Different Strategies, Similar Results

Ireland, Norway, and the Domestic Preconditions of Small State Status-Seeking

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Abstract

This thesis proposes that the domestic context is key to understanding status-seeking among small states. Through the analytical lens of the foreign policy establishment, the dissertation proceeds by way of a qualitative case study of Norway and Ireland. It finds that in its bid for the UN Security Council, Ireland was constrained by the institutional weakness of its domestic foreign policy establishment and the lack of funding for the Department of Foreign Affairs. Ireland still achieved success in leveraging empathy, kinship ties and common experience with developing countries. This suggests a new path to recognition for small states; namely that of *be-goodism.*

Keywords: Status, small states, foreign policy establishment, United Nations Security Council, Ireland, Norway

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List of Abbreviations

CMI: Christian Michelsen Institute [Christian Michelsens Institutt]

DFA: Department of Foreign Affairs

DIFP: Documents of Irish Foreign Policy

FNI: Fridtjof Nansen Institute [Fridtjof Nansens Institutt]

IIEA: Institute of International and European Affairs

MFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Utenriksdepartementet]

NORAD: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

NUPI: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs [Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt]

ODA: Official Development Assistance

PRIO: Peace Research Institute Oslo

STV: Single Transferable Vote

TD: Teachta Dála [Member of the Irish Parliament]

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

Chapter 1: Small States, High Ambitions

The results were in: Norway, 130; Ireland, 128; Canada, 108. On 17 June 2020, Norway and Ireland were elected to the UN Security Council (UNSC) on the first round. They could look forward to a 2-year term in the world's most powerful body for regulating international conflict. This outcome was hailed by political leaders in both countries as a great achievement. It gave access to the role of chair and penholder on several of the Council's key dossiers (Security Council Report, 2022). Holding their own against Canada, their election was by most accounts a diplomatic success story, and a testament to the esteem with which Norway and Ireland are held in the international community.

Since 2016, Ireland had a key role in formulating the EU position on Brexit. It also secured the portfolio for trade in the von der Leyen Commission, if only briefly. Both achievements indicate a small state with outsized diplomatic influence. Norway, as well as being the largest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) per capita and one of the largest aid donors in absolute terms, has played an active role in peace processes in countries as far-flung as Palestine, South Sudan and Sri Lanka.

Although it is notoriously difficult to measure a country's place in the international community (Røren, 2020), these examples indicate that these two small states, in the words of former US President Obama "punch above their weight" (Korte, 2016). Winning a "seat at the table" in the UN Security Council is no mean feat.

Though population size and GDP place them squarely in the category of small states (Thorhallsson, 2018b), and they are both located in Western Europe, these states do not have much in common. Their political histories, religion and culture are divergent, they have different challenges, outlooks and strategies of foreign policy, and they tend not to be placed in the same peer-group, both in common discourse as well as status scholarship in international relations. This makes a comparison of the two countries a particularly interesting case. Do small states achieve high status due to similarity in character, approach and strategy, or may they follow different paths? In other words: are there multiple roads to Rome?

Problems and solutions

It is clear that the theory of status is a fruitful framework for interpreting this result – but it is not without its challenges. The problems of much status research lies in how it skirts on the

surface of the countries it analyses. It gives short shrift to the domestic, and thus leaves out key factors which could theoretically moderate and condition states' supposed quest for status. For its part, research on the role of the domestic in formulating and conditioning foreign policy also has problems, although these more often have to do with a lack of broader contextualisation or attempts to evaluate the transferability of its findings. Through analysing the domestic context of Ireland and Norway, I aim to synthesise these traditions, bringing together the domestic and the international in order to give a fuller picture of small countries' international behaviour. My research question is as follows.

What are the domestic preconditions of Norwegian and Irish status-seeking, and how does this affect their status-seeking strategies?

Hypothesis

I propose that there are significant differences between Norway and Ireland's foreign policy establishment and political system, that these are important preconditions of Norwegian and Irish status-seeking strategy. While Norwegian domestic conditions *enable* a strategy of *conspicuous do-goodism,* Irish domestic conditions *necessitate* a strategy of *be-goodism.*

Thesis Layout

Chapter 2 will provide the theoretical backdrop for this hypothesis. In it, I will discuss the field of status research, to identify key perspectives and what they say about the behavioural patterns and status-seeking strategies of small states. I then present the literature of elites in international relations, addressing both definitions and theories on how elites shape a country's foreign policy. I submit that the concept of the foreign policy establishment is critical for understanding Norway and Ireland achieve high status as small states on the international stage. This will be the primary theoretical framework underlying my analysis. Finally, this chapter discusses my research design and methodological approach – an explorative comparative case study using saturation as the main criterion of validity.

Chapter 3 will provide a map of the institutions of the foreign policy establishment in Ireland and Norway, fleshing out some of their differences and making preliminary suggestions as to how they shape foreign policy. Chapter 4 will zoom in on politicians as a class, examining how they relate to other elites in the foreign policy establishment and what effects this might have. Chapter 5 expands the analysis to the electoral system, discussing its impact on elite interrelations and on political incentives in the foreign policy field. Chapter 6 examines variations in academic and political discourse of foreign policy through comparative analysis

of their approaches to official documents and political debate. In chapter 7, I analyse the practice of foreign policy, and examine diplomatic initiatives related to their bids for a seat in the UN Security Council. In the final chapter, I bring all these strands together, and discuss what my findings might mean for the diplomacy of small states in the future.

Chapter 2: Theory and Methods

Status and International Relations

The empirical complexity and hence inaccessibility of status has led to diverging approaches in the literature. Paul, Larson and Wohlforth define status as "collective beliefs about a given state's ranking on valued attributes (wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, sociopolitical organization, and diplomatic clout)." (2014, p. 7). This definition is adapted from the classic sociology of Durkheim and Weber, and forms a good basis for a discussion of similarity and difference between traditions.

Status as an End

Among the most widely acknowledged branches of status literature is the Social Identity Theory (SIT) of status, as popularised by Larson and Shevchenko (2003, 2010, 2014). This theory, adopting insights from social psychology, posits that states seek to improve their image in the eyes of others. To that end, they may utilise strategies of social competition, social mobility, and social creativity. In other words, status is (one of) the key goals of states, and states take active and self-conscious measures in seeking it. The reason for this lies in the inherent need for recognition states, like the humans who constitute them, have from other entities. Only secondarily (if at all) do states seek status for instrumental purposes, such as for material gain. SIT has become highly influential in the US discourse (Bezerra, Cramer, Hauser, Miller, & Volgy, 2015; Lee, 2016; Malinova, 2014; Miller et al., 2015; Ward, 2017), although it is not without its critics (Ward, 2017).

Status as a Means

Opposing this school are those advocating a primarily instrumental understanding of status. Scholars in this tradition claim that having status enables states to achieve political outcomes they desire – primarily the deference and obedience of small states to the will of great powers (Butt, 2019; Khong, 2019; Renshon, 2017; Volgy, Corbetta, Grant, & Baird, 2011). Methodologically, this approach is heavily influenced by rationalism, and significantly more quantitatively inclined than Social Identity Theory. This has led to some interesting innovations. Renshon's metric of diplomatic representation as a proxy for status is one, and similar network-based metrics have seen use in a number of later analyses (Røren, 2020; Røren & Beaumont, 2019).

Great power politics are at the centre of the analyses offered by these scholars. The growing relevance of China and other rising states in relation to the US and the West is often analysed

(Evans, 2015; Khong, 2019; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014, 2019b; Lee, 2016). One of many debates within the school of Social Identity Theory is that between Larson & Shevchenko and Ward, regarding the fundamental nature of SIT and consequently what lessons and recommendations may be drawn for the practice of international relations. In the face of the increasingly assertive China and Russia, it is not clear what strategy the US should employ to preserve their position internationally (2019a; 2017). While Larson & Shevchenko advocate accommodation to quench Russian and Chinese status ambitions, Ward criticises the empirical and theoretical basis of this claim. According to Ward, the attractiveness of accommodation springs from a mistranslation of Social Identity Theory from social psychology to international relations – and more nuanced thinking is required in order to make sound predictions (2017).

The novelty in the aforementioned approaches to status lies more in their approach to causality and empirical evidence, than in the fundamental insight that status has relevance for international relations.[1] The value of status has been more or less explicitly acknowledged and discussed by many of the influential thinkers in the history of international relations theory, such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Morgenthau (Knutsen, 2020). This is not to say that they have been teased out with a naturalist epistemology informing a strict empirical framework. Still, the tendency of states to act according to principles and motivations comparable to those driving individual human behaviour is a fundamental insight of classical realism. In this sense, Social Identity Theory and Renshon's instrumentalism should be understood less as a break with traditional theories of international relations, and more as a revolt against the "billiard ball" structuralism which dominated international relations scholarship in the latter half of the 20th century. There is a degree of continuity to the naturalist schools of status research – they rest comfortably within the classical tradition of international relations as an academic discipline. This is not so much the case within the constructivist school, which is more prevalent in Europe.

Status, Small States and the UN Security Council

From roots in linguistics, history, phenomenology and other fields, much European research on status has a constructivist bent. Inspired by the constructivist breakthrough in the 90's (Ruggie, 1998; Wendt, 1995), Scandinavian scholars such as Iver Neumann (1999) and Lene

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[1] The development of status literature is marked by the intermittent expansion of factors which are considered to determine the status of states. From classical realists' emphasis on military and economic resources, to the more liberal argument that ideology, culture and moral superiority are auxiliary factors, and most recently the importance of social recognition, springing from sociological network theory (Duque, 2018).

Hansen (2013) pioneered concepts of identity in foreign policy, as well as novel analytical approaches such as discourse analysis. The Norwegian research institute of NUPI has come to play a key role in formulating this tradition, and in recent years it has evolved towards greater emphasis on the concept of status, and how it mediates state behaviour and international relations (de Carvalho & Neumann, 2014; Wohlforth, De Carvalho, Leira, & Neumann, 2018).

Central to the status question in the European context is the concept of the small state. Small states are conventionally considered to be those with a population below 10 million – although some scholars refer to other metrics as well (Thorhallsson, 2018b, p. 20). Small state scholars explore the political logics governing the behaviour of small states on the international scene, and their main finding is that their vulnerability confers both advantages and disadvantages. Icelandic scholar Baldur Thórhallsson is among the foremost theorists of small state foreign policy, with a particular eye to the European context and the EU (Thorhallsson, 2006, 2017).[2] One of his key contributions is that of shelter theory, which posits that small states seek shelter through larger states and international organisations in order to compensate for their inherent vulnerability. Through diplomatic and military backing, economic and societal bonds, small states seek to reduce their exposure to possible threat, in a process reminiscent of the realist concept of "bandwagoning" (Mearsheimer, 2001; Thorhallsson, 2018a).

Thorhallsson has also brought the small state perspective to analysis of the UN Security Council (Thorhallsson & Eggertsdóttir, 2020). Analysing the Austrian bid for a seat in the Council for the term 2009-10, Thorhallsson and Eggertsdottir argue that the Austrian campaign should be understood as a quest to "maintain status" (2020). Indeed, the UNSC has been a favoured topic of status researchers for more than 20 years (Dunton, 2020; Ekengren & Möller, 2020; Langmore, 2013; Malone, 2000). From Malone's seminal work (2000), proceeding on the premise that "membership in the council is seen […] as more of a prize than ever" (Malone, 2000, p. 3) – there is clear consensus that status plays a critical role in understanding how and why countries seek election to the Council.[3]

---

[2] Australian and Canadian scholars were among the first to delve into the question of how state size affects foreign policy behaviour in structurally similar ways, with the modern understanding of the term "middle power" arising shortly after the Second World War (Cooper, 2016; DeT, 1947; Holbraad, 1971, 1984; Robertson, 2017)

[3] Despite having undergone a number of informal reforms in recent years (Baccarini, 2018; Gifkins, 2021), the power differential between permanent and elected members and the coldness of relations within the Permanent

Status Contexts and Moral Authority

Norwegian scholars have also made important contributions to the field of status and small state research. The seminal book *Small state status seeking: Norway's quest for international standing* (2014) showed that small states were also involved in the quest for prestige, although in a significantly different manner than their larger counterparts. This argument has been further developed by more recent entries, such as Wohlforth et al. (2018). Wohlforth et al.'s article proposes that moral authority, i.e. the perception of "goodness", is a key route through which small and middle powers achieve status and recognition (2018). They further claim that an often-used and effective strategy to achieve this is what they call "conspicuous do-goodism"; i.e. engaging in system-supporting and pro-social behaviour towards fellow states in order to "show off" their moral authority and thus achieve a high status.

The literature on status has up to now been conspicuously silent on the moderating factor of status contexts, leaving open how states' specific characteristics in relation to other states may itself impact behaviour and status outcomes (Røren, 2020, p. 2). The transferability of findings are often taken for granted, if they are mentioned at all. This is especially concerning given that status research up to now has been dominated by intensive single-case research (Ekengren & Möller, 2020; Evans, 2015; Larson & Shevchenko, 2014; Malinova, 2014). Scholars studying the intersection of status literature and that of small states are particularly guilty of this, since they rely so strongly on empirical studies of wealthy states in Scandinavia and northern Europe. These states are disproportionately Protestant, social-democratic and internationally oriented. Following Røren's argument, this is a poor basis for generalisation, and although there is growing awareness of this challenge (Duque, 2018; Røren, 2020; Wohlforth et al., 2018), attempts to seriously address it are few in number.

Ireland and Norway as Diplomatic Entities

Attempts to step outside of the high conceptual analyses of interstate relations, into the realm of intrastate politics are even less common. Analyses offered by scholars of status are often based on the conception of states as diplomatic entities, self-consciously pursuing status through various means. Much of this research, particularly in the Nordic context, has relied on elite interviews with high-ranking diplomats to make inferences and judgements on

five has hamstrung its ability to enforce international peace and security (Ekengren, Hjorthen, & Möller, 2020; Lättilä & Ylönen, 2019; Stephen, 2018).

collective perceptions in the world of diplomacy, and how these shape and direct diplomatic engagement (de Carvalho & Neumann, 2014; Ekengren et al., 2020).

This is problematic for a number of reasons. One is that it presumes that the perceptions of Nordic diplomats is representative of diplomats in other states. This is not necessarily the case. Furthermore, such an approach gives improper weight to the impact diplomats have on their countries' foreign policy. I contend that this is too simplistic as a model of the state as a diplomatic entity, and leaving it unexamined risks serious misinterpretation of the process and content of small state status-seeking. In the following section I will expand upon the question of who decides a country's foreign policy, and present a theoretical framework for examining the domestic preconditions of status-seeking.

Foreign Policy and the Elite

> "Beware of the Blob! It creeps, and leaps, and glides and slides across the floor. Indescribable... Indestructible!"
>
> *The Blob* (1958)

From studies of the origins of the First World War (Joll & Martel, 2013), to crisis management during the Cuban Missile Crisis (Allison & Graham, 1999) and the role of personalities in high-stakes decision making (Jervis, 2017), *who decides* has been examined a great many different ways, in various contexts, and with diverse conclusions. Though the appeal of the age-old "Great Man"-theory of historical development is not so strong as it once was, there is still much to be said for the insight which may be drawn from studying those who are intimately involved in the conduct of politics at the international level.

But are they actually in charge of foreign policy? Most scholars disagree. In studying foreign policy as a process, there are widely diverging approaches. Some highlight the importance of individual leaders (Horowitz & Fuhrmann, 2018; Mintz & DeRouen Jr, 2010), others the tug-of-war of bureaucratic organisations (Allison & Halperin, 1972). Yet others highlight the importance of interest groups and public opinion for the political process (Moravcsik, 1997). There are even those who deny the merits of intrastate analysis, arguing that international relations are best understood at the structural level (Mearsheimer, 2001; Waltz, 2000, 2010).

Adopting a less adversarial conception of the decision-making process, another school advocates the concept of the "blob", that is, how the US foreign policy community influence its presence on the international scene (De Graaff & Van Apeldoorn, 2021; Layne, 2017;

Porter, 2018; Walt, 2018). They argue that a small group of well-connected elites and insiders dominate the conversation and conduct of foreign policy of the United States (Porter, 2018), that they needlessly and ineptly pursue an activist policy of liberal hegemony (Walt, 2018), and thus obstruct long-deferred US strategic realignment (Layne, 2017). And although they are not without their critics (Jervis, 2020), the contributions of these scholars have pushed the envelope on the role elites play in conditioning foreign policy.

I propose that the concept of the foreign policy establishment is a good framework for analysing the domestic structure and sources of status for Ireland and Norway, and the main part of my paper will rest on this concept. I use Walt's definition of the foreign policy community, namely "those individuals and organisations that actively engage on a regular basis with issues of international affairs" (2018, p. 95). Note that I use the terms foreign policy community, establishment and elite interchangeably, but they will refer to this definition unless otherwise stated.

The key insight of Walt and his American colleagues lie in their mapping of the institutional and interpersonal structure of the US foreign policy elite, and how this structure mediates the foreign policy of the state. As an approach this is readily transferable to other contexts, and there is no shortage of studies of foreign policy elites in European literature (Bartolucci, 2010; Kratochvíl, 2008; Larsen, 2005). Discourse analysis is commonly used, with themes varying from elite shaping of approaches to terrorism (Bartolucci, 2010), cultural and institutional Europeanisation (Geiger, 2000; Kratochvíl, 2008), and the construction of self-serving exceptionalist foreign policy narratives (Yanık, 2011).

Norwegian and Irish scholars have entered this debate as well (Devine, 2006; Skånland, 2009), with Terje Tvedt being a particularly influential figure (Tvedt, 2007). In his criticism of the Norwegian aid regime and the foreign policy establishment, Terje Tvedt sketched out the blurred lines and revolving door-mechanism characterising relations between official and unofficial foreign policy actors in the Norwegian context (Tvedt, 2007). He took issue with the internationalist character of the Norwegian foreign policy and aid establishment (Tvedt, 2017), claiming it did not serve Norwegian interests either at home or abroad. [4]

Tvedt's arguments have not gone unremarked among the broader academic community in Norway. He has been criticised for cherry-picking data (Gripsrud, 2018), and for engaging in

[4] Note that despite the concept of the foreign policy establishment being present in Norwegian literature, there have as yet been no studies exploring the mechanisms by which it conditions international engagement.

arguments in bad faith (Pharo, 2019). Perhaps most damaging to his argument, however, is his lack of contextualisation. This is, in fact, a common issue with the literature critically evaluating the role of elites in foreign and domestic policy (Jervis, 2020) – in almost all instances, they study only a single case. Comparison is entirely absent as an analytical tool, and the argument is weaker and less transferable as a result.

What I Aim to Do

This paper aims to uncover domestic preconditions of small-state status-seeking behaviour on the international scene. My starting point is that Norway and Ireland are both small states with high status. Furthermore, they follow an explicit strategy of status seeking in their international engagement. Following Walt and others, I argue that their foreign policy establishments play an important role in shaping their quests for status. Using this analytical framework, I conduct an open-ended inductive study of the domestic preconditions of status-seeking behaviour for Ireland and Norway. But first, it is necessary to explain my methodological approach. I will do so below.

Methods

Case Selection

There are a number of reasons why I chose Norway and Ireland as the countries to analyse. One is that I strived towards a priori thematic saturation (Saunders et al., 2018) – a sampling strategy by which one attempts to maximise the difference between research objects, in order to increase the likelihood of making new discoveries or finding nuances which past research may not have uncovered (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1895). Norway and Ireland are structurally similar in population and GDP – given that I purport to analyse “small states”, such structural similarity is a precondition for a functional research design. However, their structural similarity and geographic closeness obscures great differences in domestic factors such as culture, history and politics.

Perhaps because of this, the countries are also conventionally deemed to be of different kinds and are therefore (understandably) not often grouped together in analyses of the character of small state foreign policy. To that end, Norway and Ireland provide an ideal starting point for an empirical analysis. For not only do the countries differ in their domestic characteristics. The countries also inhabit materially different status contexts, having opposite membership status in EU and NATO. Coincidentally, Ireland is often excluded from what is conventionally termed the “Utstein group” (Wohlforth et al., 2018), i.e. a group of wealthy,

multilateralist North Atlantic states often expounding similar values and exhibiting similar behaviour on the international scene. Norway and Ireland are a case of two small states embodying different characteristics and inhabiting different status contexts (Røren, 2020). Despite this, they achieved similar results in the status competition of seeking non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council, and should be understood as states possessing high status in international comparison.

Still, one must assume that common history, culture and institutions springing from historical ties, similar experiences and geographic proximity makes them more similar in nature than, say, Norway and Malawi. This is an inherent problem with comparative research on states conceptually conceived of as possessing high status, given that they are disproportionately situated in the West. Nevertheless, I believe this to be a necessary choice, given the lack of structurally similar high-status states in other regions.

Putting this analysis in the framework of classic comparative case research, one may thus say that I have selected my cases after the most-different principle (Gerring, 2006, pp. 83-84), in which these cases reach similar outcomes (high status) despite contrasting on a number of potentially causal variables. I have also been conscious of the deviancy of each of my cases – that is, how they may and do deviate from expected causal patterns (Gerring, 2006, pp. 74-75).

The Challenge of Comparison

As with any qualitative comparative study, this study is exposed to the challenge of establishing equivalence. To alleviate this, I have heeded van Deth's text on the problems of harmonisation when conducting intercultural comparison (2009). Restricting the analysis to two countries is helpful in respect to establishing equivalence, as it allows for more in-depth research and familiarisation into each specific context. I can also draw on my own intercultural background – I am both Irish and Norwegian. The data I present in the following chapters are carefully sampled on the basis that they have direct equivalents in both countries. The fact that both countries ran for the UN Security Council for the same term means they simultaneously undertook comparable diplomatic initiatives to this end – fruitful ground for exploring their differences.

Data and Analysis

The empirical basis for my thesis is a longstanding inquiry into numerous different sources of data, including but not limited to government documents from both countries, newspaper

articles from domestic and international newspapers as well as analyses of their domestic academic discourses. Some of the angles I have pursued have come about through discussions with colleagues in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, and some through discussions with friends and experts with knowledge of the field.

The analysis I have conducted has been open-ended and inductive, and I have attempted to uncover any domestic factors which might be relevant preconditions for status-seeking. I have approached the evidence with the aim of tracing themes, subthemes and the interrelations between them, in the process known as thematic analysis (Bryman, 2016, pp. 587-589). My method for discerning themes is largely qualitative, although I do make forays into quantitative comparisons on occasion. In instances of direct comparative analyses, they have been chosen as typical examples of concepts and factors that I have uncovered.

As a paired comparative case study, the goal of my analysis will be to uncover *differences* between the objects. Throughout, I will conduct a nominal comparison by which the countries are categorised exclusively and in relation to each other (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 339). The strength of small-N studies such as this lies in their intensive character – having only two cases has allowed me to conceptualise individually tailored themes as we progress through the analysis.

Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

A key concept in developing my hypothesis is that of *necessary* and *sufficient* conditions. This framework for conducting social science research springs from mathematical set theory, but is closely related to classical comparative analysis (Braumoeller & Goertz, 2000; Goertz & Levy, 2007; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). There are two characteristics of a necessary condition: (1) is that it is always present when the event for which it is a condition occurs; and (2) is that the outcome for which it is a condition does not occur in its absence (Braumoeller & Goertz, 2000, p. 846). A sufficient condition is one where, if present, the outcome is always present as well (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012, p. 333). This does *not* mean that the outcome may not occur in its absence.

In the event that the conditions I analyse do not turn out to be sufficient or necessary in the strictest sense, they might still be what Goertz & Levy's call "contributing factors" (2007, p. 10). That is, factors which do not in themselves amount to sufficiency or necessity, but which

contribute to a given outcome.[5] Note that I do not explicitly refer to these concepts in the analysis, but they will return when I summarise and discuss my findings.

Saturation as Validity

The concept I use to evaluate the validity of my findings is that of “saturation”. I draw this concept from Saunders et al.’s article (2018), which discusses the concept at length. The definition given by Glaser and Strauss is instructive:

> *Saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated. (Glaser and Strauss in Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1895)*

This definition is used by Saunders et al. to illustrate their concept of “theoretical saturation”, but it illustrates the key characteristics of saturation as a standard for qualitative research. Saturation is important in all the different stages of the research process – both in sampling, data collection, analysis and theory building (Saunders et al., 2018). I am conscious of the challenge of transparency when utilising saturation as a criterion of validity, and as such I will take care to provide sufficient context and explanation of the examples I choose to raise throughout.

[5] See Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (2003, ch. 10) for an instructive discussion of probabilistic as opposed to deterministic methods.

Chapter 3: Mapping the Foreign Policy Establishment

Structure and Funding

Walt's definition of the foreign policy establishment is "those individuals and *organisations* that actively engage on a regular basis with issues of international affairs" (Walt, 2018, p. 95, my italics). In this section I will present the organisational structure of the foreign policy establishment in Ireland and Norway. I will compare their financial situation and discuss what this might imply about the status of foreign policy in the domestic context. We start with the formal structure of foreign policy: the foreign service and its political leadership.

Politics and Bureaucracy

The structure of Ireland and Norway's foreign policy apparatus is very similar. In Ireland, responsibility for foreign affairs lies under the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Its political leadership consists of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as two subordinate Ministers of State; one for European Affairs, and one for Overseas Development and Diaspora. The Department of the Taoiseach[6] also has purview over some aspects of foreign policy, in particular relations with the European Union and Britain and Northern Ireland (Department of the Taoiseach, 2021a). Naturally, the Taoiseach also has overall responsibility for all government policy, including foreign affairs.

In Norway, responsibility for foreign affairs lies under its own Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The political leadership of the MFA is divided between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Development, with formally equal status. The Ministers also have two and one State Secretaries, respectively.[7] The Office of the Prime Minister also plays a part in foreign policy, but this is relatively smaller than in Ireland (Office of the Prime Minister, 2022). Similarly to Ireland, the Prime Minister is responsible for overall government policy. Having presented the formal political institutions of Ireland and Norway, I will now examine the financial structure of the foreign policy establishment.

Follow the Money

When comparing national budgets, one is immediately confronted with a massive discrepancy in public spending on foreign affairs and international cooperation and development. Taking 2020 as an example, Norway spent €4.41 billion (Utenriksdepartementet, 2022), channelled through the MFA, the Norwegian Agency for

[6] Equivalent to Prime Minister.
[7] Junior Ministers.

Development Cooperation (NORAD) and various international bodies. In comparison, Ireland spent €821 million (Government of Ireland, 2020) through the DFA, and a further €322.4 m through the EU development cooperation budget (Government of Ireland, 2021). In other words, Norway outspent Ireland by a factor of more than 3. Of this, 82 % was spent on development aid in the Norwegian case, while the equivalent figure was 76 percent for Ireland. That means 768 million and 270.3 million EUR, respectively, was spent on the foreign service and its obligations.[8]

Table 1: Irish government spending on foreign affairs and international development (Government of Ireland, 2020, 2021).

Goal	Funding
A. To serve our People at Home and Abroad and to Promote Reconciliation and Co-operation	€88.6 m
B. To Work for a Fairer more Just Secure and Sustainable World	€32.7 m
C. To Advance our Prosperity by Promoting our Economic Interests Internationally	€54.2 m
D. To Protect and Advance Ireland's Values and Interests in Europe	€41.2 m
E. To Strengthen our Influence and Our Capacity to Deliver our Goals	€54.0 m
International Co-operation	€550.7 m
Contributions to the EU Development Cooperation Budget	€322.4 m
Total expenses	€1143.8 m

Table 2: Norwegian government spending on foreign affairs and international development (Utenriksdepartementet, 2022).

Programme area	Funding
Programme area 02 Foreign service	€768 m
Programme area 03 Development aid	€3.64 b
Total expenses	€4.41 b

This gap is present also when adjusting for the proportional funding foreign affairs are devoted over the national budget. Norway spends almost three times as much as Ireland; 3 % of €161 billion (Finansdepartementet, 2020; Utenriksdepartementet, 2020b) as opposed to 1.14% of €71.4 billion (Government of Ireland, 2020). In both relative and absolute terms,

[8] Interestingly, Norwegian spending is itemised into clear categories (i.e. funding to International Organisations, funding of official visits abroad), but Irish funding is only itemised into broad thematic categories (i.e. “Our Values”, “Our Place in Europe”). This is indicative of a cultural gap in financial transparency.

Norwegian funding of foreign policy and development aid dwarfs Irish funding. Clearly, the two countries' foreign policy establishments operate under radically divergent financial conditions. Of the two, Norway's funding structure is more uncommon in international comparison – a fact which has not escaped attention in the past (Salmon, 1998; Tvedt, 2007).

Given the vastly larger Norwegian development aid budget, it follows that the domestic development sector is much larger in Norway than in Ireland. Examining the development sectors in both countries confirms this. Taking humanitarian aid as an example, Norway granted a total of €200.3 m to domestic humanitarian organisations in 2020 (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, 2021). The equivalent figure for Ireland was €19.6 m (Irish Aid, 2022).[9] This gives a glimpse into the sheer difference in scale between the domestic development sectors in each country – a fact I will return to in chapter 4.

As for the media sector, no media organisations or news outlets specialising in foreign affairs are present in either country. The case of Bistandsaktuelt, the only Norwegian periodical devoted to development questions, is illustrative of the broader character of the Norwegian foreign policy establishment. Though formally independent, Bistandsaktuelt is published by NORAD. This is yet another case of public funding underpinning an institution of the foreign policy establishment, as is commonly the case in Norway. Additionally, the staff of Bistandsaktuelt are formally employed by NORAD itself, despite running an independent journal. As we shall see in chapter 4, navigating the grey zone of overlapping roles and uncertain loyalties is not rare for the Norwegian foreign policy establishment.

Research Institutions

The funding gap is evident in academia as well; for while Norway has no less than four independent research institutions devoted to international affairs[10], Ireland has none. The closest equivalent would be the Institute for International and European Affairs (IIEA), a think tank devoted to international questions. In itself, this organisation has only a fraction of the material and human resources of any single Norwegian institution and is in large part a venue for speeches and in-house discussions on current affairs.[11]

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[9] Channelled through the Humanitarian Programme Plan (€15.8 m) and the Emergency Response Fund Scheme (€3.8 m).

[10] Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). One could also include the Norwegian Defence Research Institute (FFI).

[11] The role and place ascribed to think tanks in Norway and in Ireland are quite different. In the former, think tanks are defined as existing outside the academic space. To quote from the Norwegian Encyclopedia SNL: "Think tanks are *not* research institutes" (Garvik, 2021, italics mine). In the latter, this distinction is not so clear-

As a forum for much official discourse on foreign policy questions, the IIEA most closely resembles the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in Norway. However, they are not close to matching them in terms of financial resources. Examining their revenue for the year 2020, NUPI received funding and income amounting to €10.4 million (Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt, 2021), while the IIEA received a paltry €1.65 million in comparison (Charities Regulator, 2022). As it stands, NUPI hovers around 80 employees in total (Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt, 2022), with the IIEA trailing far behind at only 27 employees (Institute for International and European Affairs, 2022). In fact, any single Norwegian research institution in this field dwarfs the Irish IIEA both in funding and personnel, with even the smallest one, Fridtjof Nansens Institutt (FNI), receiving €3.7 million and employing 42 people in full-time or part-time positions (Fridtjof Nansens Institutt, 2021).[12] In other words, the Irish foreign policy research sector not only lags behind Norway in number of institutions, it also lacks the means to match any of them on a pound-for-pound basis.

Comparing the source of their funding is also instructive. Of the IIEA's total funding, only €756.253, or 46 %, came from public sources in 2020 (Charities Regulator, 2022). In comparison, NUPI received a full 86 % of its funding from various government bodies (Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt, 2021, p. 8) – almost twice as high a proportion. This gives an indication of the importance of the public sector for the foreign policy community in Norway. With no access to structural funding at anywhere near the scale of its Norwegian equivalents, the IIEA is reliant on membership fees and on the generosity of sponsors. This may also account for the difference in focus of the IIEA in relation to Norwegian research institutions – emphasising events and public outreach over academic research.[13]

Note that free-standing research institutions are not the only academic institutions engaged in the analysis of foreign policy. University faculties, university research centres and individual scholars also contribute to foreign policy research in both countries. I restrict my analysis to independent research institutions because in contrast to universities and individual academics,

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cut. From Encyclopedia Britannica, think tanks are defined as an "institute, corporation or group organised for *interdisciplinary research* with the objective of providing advice […]" (Ladi, 2015). Interestingly, the Encyclopedia Britannica does not have a separate entry for research institute – perhaps exposing a cultural gap in the status of academia in relation to the political process.

[12] Total revenue for the four Norwegian research institutions amounted to €34.8 million, with PRIO receiving €12.1 million (Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2021), and the CMI receiving €8.6 million (Christian Michelsens Institutt, 2021).

[13] It is worth mentioning the mediating impact of language in this instance. Being an Anglophone country, Irish researchers have knowledge of and access to English language research institutions in the US, Britain and elsewhere. Of course, Norwegian researchers do so as well, but they cannot lean on other countries for native language foreign policy analysis.

they are *specifically* dedicated to foreign policy. This makes them a particularly good proxy for comparing funding for *foreign policy as a research field*, and the status of foreign policy more broadly.

The Media

As for the media sector, no media organisations or news outlets specialising in foreign affairs are present in either country. The case of Bistandsaktuelt, the only Norwegian periodical devoted to development questions, is illustrative of the broader character of the Norwegian foreign policy establishment. Though formally independent, Bistandsaktuelt is published by NORAD. This is yet another case of public funding underpinning an institution of the foreign policy establishment, as is commonly the case in Norway. Additionally, the staff of Bistandsaktuelt are formally employed by NORAD itself, despite running an independent journal. As we shall see in chapter 4, navigating the grey zone of overlapping roles and uncertain loyalties is not rare for the Norwegian foreign policy establishment.

Comparing Research Journals

The status of their leading peer-reviewed academic journals on international affairs is another example of the chasm between them. The Norwegian journal “Internasjonal Politikk” was founded in 1937 and has been published by the independent research institution NUPI since 1960. It is considered the leading Scandinavian-language journal on international affairs, and is issued 4 times a year. This is in contrast to the Irish journal, “Irish Studies in International Affairs”. This journal has only been published since 1979, by the Royal Irish Academy.[14] It is much less advanced as an independent institution than its Norwegian counterpart, only publishing one issue per year. It has no independent organisational structure in the manner of the Norwegian journal, although it does have an editor (John Doyle of Dublin City University). This is evidence of a clear contrast in status and capability of these two journals, which once more speaks to the sizable gap in resources devoted to foreign policy between Norway and Ireland.

Structure, Funding and Status

The institutional structure of the foreign policy establishment is largely the same in Ireland and Norway. It consists of the development sector, the foreign service as well as various research institutions, with the media sector not being particularly prevalent in either case. However, there is a significant gap in funding for these organisations, leading to the

[14] Equivalent to The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters [Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi].

Norwegian foreign policy establishment being larger, richer, and more influential in the domestic context. This could imply that the status of foreign policy in the domestic context is lower in Ireland than in Norway.

These findings are particularly notable in light of Norway and Ireland both having high status on the international scene – implying that financial investment in foreign policy is *not* a precondition of high status. Having examined the *organisational* structure of the foreign policy establishment, I move now to the individual level. In the next chapter will explore how politicians interact with the foreign policy establishment.

Chapter 4: Politicians and the Foreign Policy Establishment

In the following section, I aim to uncover the role each country's elite politicians play in the broader foreign policy establishment, and how their interrelations (or lack thereof) impact upon its institutional influence and resources. I start by analysing the careers of elite politicians in Ireland and Norway, followed by a comparison of the respective Parliaments' Foreign Affairs Committees.

"*Yes, Minister*": Career Trajectories of Elite Politicians

Analysing the career trajectories of key politicians in the two countries can provide insight into the role politicians play in the foreign policy establishment. The most salient difference is that the Norwegian political elite is significantly more engaged in the broader field of foreign policy. To illustrate this, I will present four tables. They will give an overview of, in turn, the career profiles of Norwegian Prime Ministers; Irish Prime Ministers (Taoisigh); Norwegian Foreign Ministers; and Irish Foreign Ministers. The tables cover the period 1981 – now; as 1981saw a significant change of government in both countries.

In the figures, I have included their party affiliation, whether they have been a foreign minister, as well as whether they have pursued a career in international questions either before or after their premiership. I define pursuing an international career as at any point having a full-time job or primary occupation within the field of international relations for any stretch of time. For this information I have used public sources, among others the Stortinget and Oireachtas websites[15], personal websites and online encyclopaediae. I will mention more minor engagement as well, though I do not lend it much analytical attention.

[15] The Storting is the unicameral Norwegian Parliament, and the Oireachtas is the bicameral Irish Parliament. The Oireachtas consists of the lower house Dáil, with legislative powers, and the upper house Seanad, with largely symbolic powers.

Table 3: Career profiles of Norwegian Prime Ministers, 1981 – present

Prime Ministers	Dates	Party affiliation	International career?
Jonas Gahr Støre	2021-	Labour Party	World Health Organisation (WHO), Norwegian Red Cross. Still in politics
Erna Solberg	2013-2021	Conservative Party	No; but heavily involved in international questions in Parliament. Still in politics
Jens Stoltenberg	2005-13, 2000-01	Labour Party	NATO
Kjell Magne Bondevik	2001-05, 1997-2000	Christian Democratic Party	The Oslo Center, UN
Torbjørn Jagland	1996-97	Labour Party	Among others: Council of Europe. Also Norwegian Nobel Committee, Oslo Center
Gro Harlem Brundtland	1991-96, 1986-1990, 1981	Labour Party	WHO, UN
Jan P. Syse	1990-91	Conservative Party	Nordic Council
Kåre Willoch	1981-86	Conservative Party	Nordic Council, International Democratic Union. Also Fridtjof Nansens Institutt, Deutsch-Norwegische Gesellschaft

As one may read from this graph, Norwegian Prime Ministers have also almost uniformly pursued careers in international affairs either before or after their terms, although some have done so to a greater extent than others. There is a clear divergence in the type of international organisations the different politicians have worked in, with Labour Party Prime Ministers most often working in multilateral and humanitarian organisations. Conservative Party politicians seem to be less involved in international organisations than their Labour Party counterparts, and to the extent that they are, the organisations they choose are more limited in scope (Nordic Council as opposed to the WHO or the Council of Europe), more political (International Democratic Union), more academic (Fridtjof Nansens Institutt) and more business-minded (Deutsch-Norwegische Gesellschaft). Bondevik, the only Christian Democratic Prime Minister, occupies something of a middle-ground, as the founder of the

human rights non-profit Oslo Center. Note that Jagland was also involved in the Oslo Center at its inception – a fact which received no little criticism at the time.[16]

This is admittedly a small sample, and we shall therefore expand the analysis to include a broader selection of top politicians in Norway. First, though, we will compare Norwegian Prime Ministers to Irish Prime Ministers (Taoisigh) in the same time period. You may find the equivalent graph below.

Table 4: Career profiles of Irish Taoisigh, 1979 – present

Taoisigh	Dates	Party affiliation	International career?
Micheál Martin	2020-	Fianna Fáil	No; still in politics
Leo Varadkar	2017-20	Fine Gael	No; still in politics
Enda Kenny	2011-17	Fine Gael	No
Brian Cowen	2008-11	Fianna Fáil	No
Bertie Ahern	1997-2008	Fianna Fáil	Some engagement in conflict resolution and human rights bodies
John Bruton	1994-97	Fine Gael	EU
Albert Reynolds	1992-94	Fianna Fáil	No; but personally involved in Indo-Pakistani peace mediation
Charles Haughey	1987-92, 1982, 1979-81	Fianna Fáil	No
Garret FitzGerald	1982-87, 1981-82	Fine Gael	Institute for International and European Affairs (IIEA)

This graph stands in sharp contrast to the graph of Norwegian Prime Ministers. There is a marked divergence in the prevalence of international careers for the Irish Taoisigh. There is only one instance of a former Taoiseach having pursued an international career; that is the case of John Bruton having been EU Ambassador to the United States in 2004-2009. What this primarily indicates is that international careers are not nearly as sought after for Irish politicians as for their Norwegian colleagues. Notably, the only instance it does occur is in the European Union, of which Norway is not a member.

Note also that some former Taoisigh have gotten involved in international affairs, often in the conflict resolution sphere – cf. Bertie Ahern and Albert Reynolds. This is undoubtedly related

[16] Cf. Fredrik Heffermehl's 2006 op-ed in newspaper Aftenposten.

to their involvement in the Northern Irish peace process. Interestingly, their engagement differs from their Norwegian colleagues by being more personal and unofficial as opposed to formalised and institutionally grounded. This is perhaps not surprising for politicians from a country with a highly personalised electoral system[17]. This divergence between the personal and institutional is a clear line of division between the two countries, and it will come up again as we expand the breadth of our empirical analysis. First, however, we shall conduct the same exercise as above with the Foreign Ministers of the two countries. By analysing a wider range of elite politicians, we improve the robustness of our findings and reduce the chance of selection bias. We will once again start with Norway.

[17] See chapter 5.

Table 5: Career profiles of Norwegian Foreign Ministers, 1973 – present

Foreign Ministers	Dates	Party affiliation	International career?
Anniken Huitfeldt	2021-	Labour Party	Still in politics
Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide	2017-2021	Conservative Party	Still in politics
Børge Brende	2013-17	Conservative Party	Yes; WEF, Norwegian Red Cross
Espen Barth Eide	2012-13	Labour Party	Yes; UN (Cyprus), NUPI, SIPRI, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), PES
Jonas Gahr Støre	2005-12	Labour Party	Yes; WHO, Norwegian Red Cross
Jan Petersen	2001-05	Conservative Party	Yes; NORAD, MFA, IDU, OSCE
Torbjørn Jagland	2000-01	Labour Party	Yes; see above
Knut Vollebæk	1997-2000	Christian Democratic Party	Yes; UD, International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
Bjørn Tore Godal	1994-97	Labour Party	Yes; UD
Johan Jørgen Holst	1993-94	Labour Party	Yes; UD, NUPI
Thorvald Stoltenberg	1990-93, 1987-89	Labour Party	Yes; UD, UN, Norwegian Red Cross
Kjell Magne Bondevik	1989-90	Christian Democratic Party	Yes; see above
Knut Frydenlund	1986-87, 1973-81	Labour Party	Yes; UD, academia
Svenn Stray	1981-86	Conservative Party	Yes; Nordic Council

This graph is broadly in line with what was indicated by examining the career trajectories of Prime Ministers. Again, we see a nigh uniform engagement in international questions among Foreign Ministers, with only the two most recent Foreign Ministers being exceptions to the rule (for the time being). Labour Party politicians have been much more likely to pursue careers in the Foreign Service, although Jan Petersen of the Conservative Party has also done so. Petersen is notable as well for being involved in development questions through NORAD.

Knut Vollebæk of the Christian Democratic Party has also been employed by the Foreign Service, as well as having jobs in multilateral organisations such as the ICMP and the OSCE. This places him closer to the Labour Party in terms of the humanitarian and multilateral character of his international engagement – much like his fellow party member and former Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik.

One apparent trend which can be identified through expanding the analysis as above is that the Foreign Service has become markedly less prevalent as a career choice for Norwegian Foreign Ministers over the past 20 years. Almost all the Foreign Ministers from 1981-2005 had backgrounds in or ended up in the Foreign Service. After 2005, this has not been the case for any – a fact which could indicate a change in the relationship between the political and bureaucratic foreign policy elite, as well as a reduction in the institutional influence of the Foreign Service in relation to the broader Norwegian foreign policy establishment. For as influential Norwegian politicians engaged in foreign policy grow less intimate with and connected to the Foreign Service, one would expect their arguments and institutional priorities to hold commensurably less weight.[18]

Another career path of note, once again more common for Labour Party ministers, is that of academia. Three former Labour Party Foreign Ministers have been employed as academics in the field of international relations, and they have occupied positions in a number of different Norwegian and Nordic research institutions. Together with Kåre Willoch of the Conservative Party having been director of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, this shows that there are strong historic links not only between politicians and the foreign service, but also between politicians and academia.[19] The latter is more notable for having been the case for the entire timeframe I have analysed. We proceed to analyse the Irish Foreign Ministers as well.

[18] One does not need to look far to find close personal ties between politicians and high-standing foreign servants – one (in)famous example being former Foreign Minister Ine Søreide’s much-discussed relationship to Norway’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Mona Juul (Steiro Sr., 2021).

[19] One might say that the Norwegian politician in the foreign policy field is reminiscent of the statesman; that is, he engages in the full range of activities and jobs which underpin and constitute the Norwegian foreign policy community. In fact, the apparent intra-elite solidarity has clear parallels to the “Embetsmannsstat” of old (Seip, 1963).

Table 6: Career profiles of Irish Foreign Ministers, 1979 – present

Foreign Ministers	Dates	Party affiliation	International career?
Simon Coveney	2017-	Fine Gael	MEP
Charles Flanagan	2014-17	Fine Gael	No; but engaged in international questions in parliament
Eamon Gilmore	2011-14	Labour	EU
Brian Cowen	2011, 2004-08	Fianna Fáil	No
Micheál Martin	2008-11	Fianna Fáil	No
Dermot Ahern	2004-08	Fianna Fáil	No
David Andrews	1997-2000, 1992-93	Fianna Fáil	Irish Red Cross
Ray Burke	1997	Fianna Fáil	No
Dick Spring	1994-97, 1993-94	Labour	UN
Albert Reynolds	1997	Fianna Fáil	No; see above
Gerry Collins	1989-92, 1982	Fianna Fáil	MEP
Brian Lenihan	1987-89, 1979-81, 1973	Fianna Fáil	MEP
Peter Barry	1982-87	Fine Gael	No
James Dooge	1981-82	Fine Gael	Academia, UN
John Kelly	1981	Fine Gael	No

This graph once again shows the gap between Norwegian and Irish politicians in terms of international involvement. There are only very few instances of politicians pursuing careers in international affairs, with most of them being in the humanitarian space (UN, Irish Red Cross). James Dooge[20] is worth mentioning for being a key figure in scientific bodies, also in the UN, post-politics. Dick Spring was UN envoy for Cyprus, and Eamon Gilmore has served as EU special envoy for peace in Colombia, and is currently the EU Special Representative for Human Rights. Lastly, David Andrews was a longstanding leader of the Irish Red Cross. Note the three Foreign Ministers who served as Members of European Parliament.[21]

[20] Dooge is an interesting case for being the only Irish Minister in modern times not elected to the Dáil. The incoming Taoiseach first appointed him to the Seanad, and then named him Foreign Minister.
[21] This occupies something of a middle ground between national and international affairs, and may perhaps be compared to Norwegian former politicians serving in the Nordic Council. One key difference between these two jobs would be the manner in which they are received; for while one is elected as a Member of the European Parliament by the people directly, the election to Nordic Council President happens indirectly, with only representatives appointed by each member country's Parliament eligible to cast a vote. This has consequences

A Life Outside of Politics..?

The structure of Irish politicians' international engagement is quite different from their Norwegian counterparts. Although there is some overlap[22], with both countries' politicians pursuing careers in the UN and their domestic International Red Cross organisations, for the most part the organisations they choose differ radically. In no cases do Irish Foreign Ministers go into the Foreign Service, while this is quite common in Norway. Academia is also almost absent as a career path, with the only instance in which it occurs being in the field of hydrology and climate research (James Dooge).

Additionally, there are no cases have Irish politicians worked in domestic institutions devoted to international affairs or development. This comes down to two main factors: on the one hand, all Irish public servants are mandated to refrain from political life. Party membership is prohibited, and there is a strong taboo against both present and past political engagement among bureaucrats, not least in the foreign service. This utterly precludes what is so common in Norway; namely close intermingling between politicians and bureaucracy within the extended foreign policy establishment, as well as overlap of politicians rotating from one sector to the other according to preference and opportunity.

The other factor limiting the international careers of Irish politicians is the complete dearth of domestic opportunities for a career in international affairs. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Irish domestic research and development sectors are almost inconsequential in comparison to their Norwegian counterparts. In institutional terms, Ireland simply does not have the capacity to sustain a similarly scaled foreign policy intelligentsia than Norway.

Politicians in the UN

The difference in degree of international engagement among elite politicians is the most important difference I have traced above. The UN is a very common career choice for Norwegian politicians, particularly from the Labour Party and the Christian Democratic Party.[23] Examples of this are manifold, with many very prominent politicians such as former

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for the incentives politicians in the different countries are exposed to, a subject to which we will return in the next chapter.

[22] Coincidentally, former Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide also served on the UN Cyprus portfolio, albeit as Special Advisor to the Secretary General.

[23] See this website for a non-exhaustive list of Norwegians in key positions in the UN.

Prime Ministers Kjell Magne Bondevik and Gro Harlem Brundtland as well as former Ministers Erik Solheim, Espen Barth Eide and Grete Faremo.[24]

There are very few equivalent cases of Irish politicians finding work in the UN or other international organisations in the human rights space. Excepting Dick Spring, the only high-level Irish politician to have joined the UN at a similar level as Norwegian politicians is former President Mary Robinson.[25] Interestingly, one of the few instances of an Irish politician attempting to join the UN system was former Minister for Children Katherine Zappone. She was appointed to a part-time position as Special Envoy for Freedom of Opinion and Expression in June 2021, but was forced to resign after revelations of lobbying and irregularities surrounding her appointment (McConnell, 2021; Molony, 2021).

The European Dimension

EU membership also has significant ramifications for the types of careers Irish and Norwegian politicians may pursue. Ireland being an EU member state allows Irish politicians to pursue political careers at the EU level. As I have shown, this happens frequently. This is obviously not possible for their Norwegian counterparts. This forces Norwegian politicians to look outside of the political sphere if they wish to pursue an internationally oriented career. This may pose part of the explanation for why indeed Norwegian politicians are so commonly found in non-political jobs in the field of international affairs.

The Socialist International?

One apparent trend which is evident from the above tables is the apparent correlation between party membership and international careers. This is most clear among Irish politicians – see for example the fact that all Irish Labour Party politicians have pursued international careers following political office. This sets them apart from their Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil counterparts. Despite the sample size being small, this raises the question of whether some of the difference uncovered above can be explained by the differing party-political landscapes in Ireland and Norway.

With both Labour parties exhibiting social-democratic internationalist ideologies[26] (Arbeiderpartiet, 2021; Labour Party, 2020), one should not perhaps be surprised when politicians from these parties engage in international affairs outside of their political life.

[24] This gap in high-level politicians in the UN system coincides with a massive divergence in funding for UN bodies. This may not be a coincidence.
[25] Serving separately as High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Envoy for Climate Change.
[26] Using Stokke's typology of internationalisms (1989).

Indeed, party structure and ideology may form part of the explanation for why Norway and Ireland differ in terms of foreign policy establishment. Specifically, since social-democratic politicians are almost unanimously engaged in international affairs, one may ask if the historical dominance of the Labour Party in the Norwegian political system has been a contributing factor to the scale of international engagement among key Norwegian politicians for the past 40 years – and on the other side of the equation, if the relative weakness of the Labour Party in Ireland has had the opposite effect. Yet the tendency of elite politicians to work in international affairs is prominent across the political spectrum in Norway, while this is not so in Ireland. This indicates that the differences in international involvement cannot fully accounted for by party structure.

Other Government Ministers

As mentioned in the previous chapter, both the Irish and Norwegian Foreign Ministries have additional Ministers in the political leadership. In the Irish case, these are the two Ministers of State – while in the Norwegian case, these is the Minister for International Development, as well as a total of three State Secretaries. Comparing the career trajectories of these politicians turns up more of the same. Take the current political leadership of the Norwegian MFA. Minister for International Development, Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, has a background from the MFA. The three State Secretaries each have backgrounds from: the foreign policy research sector; the domestic and international development sector; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the Irish case, neither Ministers of State have any professional experience with international affairs – political or otherwise. This is further evidence of a structural gap in politicians' relation to the foreign policy establishment.

Foreign Policy Outside the Realm of Government

The choice to single out Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers above springs from their being the two most influential politicians directly involved in the conduct of foreign policy in their respective countries. However, this trend of difference in politicians' engagement in foreign affairs can be observed more broadly than just among top ministers. Comparing the membership in the parliamentary foreign affairs committees clearly shows the esteem and status of foreign policy among Norwegian politicians, and the corresponding lack of import Irish politicians attach to this policy field.

The Norwegian Foreign Affairs Committee has 16 members and is one of 13 committees in parliament (Stortinget, 2022a, 2022b) – and it is packed with political heavyweights. Its

members include four out of six opposition party leaders[27] the leader of the parliamentary group of both government parties, as well as 1 out of three members of the Christian Democratic Party. The only parties lacking high-standing party figures in the committee are the Green Party and (more surprisingly) the Socialist Left Party.

In striking contrast, the Irish Foreign Affairs committee. It has nine members[28], and is one of thirty in the Oireachtas (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2022a, 2022b).[29] Although it does contain some influential figures[30], but even allowing for the fact that three of Ireland's largest parties currently sit in government, it is a far cry from its Norwegian equivalent. This fact is even more clear in comparison with the more prestigious Dáil committees, such as the Committees for Public Accounts or for Health, both of which contain both more and significantly more prestigious members. The Norwegian Foreign Affairs committee in comparison is by far the most high-ranking committee in terms of the party standing of its members. This is yet more evidence of the status of foreign policy among Norwegian politicians. It further indicates that engagement in foreign affairs is a cross-party phenomenon, and that it is present among parliamentarians as well as government ministers.

The Existence of a Foreign Policy Community

As shown above, Irish politicians are less involved in foreign policy as a policy field, and less connected to the broader foreign policy establishment than their Norwegian counterparts. As such, one may ask whether it makes sense to speak of a foreign policy *community* in the Irish case, given the lack of close ties and overlap between its constituent institutions. To the extent it exists, it is both smaller and more compartmentalised – which could account for the relative weakness of its constituent institutions.

[27] The Conservative Party, The Progress Party, The Red Party and The Liberal Party

[28] There is not a single woman among Irish Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers – and only one out of the nine current members of the Dáil Foreign Affairs Committee are women. This fact speaks to Irish underrepresentation of women in elected office, not least in foreign affairs. Many Irish scholars point to Ireland's "open" electoral system as key to explaining this gender gap (Castles, 1981; Culhane, 2017; McGing, 2013). One can argue that the Norwegian closed list system makes it easier to achieve gender balance in Parliament. In chapter 5 I will discuss these systems. The question of how gender balance in politics might impact small state status seeking is a worthy subject for further inquiry.

[29] Including Seanad (upper house) committees. Note that in contrast to Norwegian Members of Parliament, Irish Members of Parliament (Teachtaí Dála, or TDs) may be members of more than one committee at once. The fact that influential Irish politicians *still* choose other committees is yet more evidence of the lack of import they attach to the field of foreign policy.

[30] Among others, former Foreign Minister Charles Flanagan of Fine Gael and the brother of a former Taoiseach, Barry Cowen of Fianna Fáil. In line with the Irish political character, their influence is informal and personalised rather than institutional.

In the Norwegian case, there is no question as to the establishment's communal character. Furthermore, the sheer size of the foreign policy establishment puts Norwegian politicians in a position whereby attempts to reduce its funding or otherwise hold it to account will inevitably lead to sustained and forceful backlash and criticism from highly educated and well-connected elites. This problem is no less for the fact that Norwegian politicians have such close relations to the broader foreign policy establishment. For evidence of this, one need look no further than the furious and cross-partisan backlash against the government's decision to reroute development aid towards Ukrainian refugee efforts at home – spearheaded by a number of ex-ministers now working in the development sector (Ask, 2022; Kvadsheim, 2022; Nyborg, 2022; Solheim & Skårdalsmo, 2022).

Politicians, Community and the Foreign Policy Status Gap

One conclusion from this analysis is that the status gap of foreign policy in the domestic context can be traced not just in institutional structure and funding, but also in the behavioural patterns of politicians. Norwegian politicians at the elite level are much more likely to pursue foreign policy as an area of specialisation. They are also more likely to have a foreign policy background before they go into politics, and to go into foreign affairs after their political tenure. This in tun illustrates a broader difference in the relations between politicians and the foreign policy community: Norwegian politicians, particularly on the elite level, and particularly in certain ministries – are insiders and peers of the broader foreign policy establishment. Irish politicians are not. The reason for this divergence is unclear. In the next chapter I will turn to the countries' political and electoral systems in order to find an explanation.

Chapter 5: Elections and the Foreign Policy Establishment

"I feel, more and more, the time wasted, that is not spent in Ireland."

Lady Gregory

There are significant differences between the Irish and Norwegian political systems. In this section I will analyse the electoral system of each country, in order to illustrate the political foundations of the foreign policy establishment. The key difference I will examine is the way politicians are elected to office. I argue that the Norwegian and Irish electoral systems promote different kinds of elite politicians, and that this shapes the foreign policy establishment and impacts the status of foreign policy in the domestic context.

Comparing the Electoral System

In the literature on political representation the question of how electoral systems impact candidate selection in democracies is still contested (Aylott, Ikstens, & Lilliefeldt, 2014; Shomer, 2014). Shomer argues that electoral systems do not directly impact on candidate selection, believing they should be analysed on the country level and treated conceptually separate from the party-level variable of candidate selection processes (2014). Drawing from Aylott et al. (2014), Arter argues that such a conceptual divide is overblown, and that candidate nomination is "a two-way relationship allowing for varying degrees of central party involvement" (2013, pp. 117-118). Although I do conceptually separate electoral system and candidate selection, my comparison's main goal is to bring Arter's argument one step further. I propose that the electoral system conditions parties' candidate nomination processes, and through this process conditions the structure of their foreign policy elite.

I will characterise the countries' candidate selection systems according to the dimensions of *inclusive-exclusive* and *centralised-decentralised*, as drawn from Shomer (2014). For Shomer, candidate selection processes are inclusive to the extent they involve a larger share of party members (as opposed to party elites) in candidate selection, with the most inclusive systems involving non-party members as well. The centralised candidate selection, on the other hand, is when 'candidates are selected exclusively by a national party selectorate with no procedure that allows for territorial and/or functional representation'" (Hazan in Shomer, 2014, 536).

I will focus on the election to the national parliaments (Storting and Dáil). This is because national politicians are the only ones engaged directly in questions of foreign policy on a professional level.

Norway: "Open" Electoral Lists

One key formal characteristic separates the Norwegian electoral and hence candidate selection system from its Irish counterpart: the single non-transferable vote. In the Norwegian electoral system, voters cast one vote for one party, and their vote goes towards the election of representatives in one of 19 multi-member electoral constituencies, totalling 150 representatives. Constituencies have between four and 19 seats. In addition, one seat for each of the 19 electoral districts is awarded on the basis of national vote share, distinct from the constituency vote share.[31] This gives a total of 169 seats. In national elections, candidates are elected according to their ranking on party lists, with each party getting their proportion of seats according to vote share in each constituency. In the end, seats are granted to candidates in order of their ranking on the electoral list of each party. Party lists are formally open – voters have the right to rearrange the ranked list of candidates for the party they are voting for in each constituency. However, any change in candidate ranking requires that more than half of all voters for a specific party in a constituency make the same rearrangement. This has never happened, and is highly unlikely to happen in the future (Kommunal- og distriktsdepartementet, 2017). Candidate selection in Norway is thus very much an intra-party process, in which only party members are involved in selecting and composing electoral lists for national office. I thus deem the Norwegian candidate selection system to be moderately exclusive.

In Norway, parliamentary candidate selection takes place through "nomination conventions in each constituency (i.e. the 19 counties), which are composed of delegates elected by the municipal branches" (Valen et al. in Allern & Saglie, 2012, p. 968). There is some degree of variance between parties in candidate selection (Allern & Saglie, 2012; Jupskås, 2013), but most parties largely conform to the mean. Norway thus combines top-down and bottom-up government (Allern & Saglie, 2012, p. 966), and there is some degree of local and regional influence over candidate selection for national office (Allern & Saglie, 2012; Aylott et al.,

[31] Note that these seats are only granted to parties receiving 4 % national vote share and above.

2014; Bille, 2001). The Norwegian candidate selection system is thus, institutionally speaking, fairly decentralised.[32]

Ireland: The Single Transferable Vote

The Irish system diverges from the Norwegian electoral system through its usage of the Single Transferable Vote (STV). In Ireland, voters rank their candidates according to preference, and the voting proceeds in rounds. Each round, the candidate with the lowest tally is struck from the list, and their votes are redistributed to other candidates according to preference. Counting is stopped once enough candidates have reached the voter threshold (the quota), or if there are only as many candidates left as there are seats in the constituency. This system should be viewed as very inclusive indeed. Even voters who do not vote for a specific party in their first preference vote may influence the final ranking of candidates in relation to each other – a factor which not uncommonly goes against party wishes.[33]

There are currently 39 constituencies in Ireland each with between 3 and 5 seats, and these form the basic unit for which politicians can be elected to national office, totalling 160 seats as of the 2020 elections. Similarly to Norway, nomination of candidates is conducted by the constituency branches of parties through a party convention. However, candidates are not ranked by lists, and voting patterns are to a much greater extent "personality-based and candidate-centric" (Culhane, 2017, p. 53). There is a very strong element of localism in this system, and the electoral system is friendly to independents with local support. This shifts the balance of power between individual politicians/local party branches and the party central towards the preferences of the former, and I therefore deem candidate selection to be quite decentralised in Ireland.

Election or "Selection"

Comparing Norway with Ireland on these metrics, Ireland clearly has an electoral system which incentivises greater responsiveness to local and regional preferences on behalf of party elites. In other word, one may speak of the Norwegian electoral system as one in which candidates are selected to office, while the Irish one is one where candidates are elected to office. According to Mudde & Kaltwasser, "… [E]litists want politics to be exclusively or predominantly an elite affair, in which the people do not have a say …" (2017, p. 7). On this

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[32] See Allern & Saglie (2012) for further discussion of how informal party networks impact the level of centralisation in Norwegian politics more broadly.
[33] Cf. Former Minister for Social Welfare (among other things) Brendan Daly of Fianna Fáil lost his seat in Clare in 1992 to party colleague Tom Killeen.

dimension, Norway's electoral system clearly exhibits a party-centric and elitist character, while the Irish system is much more open and inclusionary. I propose that this has a range of direct and indirect effects on the Norwegian and Irish foreign policy space, which I will discuss below.

The Impact of District Magnitude

The number of seats per constituency, also referred to as the district magnitude (Lijphart, 2012, p. 137), may also impact candidate selection processes. As mentioned, Norwegian constituencies vary in size from 4 to 19 seats. Parties have no reason to refrain from standing as many candidates as they wish, and popular parties may thus receive 6 or even more seats in the largest constituencies. Large constituencies and a non-transferable vote system mean that individual candidate choices in each constituency have less of an impact on electoral prospects. It follows that central party elites will have more success in proposing their preferences for consideration in regional candidate selection conventions.[34]

This leads to more electoral options and hence greater electoral security for politicians popular within the party, and not least within the party elite.[35] With their national office more secure, Norwegian politicians are freer to pursue their chosen policy specialisation. This trend is evident not least in foreign policy – as we saw in chapter 4 almost all Norwegian Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers for the past 40 years have had significant extrapolitical engagement in international affairs.

Under the Irish system, by contrast, constituencies vary between 3 to 5 seats. Due to the single transferable vote, standing too many candidates in constituencies risks splitting the party vote and thus preventing either candidate from reaching the electoral threshold. In Ireland, parties are structurally incentivised to select a small number of candidates for each constituency – 2 or 3 at the very most. This encourages personalised voting and campaigning, and makes it much harder for central party elites to parachute central party preferences into constituencies, as parties are at greater risk of losing if they field electorally weak candidates.

[34] Examples abound of Norwegian politicians selected on the basis of intra-party standing as opposed to local ties and electoral appeal. From the 2021 election alone, one may mention sitting Minister for the Environment for the Labour Party, Espen Barth Eide (elected to Parliament as their 3rd candidate for Oslo). Former Progress Party leader, Carl I. Hagen also won a contested first place on the Oppland Progress party electoral list, despite having no real ties to the constituency. This has happened despite the well-documented negative impact selecting unpopular candidates with few local ties has on electoral performance (Fiva & Smith, 2017; Galasso & Nannicini, 2011).

[35] This is much more the case for larger parties, as smaller parties will by definition not have the same number of seats in each constituency.

The Irish politician is a hostage of their constituents and must always be mindful of constituents' interests, lest they oust them in favour of their running mate.

Party or People?

The intra-party character of the Norwegian system leads to candidates' primary incentive being to uphold their standing within the party if they wish to maximise their (s)electoral prospects. Only by tending their relationships to fellow party members, both in the central organisation as well as local and regional branches, can politicians increase their chance of being voted to favourable positions on party lists, and hence improve their electoral prospects. This leads to party loyalty coming first by far on the list of priorities for Norwegian politicians – a factor well attested to in the literature (Heidar & Karlsen, 2018, p. 73).

In a way, this can be viewed as democratic, as national politicians are incentivised to be responsive to their local party branches. However, this is very much an intra-party process, by which party members alone may influence electoral lists and consequently candidate election. This places a premium on party standing, rather than local standing, to preserve electoral prospects. Cross-party support is nowhere near as valuable for political success in Norway than it is in Ireland. This allows for a different kind of politician to rise to prominence on a national level in Norway – the "backroom boy". As we have seen, the Norwegian system has many examples of this type of politician: often with career backgrounds outside of politics, but always a party insider.

The intra-party character of the Norwegian electoral system also insulates politicians from political backlash for neglecting their constituents. This liberates politicians to engage themselves in political questions and policy fields which exist at the national level as opposed to local concerns.[36] As mentioned, many elite politicians have used this freedom to specialise in international affairs, which is all the more notable because this is the policy field which is furthest from local politics. While such an attempt would be (and has been) extremely risky electorally for an Irish politicians, Norwegian politicians face few repercussions. On the contrary, the fact that virtually all Norwegian Prime Ministers for the past 40 years have been

[36] Note as well that there is a significant difference in the structure of local government between the two countries. There are fewer tiers of local government with fewer responsibilities and powers in Ireland as opposed to Norway (Local Government Information Unit, 2022; Stortinget, 2019). This makes constituents more reliant on their TDs to advocate local issues, and empowers the local dimension in national politics.

strongly engaged in international questions both during and after their political careers, one might even wonder whether such a focus helps rather than hinders their political ambitions.

Elitism and its Consequences

"… he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of *Parliament* …"

Edmund Burke, *Speech to the Electors of Bristol*, 1774

Having a system in which politicians are allowed to specialise in foreign policy (or any other national policy field) will presumably make them more experienced, and hence also competent and effective as political actors. They should be better equipped to ensure the accountability of bureaucrats to political leadership (Gailmard, 2012), thus preserving democratic governance over the central government. In addition, politicians who are insulated from electoral backlash will be free to represent the interest of the nation over the interest of their constituency.

On the other hand, there are some potential pitfalls to a system in which politicians are divorced from political consequences. Part of this springs form their accountability being mainly to their party over any particular constituency. On a personal level, this may lead to politicians growing distant from their constituents, as there is no reason to keep abreast of developments among their voters and in their constituencies. Elite politicians are free to pursue close relations with colleagues and with adjacent elites – not least the broader foreign policy establishment.

"See No Evil": the Case of Bondevik and the Oslo Centre

The Norwegian foreign policy establishment enjoys high status and faces little serious domestic opposition. Take as an example the reaction to former Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik and his Oslo Centre[37] receiving payment from authoritarian Kazakhstan for promoting its views in Norwegian media (Aas, 2022) as well as facilitating contact between Saudi religious figures and Norwegian politicians (Drefvelin & Krokfjord, 2021). Despite being criticised in the media, there have been no sanctions levelled on Bondevik or the Oslo Centre to date – particularly notable for happening in a country which has robust practices for the accountability of publicly funded bodies.

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[37] Note that the Oslo Center is an independent non-profit organisation, and does not receive regular funding from official Norwegian sources. It does however receive project funding from official Norwegian institutions such as NORAD and the MFA as well as the Christian Democratic Party. See their annual reports for the full list here.

On the contrary, the lack of media attention and dearth of sanctions following the revelation of Bondevik's questionable dealings illustrate the degree to which the broader foreign policy establishment have special status in Norwegian society. Despite – or, perhaps, because of – close ties to Norwegian politics, the Norwegian foreign policy establishment politicians may do no wrong. Even when they do, in fact, do wrong,[38] there are virtually no repercussions – spending on foreign affairs and development increases year by year (Utenriksdepartementet, 2022), politicians deny responsibility (S. T. Hansen, 2022), and business continues as usual. This illustrates one of the problems of the Norwegian foreign policy community – namely that its lack of clear inter-institutional and personal boundaries contributes to a lack of accountability for its mistakes.

"All Politics is Local"

It is instructive to contrast this with the Irish system. Due to the usage of the Single Transferable Vote, voters have much greater influence over candidate ranking on election day. This empowers also those voters who are not politically affiliated and incentivises parties to select candidates according to their standing in their local constituency. Irish politicians are to a much greater extent expected to put in the work for their constituents, and the job of the politician is to "act as a medium between local constituents and the state's administrative apparatus" (Culhane, 2017, p. 53). The politician always has one eye on his constituency, and there have been many instances of ministers voted out of office by constituents for being "out of touch".[39] The career path for the prominent Irish politician is *local,* in that it presupposes strong constituency support, and it is *political,* in that it puts a premium on personal political skill.

These differences are neatly captured by a term often used in Irish literature on political representation, and that is "localism" (Carty, 1981; Chubb, 2014; Culhane, 2017; Gallagher, 1980; Gallagher & Komito, 2017; S. Martin, 2013). I use Culhane's terse definition of localism as "a preference for the local" (Culhane, 2017, p. 46). This is clearly in evidence in the Irish electoral system, and it is a significant factor in shaping the Irish foreign policy

[38] Cf. the revelation that the MFA had failed in preventing Norwegian weapons exports to the UAE in direct contravention with the established principle of prohibiting weapons exports to countries at war (Zachrisen, 2021).

[39] This has led to a number of high-profile government ministers losing their seats in local elections. Besides the aforementioned Brendan Daly, former Minister of State for Finance, Michael D'Arcy of Fine Gael lost his seat in Wexford in 2020 and former Minister for Children James Reilly of Fine Gael lost his seat in Dublin Fingal in 2016 (among others). In Norway, politicians who have served as ministers are almost certain to be granted a "safe" ranking on an electoral list, should they so wish.

establishment. The Irish electoral system promotes a certain type of politician – one who is judged by their ability to promote their constituency, and who is punished if they are deemed to do so inadequately. With politicians disincentivised to focus on foreign policy, it should come as no surprise that funding of the field of foreign policy is so much lower than in Norway.

"Money Talks?" Politics and Funding of the Foreign Policy Establishment

I propose that the electoral system must be taken into account if one is to understand how Norway and Ireland have followed such different paths. One mechanism at play here is the imperative to legitimise claims on funding in the face of tough competition. Where total government spending is only 42 % of what it is in Norway, the Irish foreign service need to put forward compelling arguments for increasing its share of the proverbial pie. This fact is exacerbated by the localism of Irish politics. The political system is much more unforgiving towards politicians who forget their constituents, and politicians are strongly disincentivised to push for greater funding of foreign affairs and development aid. Furthermore, given that elite politicians are much less inclined to pursue a career in international affairs, they also have less personal incentive to shift public spending towards foreign affairs and development aid. This works to restrict funding for the Irish foreign policy establishment and goes a long way towards explaining its relative institutional weakness in comparison to Norway.

Electoral Structure, Elitism and Localism

In this chapter, I have identified two key characteristics of the Irish and Norwegian political system; that is, elitism and localism. I have traced how these are reflected in the structure of their electoral systems, how they moderate politicians' behavioural incentives and thereby impact the structure and character of the foreign policy establishment. In Norway, strong party control of candidate selection empowers party elites and enables the election of party insiders without individual power bases or ties to any particular constituency. In Ireland, the political system empowers district-level electorates, and politicians neglect their voters at their own peril. This strengthens the local dimension in Irish politics, and restricts the formation of a tightly knit foreign policy establishment in the Norwegian mould. Having established the political foundations of the foreign policy establishment, we now turn to its consequences for academia and intellectual discourse.

Chapter 6: History, Intellectual Traditions and Foreign Policy Discourse

Previous chapters have found strong divergence in the structural and financial conditions of foreign policy in each country. They also suggest that the status of foreign policy is different in Norway than Ireland. In this section I turn away from the realm of the political and into the field of public discourse. I will start by examining each country's official diplomatic histories, presenting their background and discussing what they tell us about the role of the foreign ministry in foreign policy discourse. [40] Afterwards, I analyse the broader academic and political discourse surrounding foreign policy and suggest what effects this may have diplomats and their political leaders.

Comparing the "Official" Version

To date, twelve volumes of documents from Ireland's diplomatic history have been published, covering the period from 1919 up until 1965. This is part of the ongoing "*Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*" project, run jointly by the Royal Irish Academy, the National Archives, and the Department of Foreign Affairs. No equivalent project has been conducted in Norway. The closest Norwegian equivalent is a project on the history of Norwegian foreign policy, financed by the Norwegian MFA was finished in 1997. This covers the period from 1905 up until 1995 in 6 volumes.[41]

The difference in genre is notable. The Irish project is a collection of largely unedited historical documents selected to give public insight into Ireland's positions and thinking during key events in the history of Irish foreign policy. The Norwegian project, by contrast, is a series of narrative historical volumes detailing the history of Norwegian foreign policy in the manner of more traditional history books.

As both of these projects were officially funded attempts at diplomatic histories, their differences are instructive. The Irish project is ambitious, exhaustive, and, one might add, overwhelming. Thousands and thousands of separate documents sorted by date with no

[40] I use discourse as it is understood in common parlance, i.e. "spoken or written discussion" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022).

[41] Other analyses of the history of foreign policy include *Norwegian Foreign Policy and its Ideational History* (Knutsen, Leira, & Neumann), and *First of the Small Nations: The Beginnings of Irish Foreign Policy in the Inter-war Years, 1919-1932 (Keown)* – both published in 2016. As academic works these also exhibit real differences – with the former being a multidisciplinary work of conceptual history, and the latter being a more traditional work of historical scholarship. In terms of theme and analytical focus, Keown's work is directly comparable to the second volume of the *History of Norwegian Foreign Policy (Berg, 1995)* – albeit published 20 years later. This could indicate a gap in the diversity and maturity of foreign policy as a field of research.

reading guide, little annotation or commentary, is not well suited for public consumption or for promoting public or academic understanding of the foreign service as an institution. No casual observer can be expected to trawl through all these documents in order to achieve greater understanding of the broad strokes and patterns of Irish foreign policy. Such an effort can only be expected of specialists or academics. This fits with the expressed intention of the project, as outlined in a 1996 white paper on foreign policy, which states that "… the Department of Foreign Affairs […] will publish a series of foreign policy documents of historic interest. It is hoped that this initiative will encourage and assist greater *academic* interest in the study of Irish foreign policy" (Ireland. Dept. of Foreign Affairs, 1996, my italics).

This diverges notably from the expressed intention of the Norwegian project, which was the "national duty to give the Norwegian people a broad understanding of Norway's place and role in international society. Only with such an understanding will *new generations have the basis for participating in the formation of Norwegian foreign policy* in face of the new challenges which the accelerated process of internationalisation will entail at the beginning of the 21st century." (Bjørgo, Rian, & Kaartvedt, 1995, translation by Salmon, 1998, my italics). In foreign policy as in other areas, the Norwegian approach has been to prioritise accessibility to a broader audience, in order to build a broader understanding and a better basis for future decision-making.

It is telling that the official story of the Norwegian MFA takes such an accessible form. This speaks to the high status of foreign policy in Norwegian society, a culture of open debate and a willingness to engage a broader section of the population in questions of foreign policy. This is in contrast with the Irish project, which could indicate a culture in which it is not the role or goal of the foreign service to make its own history accessible to the broader population. With less popular exposure to the history of Irish foreign policy, it stands to reason that the domestic debate on foreign policy is less vibrant, less diverse and less developed.

Funding undoubtedly plays a part in this. I have shown above that Norway's foreign policy establishment is large, diverse and well-resourced. The Norwegian MFA directed this project, financed it and published it – and the project has received praise for being uncommonly well-resourced, particularly for such a small nation (Laursen, 1999). The Documents of Irish Foreign Policy is a cooperative endeavour with representation from the Ministry, but also the

Royal Irish Academy and the National Archives. In the light of the ministries' diverging financial situations, this can perhaps be explained as financial necessity, but this itself reflects the discrepancy in the conditions under which the Norwegian and Irish foreign services operate.

Participatory Orientation and Elite Orientation

This funding gap gives credence to the apparent divergence in status of foreign policy in the respective domestic context, and this also has repercussions for their foreign policy establishments. It is telling that the Norwegian MFA could afford to stand alone in directing and funding its own history. This privileged financial situation enabled them to recruit top historians to an uncommonly well-resourced project, written in an accessible genre, aimed at enlightening the Norwegian people. Their goal was fundamentally inclusive and geared towards a wider audience than those with a special interest in the field.

The inception of the DIFP stands in stark contrast. The project had a fundamentally academic ambition from the very beginning, initially being raised by the political director of the DFA in the capacity of his membership in the Royal Irish Academy (Documents of Irish Foreign Policy, 2022). There is no mention of the Irish people in the project's stated goals, and the choice of genre can hardly be claimed to appeal to a wider audience. Some of this can be explained by the institutions involved in the project.[42]

While the MFA could stand alone in writing its history, the DFA had to cooperate with other official institutions. The necessity of having partners likely impacted the chosen genre – and the use of unedited archival extracts would indicate that the National Archives played a key part in the project's form. The importance of the National Archives is evident also in the official story of the founding of the DIFP. They take care to point out that the permission of the Director of the National Archives was "necessary for the publication of material in his care." (Documents of Irish Foreign Policy, 2022). The respective genre choices serve to perpetuate the ruling paradigm of the foreign policy establishment. The Norwegian project is open and accessible, opening the space for a broader and more inclusive (if publicly directed) debate. The Irish project, however, consigns the job of substantive analysis and interpretation to the academic space, thus reducing the scope for a broad and inclusive public debate.

[42] There is an irony here. For as we have seen, the Irish political system places personal accountability to the electorate front and centre, while the Norwegian system liberates elites to support and promote each other. Perhaps this difference is not so clear-cut as it might appear.

Furthermore, the differing role of the respective foreign services in these projects is characteristic of different cultures of academic engagement for public servants in the two countries. In Norway, research projects are often sponsored by the MFA[43], and ministry officials are often personally involved and included in academic debates and the broader research space.[44] This is very rare in Ireland. The roles and institutions of the foreign policy establishment are much more clearly separated, and the foreign policy elite – whatever their institution – largely keep to their own field. This goes for academics, politicians and bureaucrats, as well as the development sector.

Knowledge Production

It follows that the Norwegian MFA has greater influence over foreign policy research in Norway than the DFA in Ireland. The MFA is both able and willing to step into the foreign policy research space – reinforcing the interlinkage and overlap of the Norwegian foreign policy establishment. An important consequence of this is that the MFA has a significant influence in the direction of research, i.e. on what is and is not prioritised. This gives them an advantage over their Irish colleagues, as they may direct research towards their chosen fields, as well as those which might legitimise their position and influence. Through this, they entrench their high domestic status and perpetuate their privileged financial position.

The Law of the Jungle

To use a zoological analogy, one may think of the Norwegian MFA as the alpha wolf in a wolf pack – taking a key position in a (relatively) collegial environment, and with some leeway to direct its pack to its own ends. Its influence is, however, modified by the existence of other actors with independent institutional resources. The Irish DFA, by contrast, is a big fish in a small pond. It may be unchallenged in terms of influence, but this is due to lack of competition than to its own power. It operates in an environment that is much more institutionally fragmented, and it has little opportunity to direct or influence the direction and priorities of the broader foreign policy establishment – least of all the politicians.

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[43] For evidence of this, look no further than the budgets of Norwegian foreign policy research institutions (Christian Michelsens Institutt, 2021; Fridtjof Nansens Institutt, 2021; Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt, 2021; Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2021).

[44] Cf. the debate between UN Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby and historian Stein Tønnesson in the journal Internasjonal Politikk following Norway's last term in the UN Security Council (2003a, 2003b; 2003).

Self-Conception and the Academic Discourse

Self-conception is another dimension on which these countries diverge. In a 2020 article, Thorhallsson and Eggertsdóttir make the point that Austria perceives itself to be more than just another "small state" – in fact, there is a quite significant flirtation with the label of "middle-sized state" in the domestic discourse during their UNSC campaign (2020, p. 71). This mirrors a long-standing debate on self-perception and international branding in Norway, which has seen terms such as "humanitarian great power", "small state" and "small middle power" thrown around with gusto (de Carvalho & Neumann, 2014; Østerud, 2006). Attempting to define its place in the world has been an explicit theme in Norwegian foreign policy scholarship for decades, and an area in which both academics, bureaucrats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself and key Norwegian politicians have been involved (Egeland, 1984, 1996; Frydenlund, 1982; Godal, 2003; Kolby, 2003a; Stokke, 1989; Støre, 2011).

Comparing this to the Irish foreign policy discourse is instructive, for they diverge in a number of interesting ways. One concerns the difference in the degree of involvement of politicians and former politicians in the academic debate surrounding foreign policy. In Norway, there is a longstanding tradition of foreign ministers writing memoirs, and these often touch upon Norway's place in the world. These memoirs are considered canonical in the history of Norwegian foreign policy analysis. Politicians, in particular from the long dominant Labour Party, have been strongly involved in the academic debate.

In Ireland, there is no such tradition. Politicians and former politicians are distinctly lacking in the academic debate, which is dominated to a much greater degree by academics. Key themes in Irish foreign policy research are Anglo-Irish relations and the Northern Ireland question (Stevenson, 1998; Whitman & Tonra, 2017), the implications of Irish postcolonial heritage (Flannery, 2009; Laird, 2015), Irish neutrality (Devine, 2006; Driscoll, 1982; Jesse, 2006) and the meaning and value of Ireland's membership of the EU (Geary, 2017; Laffan & O'Mahony, 2008; Tonra, 2018). More recently, there has been interest in Ireland as a rising power, or a power in transition (Tonra, 2013) – but also in Ireland's vulnerability as a small power in a volatile neighbourhood post-Brexit (Rees & O'Brennan, 2019).

The domestic debate on international self-perception and branding in Ireland has put less emphasis on self-labelling in the manner so common among Norwegian politician-academics. Altogether, the academic debate seems to be distinctly more academic and less practically

oriented in Ireland than in Norway. This is in accordance with what we would expect given the compartmentalisation and specialisation of the Irish foreign policy establishment. And although labels have started being thrown around in both international (Charlemagne, 2020) and domestic (O'Sullivan, 2020) media, these efforts are nowhere near as mature as is the case for Norway.

Diversity of Political Opinion

All in all, Ireland has significantly less domestic debate on international questions. This is true on the academic side, as evidenced by the very large gap in research funding and institutions in the field. It is also true in the political space. Take as an example the Parliamentary debate surrounding each country's bids for the UN Security Council. In Norway, both ends of the political spectrum expressed scepticism about the value of running for a seat. Both the Progress Party's Christian Tybring Gjedde and the Red Party's Bjørnar Moxnes questioned Norway's campaign expenditure through written questions in Parliament (Moxnes, 2020a, 2020b; NTB, 2020; Tybring-Gjedde, 2018). No equivalent scepticism can be detected among Irish parliamentarians[45], though not for lack of interest – a large number of TDs tabled questions about the progress of the Security Council campaign (Collins, 2018; Haughey, 2019; Heydon, 2018; M. Martin, 2019).

Norway has the institutional framework to support a much more nuanced foreign policy discourse than Ireland. As we saw in chapter 3, funding for independent research institutions dedicated to international relations is more than 20 times lower in Ireland than in Norway. Ireland simply does not have the capacity to support a diverse and well-resourced foreign policy intelligentsia. This limits Ireland's ability to sustain minority views on foreign policy. As a consequence, there is a very low level of political representation for oppositional voices on foreign policy in Ireland. This may indeed be regarded as a distinct characteristic of the Irish political system. Irish opinion on the European Union is a case in point. Ireland is the most EU-friendly country in Europe, with popular support for EU membership ranging between 84 and 93 % for the past five years (European Movement Ireland/Red C Poll, 2022). This translates into an absence of Eurosceptic TDs in the Dáil – quite a rarity in the broader European context. In Irish foreign policy, consensus is king.[46]

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[45] Though here was an attempt to inquire about the cost of the campaign (Collins & Broughan, 2018). This was neatly sidestepped by the Foreign Minister.

[46] This finding mirrors recent debate and writings on conformism in Ireland (Scally, 2021).

Participation and the Scope for Debate

The comparative underdevelopment of the independent Irish foreign policy establishment leads to the Irish DFA being relatively more influential over both the conduct of and the discourse around foreign policy. Only the IIEA and the journal referenced above have as their primary occupation the analysis of Irish foreign policy and international relations.[47] Neither of these entities can rival their equivalents in the Norwegian context – and as a consequence, even the academic debate is smaller and less diverse.

In broad terms, this comes down to the room for manoeuvre that foreign policy actors are afforded by their circumstances. Both the financial situation and the gap in institutional funding for the foreign policy establishment mean that the countries have different circumstances. Choice, or lack thereof, is the operative word. Norway lavishly funds its broader foreign policy establishment, and actively attempts to foster engagement in international questions. Localism and budget constraints restrict Ireland from adopting a similar approach.

In Norway, the foreign policy discourse is large, diverse, free and open. This allows political and bureaucratic decision-makers to pick and choose ideas to adopt according to their preferences (albeit subject to the constraints of heavy criticism if their chosen theory and practice diverge too sharply from the current consensus). Under competent leadership, there is scope for shifting the consensus and practice of foreign policy – as has happened under foreign ministers from Stoltenberg to Støre (Leira & Græger, 2017). Despite the existence of inter-institutional links, the Norwegian context is characterised by diverse and robust debate on foreign policy, and as such one would expect Norwegian diplomats and politicians to be less at risk of groupthink. However, the pluralistic structure of its foreign policy community as well as the diversity of its debate also reduces the scope of political leaders to influence its course, and makes it slow to change.

Ireland: an Elite-Driven Discourse?

By contrast, Ireland's foreign policy community is small, internal and exclusionary. In Ireland, the process of policy formulation and foreign policy decision-making is less characterised by openness and public discourse. A much smaller proportion of the population are actively engaged in debate – the preference is for local issues and local concerns. As such,

[47] That is not to say that no organisations take an interest in what the Irish government does; a number of interest groups and NGOs both local and international are deeply concerned with what the DFA does, says, and spends its money on.

the high level of consensus on the foreign policy front could be a misleading metric. Since it does not coincide with the diffusion of expertise or vibrancy of debate on international affairs, it gives the impression of unity where the reality might rather be that the public abdicate responsibility for foreign policy to elites, as some scholars have suggested (Berinsky, 2009). If so, this would grant political leaders greater scope to act as thought leaders on foreign policy.

Further examination indicates that this is not so. Take for example the recent call by Taoiseach Micheál Martin for a Citizens' Assembly to discuss Irish neutrality, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Leahy, 2022). He was later joined by both Foreign Minister Coveney of Fine Gael as well as President Michael D. Higgins (Irish Times, 2022), formerly of Labour, indicating that elite scepticism of Irish neutrality is a cross-party phenomenon. Opinion polls show that despite cross-party support, there has been no significant shift in popular opinion on Irish neutrality, indicating little appetite for public debate on this matter (Leahy & McLaughlin, 2022).

Quite aside from the gap this reveals between political elite opinion and that of the broader public, the lack of further initiatives from political leaders reveals reticence on behalf of the politicians to put real weight behind their goal to move away from Irish neutrality. Once again, the ever-present Irish localism is on display, as politicians are wary of expending political capital and risking exposure for a foreign policy issue – even one as high-profile as this. Irish elite politicians do best to keep their head down in questions of foreign policy, lest the voters crack the whip and send them on their way.

Ramifications for the Foreign Service

This difference in character of foreign policy debate has a number of effects. Arguably most important is that it affects expectations of the MFA and DFA. If the foreign policy debate is small and exclusionary, bureaucrats and the foreign minister are freer to conduct their business, as opposed to expending resources on legitimating conduct in the domestic context. One might say that the DFA has only one job, which it does both cheaply and competently. It is an influence machine. The Norwegian MFA operates in a very different context. On the face of it, the MFA also has a single mission – but it operates in an environment which is more hostile to the idea of getting things done, as opposed to talking things through. As such, one may categorise the Norwegian MFA as embodying an ethic of discourse, and the Irish DFA as embodying an ethic of action.

Norwegian academics have already pointed out how managing contrasting expectations are part and parcel of conducting foreign policy (K. Haugevik & Sending, 2018). The above evidence suggests that this challenge may affect states differently, depending on the interrelations between the Foreign Service, politicians, and the broader foreign policy community. Above I have traced this difference in debate and suggested how it impacts each country's foreign policy. I will now turn to how this difference can be found in specific instances in which the foreign services engage in foreign policy debate.

"Too Many Cooks"

The sheer size of the Norwegian foreign policy community poses a challenge for foreign ministers and diplomats. Strong institutions hosting great numbers of qualified academics exposes foreign policy elites to ceaseless and demanding scrutiny. Criticism is endemic almost irrespective of what the government does, as there are jobs and funding for all stripes of foreign policy experts. This means that the domestic and international arenas are competing priorities for the Norwegian foreign policy decision maker: neglecting either poses a political risk (Leira & Græger, 2017). The choice is stark – one may either risk reduced domestic legitimacy, or the opportunity cost of neglecting day-to-day management of affairs as well as high-level political diplomacy.[48]

Having to engage with competent and critical academics to build a domestic consensus around a government's foreign policy platform appropriates the valuable resources of time and effort from political principals. This is true in Ireland as it is in Norway. However, this is where the similarity ends. Due to the Norwegian political system and the character of its foreign policy establishment, Norway's MFA must contend with some of the same challenges as its political principals. With its close links and continuous engagement with the broader foreign policy establishment, it needs to spend time and resources to keep up – a problem the Irish DFA escapes. This is as a competitive advantage for the latter, as they may prioritise their outwards-facing diplomatic mission to a greater extent.

That is not to say the great size of the Norwegian foreign policy establishment is all bad. There is clear value in having an open and public academic debate on foreign policy. Although it may be a constraint in the short term, a vibrant debate can foster common understanding and hence a broader consensus on government policy in the medium- and longer term. The capacity for analysis independent of the foreign service safeguards

[48] The value of which is suggested by Ekengren & Möller (2020).

diplomats and politicians from complacency and promotes analytical rigour and independence in foreign policy discourse

Discourse, Debate and the Place of the Foreign Ministry

In this section I have shown the place the MFA and the DFA have in the discourse of foreign policy in their countries. While the MFA takes an active role in directing discourse to promote broad public debate on foreign policy, the DFA takes a backseat role, leaving research and debate to academics and politicians. Furthermore, the size gap in the foreign policy establishment has different ramifications for foreign policy. While Norway's debate is vibrant, diverse and open, Ireland's debate is smaller and less inclusive. This exposes diplomats and their political principals to contrasting incentives, roughly corresponding to an ethic of action for the DFA, and an ethic of discourse for the MFA.

Chapter 7: The Practice of Diplomacy

"We are a vibrant first-world country, but we have a humbling third-world memory."

Mary McAleese, 1997

This chapter will analyse Ireland and Norway's campaigns for election to the UN Security Council.

Talking About the UN Security Council

On the 4th and 5th November of 2020, Norway and Ireland held separate events to discuss non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Each was held with the attendance of the respective countries' Foreign Ministry, in addition to different partner organisations.[49] Below, I will compare the background, composition and content of the events, discussing what this tells us about the role of the foreign ministries in public discourse, and how one should understand their external engagement.

Who Participated?

The Irish event was entitled "What does a successful Security Council term look like?". It was hosted by the South African Institute of Security Studies (ISS), a foreign policy think tank with offices in four African countries, together with the Embassy of Ireland in South Africa. The ISS provided the chair of the meeting, and the speakers included two high level Irish foreign servants, a speaker from the South African think tank Institute for Global Dialogue, and the Acting Chief Director for UN, Peace and Security of the South African Foreign Ministry.

The Norwegian event was entitled "Defending and renewing multilateralism: Estonia and Norway in the UN Security Council". It was hosted by NUPI alone, as part of a broader research project. Speakers included one representative from NUPI, one from the Norwegian MFA, one from the Estonian foreign ministry, and one from the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute – an independent research institution occupying much of the same space as NUPI in Estonia.

These differences are telling. In the Irish case, the DFA was the only Irish body to take part – a further indication of its institutional monopoly over foreign policy discourse. In the

[49] You may find the Norwegian event streamed online here, and the Irish event here.

Norwegian case, NUPI hosted the event alone. This underscores the status of academia as an independent branch of the Norwegian foreign policy establishment, with sufficient clout to fund and host such initiatives on its own.[50] The fact that the Irish DFA co-hosted with the Institute for Security Studies also suggests that they did not prioritise funding or hosting such an event themselves.

What Was Said?

Analysing the content of the events also reveals differences. Arranging the event together with South Africa was itself an acknowledgement of one of key players in Africa. The Irish diplomats attending lavished praise on South Africa and sought to highlight common values and interests between Ireland and African countries. These gestures, although small in themselves, are indicative of the DFA using the event as an opportunity to promote itself and to build a relationship with their South African partners in advance of their term in the UNSC.

While the Irish event was conceived at least in part as an exercise in public diplomacy, the Norwegian event had quite a different profile. In keeping with the tradition of academic engagement in questions of foreign policy, it was significantly more technical and less practical in content. Much of the discussion was about the theoretical causal chain by which small countries' engagement on the UN Security Council had positive impact. There was also discussion of the history of the UNSC, and some reflections of what might come in the future. Little time was spent on relationship-building between Norway and Estonia. This indicates that the event should be understood as an attempt by the MFA to participate in the academic debate and shape a domestic consensus around the value and usefulness of being on the Security Council. Further supporting this interpretation is the fact that the event was quickly followed by a 29-page academic report detailing the findings of the research project of which the event was a part (K. M. Haugevik, Kuusik, Raik, & Schia, 2021).

Diplomats and Academics

The Norwegian MFA in this instance chose to expend time and resources to participate in what was essentially an academic seminar on foreign policy. The Irish counterpart was more in the nature of proactive public diplomacy on behalf of the Foreign Service. The events thus

[50] Albeit funded by the Norwegian public sector.

reflected the different places the two foreign ministries occupy within their domestic foreign policy establishments.

Running for the UN Security Council

I now turn to Norway and Ireland's bid for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council. The campaign spanned many years and involved a host of different promotional initiatives, and for convenience I restrict the analysis to a single directly comparable facet; the publishing of promotional UNSC campaign brochures. Conceptually, these brochures should be viewed as exercises in social creativity; that is, attempts by the states to highlight their key characteristics and values at which they excel (Larson, 2017). I will compare Irish and Norwegian UN Security Council campaign brochures, to show how they differ from each other and how the structural factors identified in previous chapters may have contributed to this divergence.

Brochures

Releasing information material is a natural part of any campaign to influence opinion, and running for the UN Security Council is no different. In this instance, the selected brochures are both professionally designed, and were intended at least in part to favourably influence opinion among diplomats and foreign policy elites. Even so, one structural conditions may have been significant for strategic choices in their format and content.

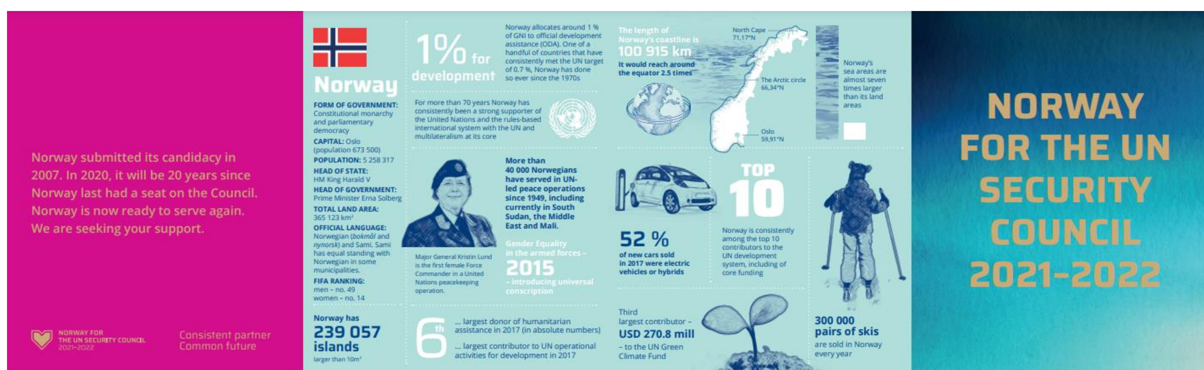
Presentation

There are a number of similarities in the two brochures. They both highlight partnership and solidarity as key values that inform their foreign policy. Both praise a multilateral approach, and both give quantitative indicators of their commitment to the UN and the international community. But there are also significant differences.

Figure 1: Extract from Ireland's UNSC campaign brochure, 2021-22 (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2018)

The brochures vary in format. Ireland's is an 8-page brochure consisting of narrative text with some pictures, while Norway's is a flyer with statistics and factoids on one side and bullet point arguments for Norway's candidature on the other. Given the equivalence of each document as the official promotional brochure for the UNSC campaign, this difference in genre is quite significant. Their linguistic, stylistic and content-related choices illustrate the countries' different approaches campaign.

Figure 2: Extract from Norway's UNSC campaign brochure, 2021-22 (Utenriksdepartementet, 2018).



One revealing difference is the use of pronouns. The Irish brochure regularly uses "we", "our" and other personal pronouns to promote itself, while the Norwegian brochure uses the more neutral and impersonal term "Norway". Combined with the divergence in style (narrative vs. descriptive) this reflects different approaches to the act of persuasion.

Content

Norway's bullet points are generally impersonal and self-contained, and frequently appeal to quantitative indicators of multilateral commitment. On the first page devoted to facts, the points related to Norwegian multilateral commitment all refer to Norwegian funding for development assistance, apart from a point on the number of Norwegians participating in UN peacekeeping operations. It is no surprise that Norway, the world's largest Official Development Assistance (ODA) donor per capita, advertises this fact when setting out its commitment to multilateralism and the UN. Norway relies heavily on statistics and macro-level indicators to bolster its statements, and this can reasonably be seen as an explicit attempt at playing to its financial strength. The Norwegian promotional strategy in this instance rests largely on its financial clout in the development space.

The Irish brochure takes a different approach. With a narrative style, it constructs a more coherent and nuanced argument for Irish membership of the Security Council. Its arguments include quantitative factors such as UN troop contributions, but these are not placed front and centre as the Norwegian brochure does. Instead, the Irish publication uses emotionally charged language and appeals to authority based on common experience with tragedy. Empathy is one of the main pillars of Irish foreign policy as proclaimed in the brochure. Ireland's struggles with famine, sectarian violence and a colonial past are explicitly evoked in order to establish credibility for its campaign.[51] The brochure presents an argument for Ireland which is emotional, personal, and historically conscious.

Representativeness

It is instructive to consider the approach taken in the Irish brochure in the context of the Irish political system; this can provide further insight into Ireland's character as a foreign policy actor. As we have seen, Ireland's political system privileges personalised campaigning, and one can see echoes of this approach in Ireland's Security Council campaign strategy. It involves the personalisation of Ireland. This coincidence may imply that Ireland's political culture influences its behaviour as a foreign policy actor not only through conditioning who is elected and how they relate to the field of foreign affairs, but also through shaping the values of the foreign ministry itself. One may further argue that this personalisation is yet another iteration of the phenomenon of Irish localism. The campaign included down-to-earth attempts

[51] Emphasising empathy and Ireland's «lived experience" has been repeatedly invoked as a strategy for Ireland's UNSC campaign by political leaders as well (Coveney, 2018).

to relate to the lived experience of people in less developed countries, a major part of the UN electorate.

These differences in strategy and genre can have other sources, for example in the structural character of their research establishment. One could posit that diplomats are influenced by academic discourse – this is by no means a controversial claim. As we have seen, self-labelling and the measurement and comparison of diplomatic success are common themes in Norwegian international relations scholarship. This lends itself to a more quantitatively inclined promotional strategy. By contrast, Irish scholarship has been more clearly characterised by idiographic historical research (Flannery, 2009; Keown, 2016; Laird, 2015; Tonra, 2013). This would lend itself to a foreign service more inclined towards narrative and qualitative approaches to promotional strategy.

In sum, the differing approaches of the two brochures have parallels to the differences in the countries' foreign policy establishments, as discussed earlier. Norway's flyer is intimately intertwined with and conditioned by the high level of funding for foreign policy and development. Ireland's brochure exhibits the personalised, down to earth and localist character. The narrative approach of the Irish brochure seems to carry more persuasive power. Of course, it is impossible to tell whether these specific documents had any impact on the result of the UNSC election. That said, a comparison between them confirms a pattern of divergence in diplomatic practice.

Does Money Talk?

The difference between Norway and Ireland in funding levels for foreign policy has been set out earlier. This is also reflected in the resources devoted to the Security Council campaigns. The official cost of the Irish bid was a mere €860.000 (Journalist, 2021). The Norwegian figure was €3.319.000 (Utenriksdepartementet, 2020a). As noted, the final result was that both were elected ahead of Canada, with Norway receiving 130 votes to Ireland's 128. Both narrowly exceeded the quota for election on the first count. If these results can be taken as a metric of diplomatic efficacy, one can ask whether the Norwegian strategy amounted to throwing money at the problem – and whether the result represented a reasonable return on investment. The negligible gap in vote share suggests not.

Looking to the Future

Psychologists have detailed how people adjust expectations when exposed to improved conditions over time (Taylor, 1982). It is not a big leap to suggest that this may apply on a

state level as well. Accordingly, one could hypothesise that states will be most grateful for prosocial and system-upholding behaviour of other states *when they are not accustomed to it*. The timing of their emergence as a small power with greater ambitions of international engagement is a further dimension on which Ireland and Norway diverge. This is reflected in their historical patterns of ODA spending. Norway has held aid spending stable at around 1 % of Gross National Income for the past 40 years. Ireland's expenditure first saw significant increase in the early 90's, reaching its peak at 0.59 % in 2008, after which it declined. It currently stands at around 0.3 % (OECD, 2022).[52]

Today, Ireland is in the process of dramatically upscaling its foreign engagement. The Global Ireland strategy, aims to "double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint by 2025." (Department of the Taoiseach, 2018).[53] One could argue that Ireland is a *revisionist* small state – while Norway is a *status quo* power on the international scene (Davidson, 2016). This could provide an interesting entry point for further research on small-state status-maintaining behaviour (Thorhallsson & Eggertsdóttir, 2020).

Historical Kinship and International Recognition

One could also argue that historical experience is part of the explanation for Ireland's relative success on a small budget. Indeed, why should developing countries believe in the rhetoric of countries such as Norway as they run for the Security Council, or seek recognition from the international community? A small state which has enjoyed high status under the current international order for decades may find it difficult to establish credibility as a reformer. In this respect there is a clear contrast to the image Ireland presents. Irish reformist rhetoric fits comfortably with a tradition of neutrality, and, crucially, with its historical experience. Oppressive colonialism, political violence, mass emigration, sectarianism, famine, economic collapse, and revival –Ireland has experienced all of these, many of them continuing into modern times. This is not the case with Norway. In this, Ireland shares "lived experience" with a great many developing countries, and this metaphorical kinship is a possible

[52] Its rapid decline post-2008 is very much related to the collapse of the Irish economy during the financial crisis of the same year.

[53] As witnessed by a steady increase in funding for the DFA, as well as the opening of many new Embassies in the past few years – with many more to come (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2021; Department of the Taoiseach, 2021b, pp. 11, 13).

explanation for its success in the Security Council campaign (K. Haugevik & Neumann, 2018).[54]

Be-Goodism: A New Path to Status for Small States?

Scholars have suggested that Norway competes in a particular status context – one of conspicuous do-goodism, where it attempts to reap the status benefits of generous financial commitment to the multilateral order (Røren, 2019; Wohlforth et al., 2018). Tracing the conditions of Norwegian status-seeking validates these claims. However, it appears that in a context where the international system is saturated with like-minded competitors, such a strategy may offer diminishing returns. The Irish case shows that there are different routes to status for small states seeking international recognition.

How, then, should one understand Ireland's path to status? Following the discussion above, one could argue that it springs from financial necessity. With the Irish foreign policy establishment including the DFA being small, disempowered, and lacking resources, Ireland could not emulate its Scandinavian rival by following a strategy of conspicuous do-goodism. Instead, it chose a strategy of what can be termed as *be-goodism*. That is, a diplomatic approach in which it branded itself as a down-to-earth and local reformer, expressing kinship and common identity with the less-fortunate peoples of the world. Although further research is needed in order to evaluate the reliability of this finding, such an interpretation would lend credence to scholars arguing the importance similarity and legitimacy has for states in achieving concrete status goals – and conversely, the lack of importance material investment has in comparison.

Status Trajectories and Historical Contingency

The discovery of a new path to international recognition for small states is a fruitful starting point for future research. It also exposes a gap in the literature: for while the rise and fall of great powers have been thoroughly studied and debated among scholars for centuries (Brooks & Wohlforth, 2015; Gibbon, 1909; Kennedy, 2010; Morgenthau, 2006; Volgy & Gordell, 2019), there is great paucity in research regarding the status trajectories of small states, how this relates to their domestic characteristics, and how their level of prominence impacts their international behaviour more broadly. More research is needed in order to evaluate how the

[54] The concept of clusters and even "post-colonial families" of nations is not new (Brysk, Parsons, & Sandholtz, 2002; Castles & Obinger, 2008), though it has mainly been studied through the framework of comparative public policy (Gal, 2010). Perhaps this perspective can be of value to scholars of comparative foreign policy.

unique political logic governing small state behaviour plays out, as well as what is and is not transferable from the study of their larger cousins.

It also raises a fundamental question of status research – to what extent is status not a means or an end, but a process and a state? Ireland's achievement is undoubtedly greater in material terms – but it also raises questions about the place of agency as opposed to historical contingency for the foreign policy of small states. To what extent may small states impact their own position in the "hierarchy of states"? Are there more cost-effective routes to status for status quo-states such as Norway as well? And in light of my findings regarding the Norwegian foreign policy establishment – may these even be pursued given the enormous structural power and status of foreign policy in Norwegian society? Further research is needed in order to address these questions.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

Domestic Sources of Status-Seeking: The Foreign Policy Establishment

This dissertation presents a multi-faceted exploration of domestic factors underpinning Norwegian and Irish status-seeking behaviour on the international scene. I focussed this analysis on the nature of the foreign policy establishment. I uncovered a pattern of differences between the two cases. This concluding chapter summarises these differences and their implications for Norwegian and Irish status-seeking.

Institutional Structure

A key difference uncovered in my analysis is the institutional structure of the foreign policy establishment. In Norway, the foreign policy establishment is well-funded, large and diverse. It consists of numerous independent research institutions, a large development sector with its very own Government Minister, and a very well-funded Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Ireland, the picture is very different. The foreign policy establishment has significantly less funding both in total and in relative terms, and as a consequence its institutions are smaller and less influential.

Diffusion of Power

Comparing the institutional funding of the foreign policy establishment also uncovered a pattern of divergence as regards the relative power of its constituent institutions. In Norway, funding and power is diffused over a number of sectors, and these are often institutionally (though not financially) independent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other public bodies. In the Irish case, the Department of Foreign Affairs is weaker in terms of funding, but on account of the comparative underdevelopment of the broader foreign policy establishment, it occupies a more prominent role in the domestic context.

Interrelations Between the Institutions

These differences are further exacerbated by the interrelations between the different sectors of the foreign policy establishment. In Norway, politicians are deeply interlinked into the other institutions of the foreign policy establishment. They can and do move back and forth between these institutions. The borders between sectors are blurred both due to overlap of personnel, and also due to close institutional and financial links. These dynamics are quite absent in Ireland, where bonds and interrelations are minimal. Politicians and bureaucrats have little interaction, the development sector is small, and academics keep to themselves.

The role of Politicians

The Norwegian politician in the foreign policy field is reminiscent of the statesman; that is, she or he may engage in a wide range of activities and jobs across the Norwegian foreign policy community. Politics, research, diplomacy and international development – all are common career paths both before and after her or his political tenure. By contrast, Irish Taoisigh and Foresign Affairs ministers are rarely directly engaged with foreign policy matters either before or after their term in office.

The influence of differing electoral systems

The Irish and Norwegian political systems play an integral part in shaping their respective foreign policy establishments. Through a party-dominated process of candidate *selection*, the Norwegian system promotes an elitist politician who is insulated from local concerns and hence free to pursue foreign policy as a field of specialisation. The Irish political system is characterised by a strong localist dimension, in which national politicians are subject to electoral backlash if they are perceived to neglect their voters. For Norway, this electoral system enables close ties and intermingling between politicians and the foreign policy establishment. For Ireland, politicians' electoral considerations contribute to the lack of close relations between politicians and the foreign policy establishment.

Domestic Discourse of Foreign Policy

The domestic discourse is another factor on which these countries diverge. While the Norwegian MFA takes an active role in fostering and directing a participatory discourse surrounding foreign policy, the Irish DFA takes a less prominent role in its own domestic discourse. Norway has a larger and more lively foreign policy debate than Ireland in both the political and academic spheres. This leads to differences in incentives for politicians and diplomats in the two cases, roughly corresponding to an ethic of action for the DFA, and an ethic of discourse for the MFA.

The Status of Foreign Policy

Summarising these findings, it appears that the domestic status of foreign policy is significantly higher in Norway than in Ireland. This has ramifications for the legitimacy of their foreign policy establishments. With foreign policy enjoying a privileged position in Norway, politicians are freer to direct funding towards the institutions of the foreign policy establishment. With the status of foreign policy being lower in Ireland, politicians are much

less inclined to fund its institutions. This lack of funding is further exacerbated by the gap in government spending.

Implications for Small State Status-Seeking

Through the above analyses, I have established the preconditions of two different routes to high status for small states. The first one is that of Norway. I propose that the empowerment of disconnected elites through the party-dominated Norwegian electoral system is a *necessary* condition of the interconnected character of the Norwegian foreign policy establishment, and a contributory factor in the high status of foreign policy in Norway. Further, I submit that the institutional and financial clout of the foreign policy establishment in combination with its closeness with political leaders is a *sufficient* condition of the Norwegian strategy of conspicuous do-goodism. In turn, this strategy is itself sufficient for high status.

The second route is that taken by Ireland. With the empowerment of constituency electorates, Irish politicians are vulnerable to political backlash should they be perceived to be neglecting their voters. This precludes the great emphasis and engagement in foreign policy observed in Norway and is a contributing factor to a foreign policy establishment which is small, weak and compartmentalised. In turn, this restricts the strategic options for Irish status-seeking, necessitating a policy of *be-goodism* – a policy which has proved as effective as its Norwegian counterpart.

Outlook: Greater Convergence?

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24 seems to have punctuated a long period of stasis in the European international order. Old truths are becoming less certain – with important figures in both Ireland and Norway advocating for closer integration with NATO and the EU (Burke, 2022; Irish Times, 2022; Johansen, 2022). In fact, this is only one way in which Ireland and Norway appear be growing more similar.

While Norway is a status "maintainer", with a relatively static level of international engagement, Ireland has been upscaling its ambitions on the international scene. The DFA budget has increased, and the number of embassies and missions abroad has grown significantly since the turn of the century. It remains a question of future analysis whether Ireland will gradually come to see itself and behave as a typical western European small state, or whether the fundamentally localist character of the Irish foreign policy establishment and political system will continue to prevail. On the other hand, there seems limited prospect of Norway developing a more emotive and empathetic approach to its search for status on the

international stage. Convergence of the Irish and Norwegian approaches to foreign policy is one possible future. It is by no means the most likely one.

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