendation were taken from the
ISGs formulated solutions frames (e.g. the ISG position paper), building on the discourse of a more inclusive partnership between donor, recipient governments and NGOs. The report acknowledged that civil society groups are quantitatively important, both for a democratic society and in terms of their importance as aid donors, recipients and partners. Furthermore the report highlighted the NGOs ability to effectively reaching out to poor and socially excluded groups, providing humanitarian assistance.

As for the concrete recommendations, the group urged for a deeper understanding and application of the Paris declaration, emphasizing on local and democratic ownership, gender equality and greater accountability. Thereby, creating a condition where the voice of NGOs could be heard in all stages in the development. Furthermore, the report recommended broadening the range of stakeholders engaged in the design and implementation of development strategies process. Consequently, urging governments to recognize that ownership of specific programs may involve leadership by actors beyond governments or governmental bodies. The advisory group further advocated the importance and diversity of NGOs and urged states to recognize NGOs as development actors in their own rights (OECD. 2008).

It is evident to acknowledge that although the ISG succeeded in framing their claims in a way that generated alignment and mobilization among the NGOs, it was nevertheless through several political opportunities that produced the possibilities for NGOs to have a direct and formal voice in the OECD. These possibilities were generated mainly by two factors; the previous restructurings of the OECD and the political alignments that the NGOs made with CIDA and SIDA. Together these two opportunities created the patterns for the creation of the advisory group which focused on the concerns of the civil society and brought it up to the agenda of DAC. The existence of the advisory group with its multi-stakeholder composition created the possibility for NGOs to formally participate and have direct access to the OECD.

The changes that occurred in the OECD during the 1990s changed the discourse within the organization, generating a more openness towards non-members. Although DAC was yet not ready to fully cooperate with civil society groups, reports from some DAC countries, such as Canada and Sweden initiated a strong will for greater NGO inclusiveness. The meeting between CIDA and several NGOs in May 2006 became the beginning of an important alignment between NGOs and Canada, which gave the NGOs a greater credibility and recognition among other DAC members. It is nevertheless equally essential to recognize the exogenous factors (e.g. political opportunities) as the internal factors with the movements (framings of the NGOs).
6 Conclusion

The emerging influence of NGOs on global governance has indeed made the outcome of international politics more complex. The outline of this study was to examine how and under what conditions NGOs influence the agenda setting in the OECD, as an attempt to further clarify the influence of civil society group on intergovernmental institutions. By drawing on two theories from social movements literatures this research has exerted an analytical instrument in order analyze the field. These theories have been combined with literature on agenda-setting in order to sufficiently theorize the impact of NGOs on the international agenda. In order to reconnect with the aim of the study, it is argued in this research that NGOs influence the OECD by strategically framing issues which are within their interest. Moreover by resonating around issues which they have in common, civil society groups are able to “produce” problems and solution and evidently transforming them to master frames and build stronger coalitions.

As Joachim states; “framing is the weapons of weak” (Joachim.2007:178). Evidently, by formulating frames, NGOs become producers of meanings. Not only do they influence the way individuals think and make sense of the world, they also constitute what actions that should be taken and what actions that are wrong. Framing/reframing becomes thus, NGOs greatest weapon for mobilizing the public and influencing politics. Frames that share certain commensurable attributes are most likely to transform to master frames.

The lack of formally acknowledging NGOs as participators in the second HLF in Paris 2005 made the NGO feel neglected in the processes of international development. This sense of neglect was increased further when it became evident that the paragraphs of the declaration enhanced a state-centric perspective of development and had failed to recognize the role of the civil society. Civil society groups came to gather in various meetings and identified joint problems and evidently solutions to overcome the problems. Consequently the concept of “democratic ownership” was externalized and transformed to a master frame and gained a general support.

Under the umbrella of the democratic ownership NGOs reframed other issues such as conditionality and aid technicalities. By dividing the framing process of NGOs in the three processes; diagnostic, prognostic and motivational, the resonating and strategically framing of NGOs becomes much more comprehensible. It should however be noted that the line between a problem and a solution is not always clear and the diagnostic and prognostic processes might many times overlap each other.
This also accounts for motivational framing which in this research has been integrated with the prognostic framing analysis. Although framing is the main factor for triggering actions, it alone does not constitute influence. In order for NGOs to assert influence on the agenda of intergovernmental institutions, one has to consider the political context which they are embedded. As such, two prerequisites for influence most be considered, access to institutions and political alignment.

Access to institutions is a pivotal necessity for exercising influence. In order to get a formal and recognized role in international development, access to DAC proved to be most appropriate. By mobilizing support among DAC members, NGOs were guaranteed a formal voice in the third HLF in Accra. Being in a regular consulting dialogue with DAC and participating in meetings held by DAC was therefore evident in order to impose influence on DAC’s agenda.

On the basis of findings in this study, NGOs increased access to the OECD was mainly due to the internal restructuring of the organization discourse towards non-members. The rhetoric of increased partnership with non-member during the 1990s resulted to an increased cooperation with civil society groups in the new millennium, hence increasing the NGOs access to the organization. Finally, finding political alignment whose preferences are resonating with the frames of NGOs can be conducive to furthering the aims of the NGOs. As the analysis of this research concludes, NGOs alignment with CIDA and SIDA proved to be a pivotal coalition for NGOs. As members of DAC, the alliance with CIDA and SIDA further legitimized the frames of the NGOs and increased their credibility.

Previous studies have tended to either highlight the political structure or on the abilities of the agencies as the main factors for determining the influence of NGOs. Risse (1995) for instance, emphasizes on the openness or closeness of institutions together with NGOs ability to join “winning coalitions”. According to Risse, NGOs most firstly gain access to the institution they “target” and secondly contributing to winning coalitions in order to steer the agenda of the institutions. In contrast to Risse, Keck and Sikknik (1998) highlight the agency specific abilities. The authors stress the importance of NGOs issue specific expertise and moral authority. Civil society groups are thus perceived as accountable agencies. Possessing these resources, NGOs are able to manipulate information in the way that the perceive it, and ultimately define the interest of international institutions and state.

Departing from this dichotomy, this research attempts to go one step further, arguing that both institutional factors and agency related elements are crucial in order to sufficiently comprehend NGOs influence. The result of this study clearly indicates that the international arena is constituted by a complex tripartite relationship composed by states, international organizations and
transnational actors. NGOs can by using political opportunities and strategically framing their claims influence and steer the agenda-setting in intergovernmental institutions.

Although the primary focus of this research has been on the non-profit NGOs, one should not exclude the impact of other transnational actors such as multi-national corporations. Closely related to the subject of this research is the discussion regarding “the fragmentation of states”. Although there is a trend towards increased partnership in international governance, proclaiming that this would be the beginning of the end for the Westphalia nation-state structure is an overstatement.

As the result of this study indicates, states and NGOs are both more dependent on each other than they would probably admit. For instance, in issues such as international aid states rely on NGOs for their efficiency and local knowledge. On the other side, as the result of the political opportunity shows, NGOs are dependent on states and inter-state structures for legitimizing their claims and getting a formal voice. It would therefore be more fruitful for future researchers to focus on the interactions in the tripartite environment of international governance, instead of proving evidence of “the fragmentation of states”.

At the same time as the quantity of NGOs with a transnational agenda increases, the amount of opportunities and constrains to legitimize their frames increases as well, evidently, creating a complex pattern for NGOs engagement in global governance. These issues along with others generate an interesting research field which should occupy researches in the near future. The analytical framework used in this study has thus been an attempt to further understand the strategies of NGOs, how the frame their claims and under what conditions they are able to legitimize those frames.
Executive Summary

Studies of international relations have traditionally perceived the world from a state-centric perspective. Yet in the course of the past two decades trends in international politics has been an increase interaction between international organizations and NGOs. While neorealist followers argue that NGOs are just by pass of international politics, other scholars has highlighted their importance, especially in regards to international norms creation. Various studies have thus presented evidence of NGOs impact and influence on international politics, whereas the question about how NGOs influence the outcome of international politics has been insufficiently theories, creating a gap in international relations studies.

This study is therefore an attempt to answer how and under what conditions NGOs are able to influence international organizations. However, in order to sufficiently theorize NGOs influence, certain concretizations had to be done first. This study has focused on NGOs activities in international aid, focusing on NGOs influence in the work of OECD’s development committee DAC.

Empirically the focus has been on NGO activities from the signing of the Paris declaration in 2005 to the follow up meeting in Accra 2008. In a more theoretical level, the aim has been to analysis how and under what condition NGOs were able to influence the agenda of OECD. The research questions to be answered are accordingly; how did NGOs frame their development and aid claims in order to engage the agenda of the OECD, and through what political opportunities were the NGOs able to raise their frames to the OECD?

The research employs Betsill and Corell’s definition of influence, which defines influence as “when one actor intentionally communicates to another so as to alter the latter’s behavior from what would have occurred otherwise” (Betsill & Corell. 2008:24).

Designed by case study manner, this study takes a constructivist epistemological stance, arguing that reality is not given, rather it is the result of subjective interpretations created from social interaction, hence the expression “reality is socially constructed”. Incorporating a constructivist approach makes the study of non-state actors evidently relevant. Due to their activities regarding knowledge and meaning production, non-state actors become important features of global politics.
The method used for processing the gathered data is process tracing. The method's ability to investigate relevant causes that led to a certain outcome was highly suitable for the purpose of this study. The analytical framework of this research is composed by theories from social movement literatures as well as agenda-setting theories.

Derived from previous literature regarding the subject, this study argues that due to their limited role in international organizations decisive bodies, the NGOs' greatest opportunity to have an impact is by influencing the agenda-setting in international institutions. Although not as impactful as decision-making, agenda formation is nevertheless politically salient as it is a gateway for what that evidently turns global norms and politics. In this study, agendas are defined as issues that actively or/and seriously are discussed in DAC.

Originated from the work of Cohen, March and Olson (1972), this research employs the “garbage-can model” to explain how agendas are created. According to the model, agendas evolve from four independent processes: problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunity. These processes exist independently from one another. However, at various points these processes randomly interact and couple, forming new agendas.

The analytical framework for analyzing the gathered data is constituted by framing processes and political opportunity theory. The strength in the triangulation of these two theories is that they both capture factors and elements that are essential in order to acknowledge the outcome and fortune of social movements. The theories should therefore not be regarded as competing to each other. Constituted by three independent processes, the analytical instruments of framing processes are composed by diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing.

Diagnostic framing involves the identification of a condition that is considered as unacceptable, the formulation of a problem. Prognostic framing involves the formulation of certain strategies and approaches to tackle a problem, the formulation of solutions. Finally, motivational framing which provides the rationale behind social movements actions. These three independent processes are complemented by master frames. Master frames are frames that resonate with a wide range of actors and across a variety of cultural contexts. NGOs seek actively to connect alignment and transfer their frames to master frames in order to gain greater legitimization for their claims. This research argues however, that framing is not enough when acknowledging the influence of NGOs.

In order to get a sufficient understanding of NGOs influence, one has to consider the political context which NGOs are embedded. The analytical components of
political opportunity theory are constituted by two variables, access to institutions and political alignment. While access to institutions mainly focuses on the access point NGOs have to the OECD (e.g. access to meetings, workshops, documents, buildings), political alignment focuses on NGOs relationship with member-states in OECD development committee, DAC. Influential allies, such as DAC member can give further credibility to NGOs frames. Together these two dimensions will generate an analytical tool for understanding the political opportunities that were created for NGOs to influence the agenda of the OECD concerning development issues.

Operating since 1962, DAC has since its creation become one of OECD’s prominent committees, playing an important role in international development issues. Composed of donor governments, it has been involved in defining what aid is and developed several aid programs. Nonetheless the Paris declaration signed in the second HLF in Paris 2005 was initiated and progressed by the work of DAC. The framing process of the NGOs was initiated after the signing of the Paris declaration, however at that time NGOs was mainly expressing their critique independently or through umbrella organizations and a coalition had yet not been formed.

The first step toward a diagnostic framing process with joint problem framing began after the meeting with DAC in November 2006. This process was happening simultaneously as other NGO groups where meeting at the World Social Forum in Nairobi to discuss the absences and delimitations of international aid and the Paris declaration. It was here that NGOs collaborated in order to gain greater mobilization for their claims. Another meeting was held with DAC, this time both NGOs in the RoA network and NGOs that participated in the World Social Forum were invited. After the meeting NGOs decided to formalize the ISG, a platform where active NGOs all over the world could contribute to.

The prognostic framing process can be distinguished in two processes; choice of strategy and framing of solutions. The choice of having an impact on the third HLF in Accra was evident to the importance of the forum. Being a major event in international development were ministers and international organization participated, the HLF was a fundamental forum in order to get recognition. However in order to have a formal voice in the HLF, steering DAC’s agenda was evident. As initiators and organizers of the meeting, DAC had an important in the agenda setting of the HLFs. The framing of joint solutions took off by the creation of the ISG. The platform made it possible for NGOs all over the world to participate and share their objectives regarding the declaration and future reformations of international aid. This was followed by several regional and national meetings in which the participating NGOs discussed the absences of the Paris declaration.
Much of the NGOs triumph in their alignment and mobilization was due to their solution framing of democratic and human rights values. By issuing the absence of democratic ownership in the Paris declaration and then stating the importance of civil society groups as pillars of democracy, the NGOs where able form alignments and generate greater mobilization. However, only focusing on the framing of NGOs is insufficient. In order to sufficiently understand how NGOs were able to influence the agenda of DAC one has to consider the institutional factors as well.

Although the NGOs succeeded in framing their claims and grievances and to generate a broader public, it was nonetheless through the formation of the AG-CS that their frames were given a formal voice. The formation of the AG-CS and its close relation and consultation with the ISG was therefore an evident factor for the influence of NGOs in DAC’s agenda. The analysis from the political opportunity variables indicates that increased access to the OECD through both formal and informal dialogue proved to be evident for the fortune of the NGOs.

The increased access can be traced back to the 1990s and the restructurings of the OECD, which resulted a more inclusive partnership with non-members. NGOs political alignment with Canada and Sweden was a further opportunity for NGOs to legitimize their frames. The alignment with those DAC members further increased the credibility of NGOs. On the basis of findings in this study, it is concluded that NGOs succeeded to influence the agenda-setting of DAC by strategically framing their issues and through the political opportunities that was created for them.


Marcussen Martin. (2001). *The OECD in search of a role*: Playing the idea game. Paper prepared for presentation at the European Consortium for Political Research, 6-11 April, Grenoble, France


## Appendix 1

### List of OECD member-states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Member year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>2000</td>
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Appendix 2

List of ISG members

ActionAid
Alliance 2015
ALO P
ANND
AWID
CCIC
CIVICUS
CONCORD
EURODAD
Ghana Forum on Aid Effectiveness
IBIS
IBON Foundation
InterAction
International Trade Union Confederation
Reality of Aid Network
SEND Foundation
Social Watch
Third World Network
UKAN
WIDE
Appendix 3

List of AG-CS/AE members

**Donor Countries**

Canada  
France  
Norway

**Developing Countries**

Colombia  
Cameroon  
Rwanda  
Zambia

**NGOs**

AFRODAD  
Action Aid  
Awid  
CCIC  
Concord  
IBON Foundation  
Reality of Aid  
Third World Network  
WIDE