Reconstructing Small Power Theory: The foreign policy conduct of New Zealand and Norway

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Contents

Introduction

"International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power"
- Hans J. Morgenthau, 1948[1]

This quote from the hugely influential book *Politics Among Nations* from the realist international relations scholar Hans J. Morgenthau has shaped the academic debate on how political realism affects power politics. In Morgenthau's book, the foreign policy of the United States was examined in the bipolar world of the post-WWII era. To some degree, and with much nuance, it still accurately depicts the power dynamics between leading states to this day. But to what extent, if at all, is it applicable to small powers, especially the ones which have lived to see the bipolar world turn into a unipolar one after the Fall of the Iron Curtain? Do these minor states vie for a place in the international order, or do they cower in the shadow of larger powers who make their foreign policy choices for them?

In recent years, the literature on small power theory has expanded exponentially. Books and articles on the material attributes of small powers like Nepal, Brunei or Qatar have become rampant, with lots of excellent scholars contributing to the research topic. However, not enough works have delved into (what I perceive as) the crux of small power theory: how are we able to explain that some, if not most, small powers are able to maintain influence on the international level and follow their (largely) independent foreign policy? Early realist small power theory dictates that these small powers are only able to stay on their own course by the grace of larger powers, if they are lucky not to be subdued by them. If this theory has truth to it, then how do small powers toe the line between a "partner" or a "subordinate"? If we want to at least begin to explain this discrepancy in theory and practice, we will first have to build a strong theory in order to determinate what we it is we are testing, what the different variables are and what the supposed outcome is. In order to do this, the first chapter will contain a literary review of the academic literature on small powers and their foreign policy conduct. Once we've established the theoretical background, we will employ case studies to determine how actual small powers fit into this approach. Because one case study would be insufficient to put the theory into good practice, we will work with two: New Zealand and the Kingdom of Norway. The primary sources I have used in thesis can be found in the online realm. They range from parliamentary dealings in New Zealand and foreign policy papers in Norway, to facts and figures from organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations. These position papers

[1] Morgenthau, H. J., *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, p. 13.

give us a clear view of the foreign policy discourse in both countries, backed up by independent statistics provided by international organizations.

Case studies of small states with remarkable and unique foreign policy behaviour have become more frequent since the 90's, with some academic attention being paid to how these foreign policies differ from larger countries with which they ostensibly share a sphere of influence. More often than not, these studies employed a Western-oriented focus. This is because, in first instance, the field belonged to researchers from Europe and the United States, as well as Anglo-Saxon countries in the Southern Hemisphere like Australia and New Zealand. Even if non-Western countries were employed as a case study, the academic debate did not yet differentiate between the differing development phases of a state and what kind of impact this had on its foreign policy. More importantly, researchers focused on the material characteristics of a country, instead of taking non-material qualities like international perception and internal politics into account. In recent years however, studies which focus on non-Western countries have multiplied. Researchers have stepped forward in the field of small power theory on topics related to developing countries in the Global South. Furthermore, small states situated within the intricate world of Caucasian politics and the polarized Middle East have been explored by Western and non-Western international relations and political scientists alike. Even so, non-material qualities are still underrepresented in small power studies. This knowledge gap is present in both Western and non-Western research. However, because of the longevity of Western-oriented research and the present volume of academic literature, I have chosen two Western countries.

In this thesis, I want to revert my attention back towards the Western world, taking into account these non-material qualities which have been neglected for the most part. Why do New Zealand and Norway lend themselves splendidly to a cross-case analysis? Both countries share a lot of material attributes which define them as small states. They have a similar population (roughly 5.1 and 5.4 million) and area (roughly 265.000 and 365.000 square kilometres) size.[2] They both have small-scale armed forces, though Norway has a relatively larger army (circa 23.00 active personnel) and thus a larger military expenditure (around $7.2 billion dollars, or two percent of GDP).[3] This is especially true in the European context, where most countries are nowhere near the 2 percent rule for member states of NATO. (This NATO guideline entails

[2] "Population, total." *The World Bank* (2020); "Land area (sq. km)." *The World Bank* (2021).
[3] "Comparison of New Zealand and Norway Military Strengths." *Global Firepower* (2022).

that each member state spends at least 2 percent of its GDP on defence.)[4] While Norway's GDP is double the size of New Zealand ($540 billion versus roughly $250 billion dollars), both countries are designated as developed and high-income economies.[5] But let us turn away from the material aspects and focus on the shared non-material characteristics. Both countries are integrated into the same sphere of influence and with a very similar foreign policy attitude. While New Zealand is located in the Global South and has a markedly different regional balance of power, its security ties are very much situated in the United States-led faction of the world. This is exactly where Norwegian security interests are situated. Territorially speaking, New Zealand and Norway face different main adversaries. Norway shares a near 200-kilometer land border with Russia, while China's wish for territorial expansion in the South China Sea threatens the balance of power on which some much national interests of New Zealand depend. However, both countries share supplementary foreign policy parallels. China threatens both countries with its economic might and both countries have been known to be frustrated by Chinese capricious diplomatic interests. Unlike larger neighbours like Sweden and Australia, Oslo and Wellington strive to de-escalate these tensions with China. On the other hand, they are much more likely to lead efforts in international organizations to curb this kind of economic warfare between the Western and non-Western world, as well as condemn acts of aggression from large powers like Russia. The pursuit of peace and international justice is the essence of both foreign policy objectives. Both New Zealand and Norway have received academic coverage on the subject of small power theory. For New Zealand, it is most often drawn into the context of its security and economic relations with the United States, Australia and, most frequently, China. For Norway, it is focused on the political and security relations it has in the European Union and NATO, as well as its economic interests in oil and gas and its focus on international mediation.

For these case studies, I have elected to use, as much as possible sources, from the time period between 2017 to 2020/2021. (Because this time period has only recently concluded, most, if not all, of my findings are fit for the present-day global situation.) I have chosen these time limitations for a couple of reasons. During this period, Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand and Erna Solberg of Norway were prime minister of their country. Though of opposing political parties (Ardern is a Labour politician and Solberg a Conservative politician), much of their views on foreign policy have remained the same as their predecessors, who were also from

[4] Techau, J., "The Politics of 2 Percent: NATO and the Security Vacuum in Europe." *Carnegie Europe* (02/09/2015).
[5] "World Economic Outlook Database." *International Monetary Fund* (April 2022).

opposing political parties. Both New Zealand and Norway have maintained an independent streak among their ideological allies, with both countries expressing the desire to reform the global world order from within strong international institutions instead of cultivating and using soft or hard power capabilities.

In this paper, I want to delve into the non-material factors which shape the foreign policy objectives of small states. According to small power theory I will examine the realist school of thought on small power theory and test it against these ideational factors. Another point of interest is that these ideational characteristics have driven small powers to be committed to international organizations. Thus, I want to determine the balance between these different theoretical approaches by examining the case studies of Norway and New Zealand. In the first chapter, I want to give an overview of small power theory in the global academic debate. Small power theory touches all kinds of different subject areas, as we will discover in that chapter. Because of the attention given to Norwegian international mediation in the third chapter, I have also added a short literature review of that subject. My question for this chapter is: "What are contemporary and historical thoughts on small power theory and how can we apply these theories to existing international relations theories?"

In the second and third chapter, my case studies of New Zealand and Norway will be tested in order to determine how these countries give substance to the different strands of small power theory. I will engage in a critical study of contemporary literature on both countries and their small power status. Subsequently, I will delve into different aspects of each state's foreign policy behaviour. This is geared towards three subjects. First, their security relationship with their Western allies. Second, their reticence to follow through on their humanitarian ideals in the face of economic retribution from China. Third, their standing and status in the global order, especially with regard to their efforts in international organizations such as the UN. My research question for these chapters is thus: "How does New Zealand/Norway uphold its particular small power status on the world stage?"

1. The academic debate on small powers and their foreign policy behaviour

1.1. Introduction

Before delving into the case studies of Norway and New Zealand, an academic overview of small power theory is required. I want to examine the many books, articles and discussion papers which have shaped small power theory. How has small power theory transformed over time and what theoretical explanations have been given to the external behaviour of small states? Which countries have been previously used as case studies and has this merited further research into small power theory? How is small power foreign policy affected by external events and to what extent can we speak of an independent foreign policy when talking about small states? Last but not least, I want to review what influential international relations theories are at the root of small power theory. To achieve this, I will answer the following question: "What are contemporary and historical thoughts on small power theory and how can we apply these theories to existing international relations theories?"

1.2. Small power theory: a literature study

In the last decade of the 20th century, after the Cold War had ended, the polarity in international relations began to change. Ever since the end of the Second World War, all the world had known was a heavily divided bipolar system. Now, in the aftermath of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, there was a sharp turn towards a unipolar world, which brought with it new opportunities for large and not-so-large states. Especially with respect to foreign policy, states moved away from material prowess towards the development of non-material qualities. This shift was more noticeable in what we call small states than in larger states, who still maintained many of the material distinctions which demarcated them as such. For one, small states seemed to multiply at a heightened rate in the 90's and early 2000's. For another, the foreign policy of these small states became more and more individualistic, which resulted in them developing unique non-material characteristics. This development contradicted the accepted realist theory in international relations of that time, which demanded that each state can only pursue its own foreign policy if it has the material capabilities to support that policy. This was true for the economic and intellectual realm, but especially for the military dimension. Realist international relations theorists agreed that only larger powers with the military capacity to back up their own foreign policy were able to influence and affect the international order, while for small states it was impossible to march to the beat of their own drum. According to realist theory, small states were non-actors in the international arena, forever tied to the whims and wishes of

larger powers who supported or scared them into submission. Small states were considered "marginal at best and counterproductive at worst".[6]

This lacklustre approach to small power theory resulted in too few studies which focused on the foreign policy affairs of small states in their own right, either boxing them into power blocs with larger powers or grouping them together into a real or imagined form of cooperation with other small powers.[7] In the best case, attention was drawn to how external events influenced the foreign policy of small states. Unfortunately, many studies failed to take into account how internal motivations and struggles shaped the individualistic foreign policy of small states. Furthermore, non-material potential has not been examined sufficiently in the realist dimension of international relations. However, some very important variables in this range are non-material, such as public perception and internal political direction. Some of the more recent international relations studies in the 21st century have been more able to pick up on these characteristics in small power theory, and some excellent contributions have been made in this field.[8]

As one of the defining works on the unequal relations between large and small states, the book titled *The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations* by David Vital gives a clear (if antiquated) view. It focuses on the material aspects of small powers and how those states are firmly wedged in between larger powers who will try to bully them into submission, if not for "the fortunate circumstance that the great powers operate today in a climate of thought which promotes caution and hesitation, particularly where the use of force is in question."[9] Maria Elman makes an effort to change this (neo)realist narrative on small power theory in her article.[10] Her study explains that domestic objectives shape the foreign policy directives of a small state just as much as external events do. This explains the flaw in the realist school of theory: if domestic motives are just as important as foreign pressure, aren't large and small states much more alike than presumed by previous scholars? And if small states shape their foreign policy at least in part in response to internal incentives, can we really speak of small states as cowering behind larger powers? In the article by Abo Lila, we are

[6] Smed, U.T. and Wivel, A., "Vulnerability without Capabilities? Small State Strategy and the International Counter-Piracy Agenda." *European Security*, 2017: 81.
[7] Zarakol, A. (ed.), *Hierarchies in World Politics*, 2017.
[8] Long, T., "Small States, Great Power? Gaining Influence through Intrinsic, Derivative, and Collective Power." *International Studies Review*, 2017, 186.
[9] Vital, D., *The Inequality of States: a Study of the Small Power in International Relations*, 1967: 190.
[10] Elman, M. F., "The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in Its Own Backyard." *British Journal of Political Science*, 1995.

presented with different theoretical delineations for the external behaviour of small states.[11] According to the author, the bandwagoning of small states with larger and more potent states is just one possible explanation among many others. Some small states provide a distinctive commodity or service, such as foreign investments and a dependable and independent banking industry. This way, the country becomes indispensable in its own way. Other small states might possess non-material qualities that strengthen its foreign policy behaviour, such as being a frequent mediator in international conflicts. Another explanation for the foreign policy behaviour of small states is the adoption of soft power measures, which enable a country to punch above its weight on the international stage. The last example given to us is the folding back of a country into its own narrative. This explanation particularly suits countries who have no interest in participating on the international stage and thus are much less impressionable by larger states.

In an early work by Thorhallsson and Wivel, the researchers examine how small powers in the EU are defined, how recent developments within the EU have influenced the foreign policy behaviour of its member states and how in turn these small member states mould the institutions, practices and policy objectives of the EU.[12] On a historical note, the 2007 study of John Rogers is a prime example of how a historical small state was influenced by events happening far outside its borders. In his case study, he regards Sweden's foreign policy as having changed after the First World War due to the rise of the League of Nations. "The realistic approach taken during the war had been replaced by idealistic foreign policy placing the security of the state in the hands of an international organisation that it hoped would maintain peace through negotiation and disarmament."[13] The 2013 article from Giorgi Gvalia and others is titled "Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States", and deals with the change and continuity in the foreign policy behaviour of small states.[14] The researchers use Georgia as case study and argue that ideational factors influence the foreign policy of small states just as much as material ones. A very recent (2020) book edited by Danish and Maltese political scientists Anders Wivel and Godfrey Baldacchino is a guidebook to understanding the politics of small states, especially in international relations.[15]

[11] Abo Lila, S. M., "The theoretical dimensions of analyzing foreign politics of small states." *Journal of Economic and Political Science*, 2017.
[12] Thorhallsson, B. and Wivel, A., "Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know?" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 2006.
[13] Rogers, J., "The Foreign Policy of Small States: Sweden and the Mosul Crisis, 1924–1925." *Contemporary European History*, 2007: 365.
[14] Gvalia, G. et al., "Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States." *Security Studies*, 2013.
[15] Baldacchino, G., and Wivel, A., *Handbook on the Politics of Small States*, 2020.

In the book by Weiss and Edwards for example, attention is paid to how domestic contestation influences the foreign and security policy of small European states.[16] A plethora of scholars see the integration of these small states in the European Union and NATO as the essence of their security policy. However, they also conclude that domestic political fluctuations directly translate into foreign policy. Because of the protection afforded by organizations like the EU and NATO, small powers are able to take their foreign policy agenda into their own hands. This institutionalist approach is also key to more academic studies in this subgroup and is closely aligned to the shelter theory as advanced by Icelandic Baldur Thorhallson.[17] In this theory, small states/entities need economic, political and societal shelter. These forms of shelter are provided by large states and international organizations. Large and powerful states have often been involved in academic research with regard to the behaviour of small states.

The fact that international organizations like the EU, NATO or the UN provide a safety net for small states that wish to leave behind the spheres of influence of the 20th century is less obvious in the academic debate. Moreover, studies often do not distinguish between the foreign policy of developing and developed countries, which exposes an incredible gap when examining small power theory. Even when political scientist Katzenstein compares political economies in his study of small states, he refrains from differentiating between developing and developed countries.[18] His claim that only small states with corporatist economies can swim with the tides of international events is thus wanting. For his analogy to be complete, he would have to look at the differing political economies sported by developing countries and how this different level of development affects their foreign policy behaviour and international standing.

Countries like Norway and New Zealand in particular place much value on the pursuit of international peace and justice. If we want to understand how these kinds of small powers affect change in the global order through international organizations, possessing nothing but strong non-material qualities, we have to take a look at the academic debate on international mediation. Since the end of the Second World War, several conflicts and disputes have been resolved through mediation of a third party, be that individuals, states or international organizations and institutions. The reasons why some intermediaries choose to function as mediators are very often transparent and easy to deduce. A supposed wish for global stability,

[16] Weiss, T. and Edwards, G., *Small States and Security in Europe: Between National and International Policymaking*, 2021.
[17] Thorhallsson, B., *Small States and Shelter Theory: Iceland's External Affairs*, 2019.
[18] Katzenstein, P.J., "Small states and small states revisited", *New Political Economy*, 2003.

democratic progress and the cessation of violent conflict stands at the basis of a country's willingness to cooperate in peace processes. Alternately, economic and political interests of the country or international governmental organization play a deciding role. When talking about third-party mediation as a concept, I employ the definition by Young, namely that such mediation is "any action taken by an actor that is not a direct party to the crisis, that is designed to reduce or remove one or more of the problems of the bargaining relationship, and therefore to facilitate the termination of the crisis itself."[19] Another similar explanation for mediation is given by Mitchell in his book *The Structure of International Conflict*; mediation is any "intermediary action … undertaken by a third party with the primary intention of achieving some compromise settlement of the issues at stake between the parties, or at least ending disruptive conflict behaviour."[20] Note that in the conceptualizations of mediation by both authors, little is said about how these mediating parties are selected.

The subject of third-country mediation is situated in the academic debate of international mediation in civil conflict. This research area has been led by many grand political and conflict studies researchers throughout the years. Two very important scholars in this field are Jacob Bercovitch and Ira William Zartman, both of whom have published articles and books on the methodological approach towards international mediation.[21] Their research focuses on how individuals, states and international organizations and institutions – most prominently the UN – have contributed to peacemaking in civil conflict. In his chapter in the book on *Peacemaking in international conflict*, edited by Zartman, Druckman goes into detail how conflict resolution through negotiation is eminently diplomatic in nature, with all sides in the conflict wanting to gain benefits and address grievances through diplomatic means.[22] The same is true for mediating parties in a negotiation, as conveyed by Bercovitch in the subsequent chapter of the book. There are always diplomatic objectives to be attained, both by the warring parties as by the third-party mediators.[23] In recent years, the interests of third-party mediator countries and their bias towards the outcome of a peace process have also been the subject of

[19] Young, O. R., *The Intermediaries: Third Parties in International Crises*, 34.
[20] Mitchell, C. R., *The Structure of International Conflict*, 1981: 287.
[21] Bercovitch, J., "International Mediation: A Study of the Incidence, Strategies and Conditions of Successful Outcomes." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 1986; Bercovitch, J., "Mediation in International Conflicts." In: Zartman, I. W. (ed.), *Peacemaking in international conflict: methods & techniques*, 2007; Bercovitch, J., *Theory and Practice of International Mediation: Selected Essays*, 2011; Zartman, I. W., and Touval, S., "International Mediation: Conflict Resolution and Power Politics." *Journal of Social Issues*, 1985; and Zartman, I. W. (ed.), *Peacemaking in international conflict: methods & techniques*, 2007.
[22] Druckman, D., "Negotiating in the International Context." In: Zartman, I. W. (ed.), *Peacemaking in international conflict: methods & techniques*, 2007: 119-20.
[23] Bercovitch, J., "Mediation in International Conflicts." In: Zartman, I. W. (ed.), *Peacemaking in international conflict: methods & techniques*, 2007: 173.

many academic studies in the field of conflict management and peace science.[24] Evidently, there is sufficient consensus among academics that third-party mediator countries have vested interests in the outcome of peace processes and that the success of their mediating efforts is intertwined with the (extremely varying) reconciliatory approaches they adopt towards the conflicting parties.

Philip Schrodt and Deborah Gerner were instrumental in providing a framework for my understanding of international mediation. They did this by making a distinction between the conflict and who is mediating in two different case studies, in a study on the Israel-Palestine conflicts on one hand and the Serbia-Croatia and Serbia-Bosnia conflicts in the Balkans on the other.[25] They demonstrated that it matters somewhat *what* the conflict is about, but that it matters immensely *who* is the third-party mediator. Zartman and Touval also contributed to my hypotheses, by providing an early examination of "mediation as an exercise in which the mediator has interests and operates in a context of power politics and cost-benefit calculation."[26] Both academics distinguish three different roles that a mediator can adopt – namely communicator, formulator and manipulator – to influence the outcome of a peace process. More importantly, their paper establishes that a third-party mediator is never entirely objective, but that the mediator is accepted by all parties because the political gravitas it brings to the table and the need for a conclusion of the civil conflict. Two conclusions can be drawn: firstly, that there is a wide variety of reasons why a third-country mediator chooses to participate in a peace process and thus that there is a plethora of reasons why it is suited to conduct such a mediation. Secondly, that is highly important to the conflicting parties involved who is the third-party mediator and so what that mediator can bring to the table in order to successfully conclude the peace process.

As proven above, small power theory has its origin in realist international relations theory. However, the theories of constructivism and liberal institutionalism also play a defining

[24] Chen, F. R., "Disentangling bias: national capabilities, regime type, and international conflict mediation." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 2019; Favretto, K., "Should Peacemakers Take Sides? Major Power Mediation, Coercion, and Bias." *American Political Science Review*, 2009; Gartner, S. S., "Third-Party Mediation of Interstate Conflicts: Actors, Strategies, Selection, and Bias." *Arbitration Law Review*, 2014; Gent, S. E., and Shannon, M., "Bias and the Effectiveness of Third-Party Conflict Management Mechanisms." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 2011; Wallensteen, P., and Svensson, I., "Talking peace: International mediation in armed conflicts." *Journal of Peace Research*, 2014.
[25] Schrodt, P. A., and Gerner, D. J., "An Event Data Analysis of Third-Party Mediation in the Middle East and Balkans." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2004.
[26] Zartman, I. W., and Touval, S., "International Mediation: Conflict Resolution and Power Politics." *Journal of Social Issues*, 1985: 27.

role in the formation of small power theory.[27] The ideational factors shaping the external behaviour of small powers, such as a moral "superpower" like Norway, play a fundamental role in how such a country perceives itself and its foreign policy. The commitment shown to international organizations as the means to maintain an independent foreign policy is a staple of the liberal institutionalist theory. In the following two chapters, I will delve into the case studies of New Zealand and Norway, which embody the balancing act between these three international relation theories.

[27] Galal, A. M., "External Behavior of Small States in Light of Theories of International Relations." *Review of Economics & Political Science*, 2020.

2. The independent streak in New Zealand foreign policy

2.1. Introduction

In March 2018, more than a year after his departure from office, Barack Obama paid a three-day visit to New Zealand. Although he was a former president (and thus had a largely ceremonial role), he seemed to enjoy great esteem in the Land of the Long White Cloud. Obama was greeted by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern with a traditional Māori ceremony. Then, Ardern and Obama engaged in a conversation about "leadership, climate change and how social media impacts politics."[28] In the same visit, Obama was invited to speak at a public speaking event for some 800 New Zealanders and he joined former Prime Minister John Key for an afternoon of golf in the Northland Region on the North Island. This might seem like a trivial out-of-office leisure and business trip, but it perfectly demonstrates the reciprocal goodwill and the excellent relations New Zealand fostered with its Western allies at the start of the Ardern administration in 2017-2018.[29]

New Zealand has been defined as a strong proponent of international law and rules-based international order, especially through organizations like the United Nations. It has been made clear in recent decades that is has adopted a strong stance on human rights, without running the risk of offending economic partners like China. Wellington is both reliant on and wary of Beijing which has gained an ever-increasing presence on the international stage in general and the Pacific region in particular. The independent streak that is followed by Wellington in its foreign policy is quite unique among its Anglo-Saxon allies. New Zealand's neighbour Australia has the tendency to follow much more of the foreign policies of the United States. For example, while Canberra opts to periodically challenge Beijing on differing economic and political issues in the past decade, Wellington consistently refrains from confronting the (sometimes abrasive) foreign policies of China. Even so, New Zealand strives to maintain the global balance of power by regularly calling upon international organizations to enforce the global order. In theory and practice, Wellington is a huge proponent of the international rule of law and international peace and security.

Among other things, in this chapter I will argue that the first Ardern administration (2017-2020) kept the security and intelligence ties between New Zealand and other Anglo-Saxon, Western countries as strong as in previous administrations. There is a lot of academic literature which touches upon the position of New Zealand (and other 'small states') in the

[28] Chavez, N., "Barack Obama gets a traditional nose-rubbing welcome in New Zealand". *CNN* (23/03/2018).
[29] Macdonald, F., "The audacity of ho-hum: Barack Obama in New Zealand." *The Spinoff* (23/03/2018).

global order, the 'power triangle' that exists between Wellington, Washington and Beijing and how security, diplomatic and military ties between New Zealand and the United States have evolved since the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War. In this paper, I will try to examine how relations between Wellington and Beijing progressed under the last few years of the 2010's, taking into account the regional and global trading and security positions of both countries. Lastly, I want to give a short overview of which non-material features define a small power like New Zealand on the world stage in the aforementioned time period and to touch briefly upon the amount of gravitas and goodwill it carries. Therefore, my main question which I will pose in this chapter is: "How does New Zealand uphold its particular small power status on the world stage?"

2.2. Academic debate on New Zealand's position as a small power

A major influence on this chapter is the article written by Austin Gee and Robert G. Patman which featured in the academic journal *Intelligence and National Security* in 2021. Through the use of small state theory, the authors deduct that though Wellington often presents itself as a small state and it requires additional UKUSA support to meet its security needs, it is actually capable of "projecting significant or moderate influence in certain regions" and "quite independent in its foreign policy thinking."[30] So, the authors claim, New Zealand meets the standard of a minor power in the Pacific region. In describing New Zealand as such, Gee and Patman draw a sharp contrast with earlier writings by John Henderson, who discusses the small state status of New Zealand in his book *Beyond New Zealand: The Foreign Policy of a Small State*. Henderson distinguishes the characteristics of a small state: "low participation in international affairs due to limited capabilities; narrow scope of interest in international relations; a heavy focus on economic affairs; strong support for internationalism, including the formation of alliances, multilateral institutions, and a rules-based order; a moral emphasis in the international arena; and a risk-averse foreign policy approach."[31]

In a much earlier article by David McCraw, he compares the foreign policy pursued by different National and Labour governments (the two main post-war political parties in New Zealand) before 1994. He notes that there have been variable differences in how those two political parties have dealt with the 'small state model' of foreign policy. Even so, New

[30] Gee, A., and Patman, R. G. "Small State or Minor Power? New Zealand's Five Eyes Membership, Intelligence Reforms, and Wellington's Response to China's Growing Pacific Role." *Intelligence and National Security* (2021): 35
[31] Ibidem, 36

Zealand's policies with regard to the international order have not differed majorly, as its focus has been on promoting humanitarian and moral values and avoiding conflict with larger and more powerful nations.[32] It has thus since before the Bush administration represented an alternative viewpoint of how small states could manifest an independent stance in world affairs.

The kind of self-reliant position that Wellington takes, has been made obvious in how previous New Zealand governments dealt with the 'irresponsible' international behaviour of Russia, China and the United States since John Key's first government in November 2008.[33] In his 2020 paper, Robert Ayson argues that the National governments under Key and his successor Bill English were quite consistent in denouncing Russia on multiple fronts (along with most other Western liberal democracies), while also criticizing the aggressive economic methods of China and the pro-war rhetoric of the United States. It has been under the Ardern government, however, that Xi Jinping's and Trumps antics have been regularly called to order by New Zealand. Such critiques of U.S. decision-making are not self-evident for Wellington, while New Zealand still hugely profits from the intelligence and security alliance it has with Washington.

With regard to the intelligence alliance that the New Zealand intelligence community has with the United States, there is a fascinating article by prominent IR academics Aytaç Kadıoğlu and Egemen Bezci, which delves into the historical intelligence relations between New Zealand and other nations in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) during the Cold War. The article introduces the Shelter Theory, which entails that small states have a strong desire to join in an alliance with stronger states, such as the United States, but also place a larger-than-normal importance on a rules-based international order. This way, small states are able to reap great results from these kinds of alliances because of their relatively small input but considerable gains. This kind of 'political shelter' also extends to intelligence alliances, though intelligence alliances can also be (partly) economic in nature. The article points out that exactly such a construction existed when we look at New Zealand's participation in SEATO. Wellington's contribution to the intelligence operations were minimal, apart from some geographic advantages of signals intelligence in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. Kadıoğlu and Bezci also successfully demonstrate that once "SEATO's role as influence amplifier and shelter

[32] McCraw, D. J., "New Zealand's Foreign Policy Under National and Labour Governments: Variations on the "Small State" Theme?" *Pacific Affairs*: (1994): 7-25.

[33] Ayson, R., "New Zealand and the Great Irresponsibles: Coping with Russia, China and the US." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (2020).

provider became obsolete, Wellington immediately asked for the termination of the alliance's security and intelligence operations."[34] This alludes to New Zealand's efforts to maintain some independence in its own foreign affairs policy, and its desire to stay out of greater state power struggles.

For the context-building part of this chapter, the chapter by Bruce Vaughn on the relations between the United States and New Zealand has proven to be a formidable asset.[35] Vaughn depicts the diplomatic, military and intelligence relations between New Zealand and the United States, and how these different kinds of relations have had different trajectories. He goes into detail how military and security ties have strengthened since the wars in Afghanistan, and how this cooperation reached its peak under the Obama administration. He also talks about which foreign policy goals New Zealand has set for itself in the Pacific region, how New Zealand deals with the rise of Chinese influence in this region and how this affects current and future relations with the United States. He also details the economic relations binding New Zealand to China, and how these relations tie in with the state security and foreign policy of New Zealand.

The same kind of rhetoric on how China affects New Zealand foreign policy can be seen in Jason Young's paper, *Seeking ontological security through the rise of China: New Zealand as a small trading nation*. In it, Young demonstrates that the independent New Zealand course is threatened by the rise of China as a global superpower, and how Wellington "seeks to avoid having to 'choose between China and the US' or between economic and security interests."[36] He employs the international relations theory of ontological security, meaning the security of the self-perception of the state. Young suggests that New Zealand is able, through skillful diplomatic and economic navigation, to retain its ideational basis as a 'good international citizen', while also maintaining excellent economic relations with China and meanwhile strengthening security connections with the United States and other Western liberal democracies.

In his article on the relations between Australia and New Zealand on the one hand and China on the other hand, Robert Ayson offers his readers an interesting insight into the different

[34] Kadıoğlu, İ. A., and Bezci, E. B., "Small State Intelligence: New Zealand in SEATO Security Affairs." *Pacific Focus* (2020): 24.
[35] Vaughn, B., "New Zealand: U.S. Security Cooperation and the U.S. Rebalancing to Asia Strategy." In: Rouse, R. E. (ed.), *Countries of the World Developments, Issues, and U.S. Relations (Volume 2)*: Chapter 2.
[36] Young, J., "Seeking Ontological Security through the Rise of China: New Zealand as a Small Trading Nation." *Pacific Review* (2017): 515.

power dynamics that Australia and New Zealand have with the United States. As economic and diplomatic relations between the two most powerful economic and military global powerhouses sour, both of these antipodean countries have to balance their policies. As Ayson demonstrates, these relations differ on the grounds of strategic and economic importance, with a significant gap between the Australian and New Zealand perspective. Ayson also delves into the bilateral relations between Australia and New Zealand, as "it would be odd if the bilateral strategic relationship which exists between them remains unaffected."[37]

2.3. Wellington's policy towards its Western allies: a security partner with an independent streak

"It goes without saying that Australia is our closest and most indispensable partner in this respect. [...] It is also true a rules-based order will not function properly without buy-in from the world's largest countries – the United States and China."[38]

- Winston Peters, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2017 – 2020)

In the past 75 years, Washington has exerted huge influence through foreign aid structures, with its goals having "remained largely the same: help countries in need, proliferate free-market principles, and foster robust alliances to promote U.S. interests."[39] For the United States, its Pacific strategic partnerships are a part of a relatively new foreign policy objective. This policy dictates that through the pursuit of (institutionalized) relationships with Pacific states, it might be able to share some of the burden of addressing geopolitical challenges in the region.[40] An often-used method of creating partnerships is through the distribution of foreign aid. While foreign aid plays a significant role in the relations between the United States and many of its partners around the world in the beginning of the 21st century, this is not so in the case of New Zealand. The 2012 article by Douglas Gibler and Steven Miller tells us that while New Zealand still received 300.000 dollars in U.S. foreign aid in 2008, by 2013 it was expected that all foreign aid to New Zealand would cease. (Other first world countries who were being zeroed out are Canada, Taiwan and Portugal, together with other unlikely foreign aid

[37] Ayson, R., "Choosing Ahead of Time? Australia, New Zealand and the US-China Contest in Asia." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2012): 358.
[38] Peters, W., *Next Steps* [Online].
[39] Runde, D. F., "U.S. Foreign Assistance in the Age of Strategic Competition." *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (14/05/2020).
[40] Parameswaran, P., "Explaining US Strategic Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific Region: Origins, Developments and Prospects." *Contemporary Southeast* Asia, 2014.

candidates such as North Korea).[41] Further research teaches us that most of the funds provided to New Zealand in 2008 came from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) International programme, which cooperated with the New Zealand government to provide an "environmental satellite, data, and information service."[42] Though the New Zealand government doesn't receive any material or financial aid, Wellington's security position is founded on its strategic relationship with New Zealand. This is also the main reason why New Zealand, as a pacifist country with a petite Defence Force, was still called upon to return the service during the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (although, in Iraq, the military forces were not active in a combat role).[43] The European Union is also becoming a more important strategic partner, with both parties having conducted regular political dialogues on the basis of a Partnership Agreement on Relations and Cooperation (2016). In the future, this might develop into a much closer security relationship, but for now, both parties are mainly involved as important trading partners (with the EU being the third trading partner of New Zealand).[44]

Apart from strong economic relations which have been cemented in organizations like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations that have been nurtured in organizations like the United States – New Zealand Council (US – NZ Council) and the United Nations, the most significant cooperation effort between the U.S. and New Zealand is the Five Eyes project. This intelligence alliance compromising the U.S., Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand was established during the Second World War, but New Zealand (along with Australia) only officially joined in 1956.[45] In the decades of the Cold War, the global surveillance network called ECHELON was an important factor in combatting the global spread of communism. New Zealand played its part in conveying military and diplomatic communications to its partners but was not an active participant in the murkier pages of what was done with said information. To this day, New Zealand stands to gain the most from the intelligence-sharing operation, as the smallest country with the least influential intelligence services.[46]

[41] Gibler, D. M., and Miller, S. V., "Comparing the Foreign Aid Policies of Presidents Bush and Obama." *Social Science Quarterly* (2012): 1211.
[42] "US Foreign Aid (Disbursements) to New Zealand in 2008". *USAID Data Services* (Data last updated on 25/02/2021).
[43] Ayson, R., "Oceania: New Zealand's defence and security policy." *Clingendael Spectator* (26 September 2018).
[44] Zaagman, R., "Oceania: New Zealand's Foreign Policy Dilemmas." *Clingendael Spectator* (19/09/2018).
[45] O'Neil, A., "Australia and the 'Five Eyes' Intelligence Network: The Perils of an Asymmetric Alliance." *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 2017: 531.
[46] Shiraz, Z. and Aldrich, R. J., "Secrecy, Spies and the Global South: Intelligence Studies beyond the 'Five Eyes' Alliance." *International Affairs*, 2019: 1314-1315.

As effective as the Five Eyes is for New Zealand, which gets to benefit immensely from the intelligence-sharing objective of the alliance, it is also a point of friction with China. Wellington sees the pursuit of further intelligence-gathering as a practical tool but not a foreign policy objective in and of itself. This is in part because New Zealand is less eager to offend Beijing for fear of losing its favourable export position to China. At the same time, legitimate concerns are raised with China's growing influence in New Zealand foreign and domestic affairs, threatening its sovereignty and undermining its long-standing democratic system. While New Zealand is definitely not the only country being targeted by the Chinese Communist Party, it is a unique platform for the Chinese to demonstrate its political superiority over the West. New Zealand is a vested security partner of the Western world, and as a fellow Anglo-Saxon country with a long democratic record it holds strong ties with the United States. If Beijing is able to separate Wellington from a collective security network such as NATO or from an intensive joint intelligence alliance such as the Five Eyes, this would spell a huge geopolitical success for the Xi administration.

2.4. Wellington and Beijing: balancing economic needs with a changing security reality

This balancing act between soothing the economically important Chinese and maintaining strong security and intelligence ties with the rest of the Western world is what demarcates Wellington's foreign policy position. The delicate equilibrium that exists between New Zealand, China and the United States is also explored in the work by Reuben Steff and Francesca Dodd-Parr. In this article, they position New Zealand on the geographic outskirts of the global hegemony battle between Washington and Beijing. Nevertheless, in the Pacific region New Zealand has a solid presence and exerts considerable influence on the balance of power between the United States and China. Though Wellington is willing to work with Beijing on most economic matters, to the researchers it seems very unlikely that New Zealand would switch security allegiance from the United States to China. "Beijing lacks the military power to guarantee global trade routes. Additionally, Wellington decision-makers would not find it reassuring to know NZ's security was 'guaranteed' by a state that it shares little history or cultural ties with", say Steff and Dodd-Parr.[47]

That is not to say that China has never flexed its muscles in NZ's face, especially with regard to its trade practices. In 2016, during a visit of Prime Minister Key to China to join talks

[47] Steff, R., and Dodd-Parr, F., "Examining the Immanent Dilemma of Small States in the Asia-Pacific: The Strategic Triangle between New Zealand, the US and China." *Pacific Review* (2019): 108.

over an update to the NZ-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA), an influential pro-party editorial in Xinhua scoffed at NZ's recent efforts to criticize China's provocations in the South China Sea. The news agency stated that "[Prime Minister] Key should be reminded that New Zealand is an absolute outsider in the dispute and not a concerned party, and that any attempt by Wellington to break its promise not to take sides on the issue would risk complicating the flourishing trade ties between China and New Zealand."[48] Advantageous trade agreements or punitive trade reprisals have more often than once been waived around by Chinese officials in order to influence NZ's policy, whether on the international stage or much closer to home. In 2008, under the premiership of Helen Clark, New Zealand was the first developed country to sign a free-trade agreement with China. But in 2018, tensions ran high when New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau restricted Chinese multinational corporation Huawei from providing 5G technology to Spark, one of New Zealand's largest telecommunication companies.[49]

On the surface, trade relations were soon restored to an all-time high in the following year. On 2 May 2019, David Parker (Minister for Trade and Export Growth) told parliament during oral questions that, even though members of the opposition party claimed NZ-China trade relations were "on the rocks", goods exports increased by 52 percent in March 2019.[50] He also praised his own business delegation to China the week before, which according to him was a huge success. While in China, Parker met with the Chinese Commerce minister Zong Shang, to discuss in detail the upgrade of the FTA. On 7 August 2019, Parker repeated this upbeat message, declaring that exports to China had risen by 29 percent to NZ$8.1 billion in the first half of 2019.[51] Earlier in the year, the minister not only backed the upcoming upgrades of the FTA with China and the New Zealand - Australia ASEAN agreement, but also affirmed the government's commitment to globalization. He did this by reminding parliament that the government was "constructively and actively defending the system of the World Trade Organization trade rules by developing constructive proposals for reform with 12 other like-minded economies."[52]

In some areas, the economic might of the Chinese has pushed New Zealand out of its own influence sphere in the Pacific region. They did by ostensibly overtaking New Zealand,

[48] Trevett, C., "China news Agency's warning to PM." *NZ Herald* (17/04/2016).
[49] Westcott, B. and Hollingsworth, J., "New Zealand's special relationship with China is on the rocks. Can Jacinda Ardern's Beijing trip save it?" *CNN* (30/03/2019).
[50] "Question No. 4—Trade and Export Growth." *New Zealand Parliament* (Sitting date on 02/05/2019).
[51] "Question No. 4—Trade and Export Growth." *New Zealand Parliament* (Sitting date on 07/08/2019).
[52] "Question No. 7—Trade and Export Growth." *New Zealand Parliament* (Sitting date on 12/03/2019).

long the region's biggest aid sponsor after Australia, as the biggest donor to Pacific nations. The Lowy Institute, an independent think tank focused on policy-relevant research from an Australian perspective, reported that China had committed to spending more than $6.2 billion between 2017 and 2019, while New Zealand had committed to spending slightly over $820 million. However, in reality, China had by June 2021 spent just a little more than $645 million on aid grants, while New Zealand had spent just shy of $713 million.[53] In summary, this meant China had made good on just over 10 percent of its pledges, while New Zealand had honoured almost 87 percent of its commitments. However, the devil is in the details. While New Zealand directed much of its aid flow in this time period towards education and humanitarian aid, China disproportionately favoured transport and, to a lesser extent, communication projects. Moreover, China granted to just 213 projects in the Pacific region, while New Zealand's aid money supported 1.196 projects.[54] Another reality which worries Western observers is that China provides aid through a number of mechanisms and in a mixture of grants and loans. In fact, the majority of Chinese aid is provided in the form of infrastructure loans implemented by Chinese State-Owned Enterprises. This fact made politicians in Washington, Canberra and Wellington nervous, considering China's enormous infrastructure investments it made around the world in line with the 'One Belt One Road' initiative.[55] In the words of Winston Peters, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a speech to Otago Foreign Policy School on 29 June 2018: "Against this backdrop, our eyes are wide open to New Zealand's decreasing influence in the Pacific and we are committed to re-setting our approach to working with the Pacific."[56]

2.5. New Zealand's influence on the world stage

In the run-up to New Zealand's hosting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in November 2021, New Zealand's Labour foreign minister Nanaia Mahuta argued in favour of a role as peace broker between Australia and China.[57] This statement was made considering the recent confrontations on economic and political security and influence between Canberra and Beijing since 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic has done nothing to soothe the tension between these two economic and political powerhouses in the Pacific. New Zealand –

[53] "Dashboard." Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map.
[54] Ibidem.
[55] Griffiths, J. and Westcott, B., "China could overtake Australia as biggest donor to Pacific, if it pays up." *CNN* (09/08/2018).
[56] Peters, W., *Next Steps* [Online].
[57] Menon, P., "New Zealand says to be willing to be arbitrator in Australia-China spat." *Reuters* (15/12/2020).

which (like Australia) counts China as its number one trading partner – has a vested interest in a calm region and normalized trading relations between its two most important trade relations, according to the World Bank.[58] Furthermore, New Zealand has been a proponent of international mediation for many decades and views itself as having political and moral high standards. An example of this has been its third-party participation in over 60 World Trade Organization disputes.[59] However, its efforts to bring China and Australia to the table and act as an objective intermediary are thwarted by its participation in the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (in which Australia also participates) and its strong security and economic alliance with the Western world, which is also inevitably an alliance against China.

New Zealand is a founding member of the United Nations and a faithful adherent of its guiding mission to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.[60] From 2009 to 2017 Helen Clark, the most recent Labour predecessor of Jacinda Ardern, headed the United Nations Development Programme and thus held the third-highest ranking in the UN. She even made a bid for the position of Secretary-General in 2016 but was rejected during the selection process.[61] On the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, it states that one of the policies of New Zealand during their stint on the UN Security Council (2015-2016) was "to ensure the voice and interests of small countries continued to be heard in the debate around international security."[62] Moreover, they vehemently opposed the veto right for any members on the Security Council and wished to place a greater emphasis on conflict prevention and resolution.

2.6. Conclusion

New Zealand has contributed troops and personnel to UN peacekeeping operations since they began in 1948. Since then, they have been involved in more than 40 peace operations in more than 25 countries, either under UN auspices or as part of coalitions.[63] However, Wellington is not blind to the security failsafe it needs to nurture with its Western, Anglo-Saxon partners. In this regard, Australia and the United States were and still are its greatest

[58] "New Zealand trade balance, exports and imports by country 2019." *World Integrated Trade Solution (World Bank)*.
[59] Kelly, L., "New Zealand backs Australia in trade spat with China ahead of Ardern-Morrison meeting." *Reuters* (30/05/2021).
[60] "United Nations Charter, Chapter I: Purposes and Principles." *United Nations*.
[61] Hunt, E., "Helen Clark: I hit my first glass ceiling at the UN." *The Guardian* (14/06/2017).
[62] "Our work with the UN." *New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade*.
[63] Ibidem.

allies in the Pacific region. During the first few years of the Ardern administration, New Zealand adopted a policy of cooperating with these Western allies on an intelligence and security level, while keeping relations with China economically healthy. For the main part, this has been a success. While Wellington has not been able to apply any pressure to Beijing in order for them to commit to the further advancement of human rights and democratic values, Aotearoa has gained a reputation for advancing the international rule of law and the development of nations and peoples.

3. The international mediator: Norway's humanitarian foreign policy

3.1. Introduction

Erna Solberg, the liberal-conservative prime minister of Norway from 2013 to 2021, visited China on an official visit from 7 to 10 April 2017. The main purpose of the visit was to strengthen political and economic ties, which had received a dent after the Norwegian Nobel Committee had decided to give the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 to incarcerated Chinese writer and human rights activist Lu Xiaobo. Solberg said during the visit that she was "very pleased that we are now normalising our political and diplomatic relations with China. The visit reflects the fact that both countries wish to re-establish our long-standing, broad and forward-looking cooperation. […] The normalisation of our relations will create major opportunities for Norwegian businesses and for job creation. We also hope to resume negotiations on a free trade agreement with China."[64] This sort of bilateral approach to China, centred on an economic dependency and realist balance of power, runs counter to what Norwegians describe as the very essence of their foreign policy: the pursuit of international peace and justice.

Ever since the end of the Second World War, international relations scholars have placed Norway firmly in the category of "good powers", or the kind of states that put stock in internationally advocating peace and justice. Even though Norway joined NATO in 1949, instead of staying part of the Scandinavian union of neutrality, the country has seldom been regarded as a mere puppet regime of the United States.[65] With its investment in international organizations and its direct and indirect support for international mediation efforts in conflict zones, it's seen as an example to the international community. Norway consistently ranks as one of the most democratic states in the world. According to the Democracy Index (DI) compiled by The Economist Intelligence Unit, Norway has set the highest democratic benchmark since 2010.[66] The same is true when we look at the rating from Freedom House with regard to people's access to political rights and civil liberties.[67] But under the guise of championing far-reaching international oversight, its bilateral relations with, for example, China are a lot more ambiguous. As we will see in this chapter, the Norwegian government often refrains from antagonizing Chinese political interests in order to safeguard economic benefits. However, Oslo's approach to its small power status is vital to advancing the international peace effort. In theory and in practice, it advances the idea that international

[64] "Prime Minister Erna Solberg to visit China." *Norway in China: Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beijing* (26/04/2017).
[65] "Norway and NATO." *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*.
[66] "A new low for global democracy." *The Economist* (09/02/2022).
[67] "Freedom in the World 2021 – Norway." *Freedom House* (2021).

organizations should be able to enforce peace and justice. Therefore, it consistently supports efforts made by these organizations and by larger countries to affect this change in international relations.

In this chapter, I want to delve into the non-material foreign policy directives of the last four years of the Solberg Cabinet (2017-2021). Among other things, I argue that Norway's security ties to the Western world were still acting as its safety net in the global balance of power. However, maintaining good relations with China had become just as important as with the maintaining good relations with the West, which is why on a bilateral level Norway was unwilling to shake its fist in the face of Beijing. This stood in sharp contrast to its allies. Some of them, like Sweden, would actively engage in diplomatic skirmishes with the Chinese government over the arrest and treatment of Chinese-born Swedish dissident Gui Minhai and the ban of Chinese technology corporation Huawei.[68] How did relations with Beijing progress in the context of China's contestation of the unipolar world order? A large factor in Norwegian foreign policy is its involvement in international third-party mediation. I explain why Norway is suited in this role as international peace enabler and how the country is able to achieve much of its foreign policy objectives through its involvement in international organizations such as the UN. Lastly, like in the previous chapter on New Zealand, I explain the non-material qualities which define Norway's role as a small state during the last years of the Solberg administration and how Norway's international status fits in with the realist school of thought on small power theory. The question I will answer in this chapter is: "How does Norway uphold its particular small power status on the world stage?"

3.2. Academic debate on Norway's position as a small power

On the subject of the polarity changing in the world and its effects on Norwegian foreign policy, the article by Øystein Tunsjø was very helpful. The article touches upon how shifts in the global order have had a direct influence on how Norway as a small state conducts itself on the international stage. Tunsjø details how Norway feels its transatlantic ties severing amongst the backdrop of China's rise as a global superpower. He adds that small states like Norway are adapting rapidly to this geopolitical change, keeping economic ties with China vibrant while hedging its security bet with its Western allies. "Hence, by being proactive in its foreign policy under the 'dynamics of today's environment', Norway may succeed in doing

[68] "How Sweden copes with Chinese bullying." *The Economist* (20/02/2020); "Will Sweden's Huawei ban harm Sino-Swedish business?" *The Economist* (28/01/2021).

what it can, rather than suffering what a small state must."[69] Furthermore, Tunsjø draws a comparison to the balancing act in which Norway found itself during the long years of the Cold War. However, the researcher fails to pull Norway out of the realist dimension of small power theory by emphasizing Norwegian efforts to adapt to global shift in power as the only way forward. The article misses some nuance on the part of Norwegian efforts to transform the international system through participation in international organizations. Another note, though an unavoidable one on the part of the author, is the changed diplomatic rhetoric and actions of the Chinese Politburo. During the time period of his case study, China was still firmly hanging on to its foreign policy of avoiding international controversy and the use of abrasive rhetoric. However, in my case study, China had adopted a new and aggressive style of coercive diplomacy, known colloquially as Wolf Warrior diplomacy.[70]

In the book edited by de Carvalho and Neumann titled *Small State Status Seeking: Norway's Quest for International Standing*, we delve into the world of international prestige and status, an important non-material quality of a small power. Norway started seeing returns on its investment in international peace and security in the 2010's, as stated in the chapter by De Carvalho and Lie.[71] The crux is that Norwegian endeavours in international peacekeeping missions and its involvement in international organizations was a means to attaining an international status larger than what its material qualities warrant. With these efforts, Norway managed to become known as a humanitarian 'great power", due to its humane foreign policy and its willingness to engage in an open dialogue with hostile nations. This use of *engasjementspolitikk*, or policy of involvement, reaped positive results at home as it did abroad. Norwegians embraced the image of a pacifist and morally upstanding nation, and subsequent governments of different political compositions dared not move away from this policy. This partly explains why, during the rule of Christian Democratic, Labour and Conservative party governments in the 21st century, this policy of engagement never subsided. It has become an intrinsic part of Norwegian foreign policy.

[69] Tunsjo, O., "Geopolitical Shifts, Great Power Relations and Norway's Foreign Policy." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 2011: 72.
[70] Dai, Y. and Luqiu, L. R., "China's 'wolf warrior' diplomats like to talk tough." *The Washington Post* (12/05/2021).
[71] de Carvalho, B. and Lie, J. H. S., "A great power performance: Norway, status and the policy of involvement." In: de Carvalho, B. and Neumann, I. B., *Small State Status Seeking: Norway's Quest for International Standing*, 2015.

As an example of how to integrate a cross-case analysis in the theme of the diplomatic approach of small powers, one discussion paper in diplomacy catches the eye.[72] Bátora draws a comparison between the public policies of Norway and Canada, though he characterizes Norway as a small power and Canada as a medium power. Though both countries share a very similar foreign policy, the perception that other countries have of both countries is not the same. Bátora argues that in the approach to public diplomacy coordination, Norway handled a unitary vision, exported in large part by the Foreign Ministry, Norwegian NGOs and individuals. Each subgroup handled the same value system and emphasized the pursuit of international peace and justice through global means. The Canadian public diplomacy scene was fragmented, with each subgroup accrediting different values to different situations or countries. Moreover, the Canadian foreign policy world was unable to successfully advocate the message of international peace and justice. Because of this, there is a difference in public perception between both countries. Canada is seen as an exemplary partner on the world stage, but Norway is seen as having the moral high ground in most, if not all, international affairs.

Because of Oslo's commitment in international mediation, I want to touch briefly upon the subject. Much of the academic debate surrounding the suitability of a third-party country to alleviate some of the conflict dynamics during a peace process is perfectly applicable to the role of Norway in several peace processes. Norwegian individuals have been known to facilitate peace processes in an unofficial and non-governmental capacity. In particular the Norwegian government itself has proven to be a great mediator in international conflict. Norway's most famous involvement was during the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and Palestine, but the results were initially ambiguous and ultimately unsuccessful in securing peace. However, Norway's role in concluding civil wars in Mali in 1995 and Guatemala in 1996 are much more consequential notches in its belt, and in recent years Oslo has been successful in mediating the half-century long conflict between the Colombian government and FARC rebels. Norwegian historian and famous peace researcher Hilde Henriksen Waage has contributed greatly to the academic debate, writing extensively on Norway's mediating efforts in the Israel-Palestine conflict and the evolution of Norway as the 'exemplary' mediator country.[73]

[72] Bátora, J., "Public Diplomacy in Small and Medium-Sized States: Norway and Canada." *Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael* (06/05/2005).
[73] Waage, H. H., "Explaining the Oslo Backchannel: Norway's Political Past in the Middle East." *Middle East Journal*, 2002; Waage, H. H., "Norway's Role in the Middle East Peace Talks: Between a Strong State and a Weak Belligerent." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 2005; Waage, H. H., "The 'Minnow' and the 'Whale': Norway and the United States in the Peace Process in the Middle East." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2007;

3.3. Oslo and the balancing of power: a fragile position between security and economic interests

Norway's membership of NATO and its transatlantic ties to the United States and other Western allies are without a doubt the cornerstone of Norwegian foreign and security policy. It is also a leading member among the Nordic countries within the realm of security, defense and intelligence, apart from being an economic and intellectual powerhouse. This is clearly seen in Norway's role as a key state actor in the Arctic region.[74] On a digital security level, Norwegian intelligence and cybersecurity services have expanded and intensified their activities. As with every other foreign policy effort by the Norwegian government, this is based on rules-based international cooperation. "Norway expects its multilateral partners to make increasingly wider use of digital tools and to have a strategy for actively utilising digitalisation both to reach more people with greater precision and efficiency as well as to measure the effect of initiatives."[75] In the international context, the country supports the Principles for Digital Development. To combat fragmentation, Oslo actively opposes the development of competing initiatives by different UN organizations, while in favour of effective coordination and against supporting new initiatives where there are good existing solutions to build upon. Norway also enjoys strong security ties with the European Union, although it has no formalized agreements on foreign policy. The EU invites Norway and the other European Free Trade Association partners to consultations with the Council Working Groups. Furthermore, the European Economic Area Agreement facilitates biannual political dialogue on foreign policy. The cooperation is strongest in the area of Common Security and Defence Policy, as Norway entered into a separate agreement with the EU in order to contribute to civilian and military mission in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and the Balkans.[76] Furthermore, Norway is a contributing partner to the European Defence Fund, which lays the foundation for increased Norway-EU engagement in the field defence materiel technology cooperation. Concurrently, it will strengthen the position of the Norwegian defence industry in the European market.[77]

Waage, H. H., and Nissen, A., "Weak Third Parties and Ripening: Revisiting Norwegian Interventions in Guatemala and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *International Negotiation*, 2015.

[74] Wegge, N., "Small States vs. Middle Powers - What's the Difference?" *Centre for International Policy Studies* (15/07/2018).

[75] "Digital transformation and development policy - Meld. St. 11 (2019–2020) Report to the Storting (white paper)." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)* (13/12/2019).

[76] "Norway and the EU." *Mission of Norway to the EU* (01/03/2017).

[77] "Cooperation for Security - Meld. St. 17 (2020–2021) Report to the Storting (white paper)." *Ministry of Defence (Norway)* (12/03/2021).

Like New Zealand, Norway's relationship with China is one of economic power disbalance. In 2020, Norway imported from China nearly $7.8 billion dollars, making it Norway's third biggest import country after Sweden and Germany.[78] Norway, in turn, does not even figure in the top 30 of Chinese import countries.[79] While this is inevitable for a small state like Norway to be more dependent on China than vice versa, we can still conclude that in the trade balance between Norway and China, Beijing holds all the cards. On the Norwegian side, the fear of a repeat of the breakdown of trade relations, after the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the 2010 Peace Prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, is still strong. In the 10 years since, the Norwegian government has actively tried to steer clear of antagonizing the Chinese Politburo. Eventually, diplomatic and trade ties were restored to their pre-2010 level.[80] One of the few times the Solberg government touched upon human rights issues in China was when its UN ambassador signed a letter in July 2019 condemning the massive detention programme through which Uyghurs were imprisoned in concentration camps in western China's Xinjiang region.[81] As a new foreign policy strategy, Norway endeavours to involve China more in the multilateral system. Oslo states that as China's economy develops, it will start to shoulder more and more of the financial burden of international organizations. This way, emerging powers like China will receive more possibilities to set the agenda for and influence the organization's work. They are not wrong in this regard. New estimates show that China has become the second biggest contributor to the UN in the period 2019-2021, just behind the United States.[82]

An important aspect of Norwegian multilateral policy is its participation in development programmes in most policy areas. For example, Norway is one of the contributing members of the PROBLUE programme, together with Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[83] PROBLUE is an umbrella multi-donor trust fund administered by the World Bank. The programme supports the sustainable and integrated development of marine and coastal resources in healthy oceans and Norway was the first to announce its contribution at the 2018 World Bank Group and IMF Spring Meetings, followed by Sweden, Iceland, France and Germany. This goal of achieving global Sustainable

[78] "Norway." *The Observatory of Economic Complexity* (2020).
[79] "China." *The Observatory of Economic Complexity* (2020).
[80] "Norway, China normalize ties after Nobel Peace Prize row." *Reuters* (19/10/2016).
[81] Putz, C., "Which Countries Are For or Against China's Xinjiang Policies?" *The Diplomat* (15/07/2019).
[82] "Norway's Role and Interests in Multilateral Cooperation - Meld. St. 27 (2018–2019) Report to the Storting (white paper)." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)* (14/06/2019).
[83] "PROBLUE: Healthy Oceans, Healthy Economies, Healthy Communities – Partnership Council." *The World Bank* (2022).

Development Goals through multilateral organizations and programmes is also stipulated in Norway's foreign and development policy on oceans, as part of its efforts to support the blue economies of developing countries. This also benefits Norwegian domestic interests which "are related to value creation, the environment, climate change and sustainable use of resources."[84]

3.4. "Keep the peace at all costs": International mediation as a foreign policy tool

To understand the foreign policy behaviour of Norway, it is imperative that we look at their efforts in international mediation. Simply put, Norway is heavily invested in maintaining the international rule of law and, most importantly, a global balance of peace. In this regard, it is joined by the other Scandinavian countries of Northern Europe, who have "consistently and actively sought to influence more powerful states in establishing and strengthening global norms of cooperation."[85] However, while Danish and Swedish strides on this account are recommendable, the Norwegians are still the most vocal proponent of peace. Thus, Norwegian foreign policy is grounded as a "foreign policy of peace", which it has pursued ever since its inception as an independent country.[86] In its own words, Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes this as a result of the "lack of an imperial past and great power ambition, coupled with a long-standing peace tradition."[87] This is evidenced by the many NGO's which have settled in the country, and Norway's investment in international organizations. Although Norway's image seems pretty clean-cut, the country has been actively involved in war zones under the auspices of NATO. As recent as 2011, Norwegian fighter jets flew 583 missions (out of a NATO total of 6493) over Libya, dropping 569 bombs.[88]

Norway's history in international mediation is a long one. With the country's 1949 admission to NATO, it undeniably took a side in the Cold War conflict. However, ever since that period, Norway had done everything in its power to prevent the further alienation of the Soviet Union. In the 60's and 70's, Norway's commitment to international peace and justice became the defining trademark of the country, but it would take two more decades before it really came into its stride. In the 90's, it devoted itself to bringing about peace and ending

[84] "The place of the oceans in Norway's foreign and development policy— Meld. St. 22 (2016–2017) Report to the Storting (white paper)." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)* (24/03/2017).
[85] Ingebritsen, C., "Norm Entrepreneurs: Scandinavia's Role in World Politics." Ingebritsen, C. et al., *Small States in International Relations*, 283.
[86] Leira, H., "Our entire people are natural born friends of peace': the Norwegian foreign policy of peace." *Swiss Political Science Review*, 2013: 340-346.
[87] Ibidem, 2013: 349; Stokke, Kristian. "Peace-Building as Small State Foreign Policy." *International Studies (New Delhi)*, 2012: 218.
[88] Charles, T., "Fact Sheet: Norway as International Mediator." *Tactics Institute for Security & Counter Terrorism* (23/04/2021).

armed conflicts in the Africa, Central America and the Middle East. As far as the first two regions go, this turned out to be a great success. With the help of Norwegian Foreign Ministry diplomats, a bloody rebellion in Mali was ended in 1995, as well as the brutal 36-year civil war in Guatemala in 1996.[89] But the spotlight would be very much on Norway's commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Although the 1993 Oslo Accords failed to deliver the lasting peace that the Norwegian government hoped for, its reputation as an objective and fair peacebroker was firmly established. In 2010's, under the government of Jens Stoltenberg, it played a mediating role in ending the conflict between the Colombian government and the FARC rebel group.[90] This successful experience tempted the Norwegian government under Solberg to serve as a facilitator between the Colombian government and another rebel group, the ELN. However, in the final stages of negotiation in 2018, the talks failed to produce a final agreement.

Norway's approach to mediation is one of willingness to help, as long as help is wanted. In 2019, during a visit to New Delhi, Solberg denied having been approached for peace talks on the Kashmir subject between India and Pakistan. However, she pointed out that if asked, Norway would be able to mediate. She further stressed that the initiative lay with the conflicting parties, who would first be willing to talk with each other. "Our government policy is very clear, if we are going to help somewhere, they have to ask for it. It is not an initiative that comes from the outside."[91] In 2019, the Norwegian government attempted to bring about peace negotiations between the Venezuelan government under the leadership of Nicolás Maduro and its opposition under the leadership of Juan Guaidó.[92] It also facilitated talks between the government of Mozambique and rebel group Renamo, who were able to sign a peace agreement on 6 August 2019.[93]

3.5. Norway's influence on the world stage

Norway's has always been an ardent supporter of intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations. Those international platforms offer the country the opportunity to develop their foreign policy of international peace and prosperity. Furthermore, they are able to draw in like-minded allies who are willing to contribute to this endeavour. Lastly, it is a safe place

[89] Fisas Armengol, V., "The principles of mediation and the role of third parties in peace processes." *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF)* [Report] (June 2013): 3.
[90] Ibidem, 2013: 7.
[91] Chaudhury, D. R., "Norwegian PM Erna Solberg offers to mediate Indo-Pak talks." *The Economic Times* (08/09/2019).
[92] "The Venezuelan Negotiation Process." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)* (16/05/2022).
[93] "The peace process in Mozambique." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)* (02/12/2019).

for Norway to voice its displeasure with countries who are violating human rights, thwarting national sovereignty and discombobulating the international balance of power.

A striking example of Norway's involvement in the UN is not a policy or an event, but a person by the name of Jan Egeland. Egeland has been working for the UN since 1999, after serving for eight years as State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2003, he was appointed Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, which also meant he headed the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. During his time as Under-Secretary, he was leading efforts to defuse civil conflict in Africa, in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Darfur Region in Sudan. He also helped mitigate the humanitarian fallout after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and Hurricane Katrina. In recent years, he has worked on improving the UN peace and humanitarian relief efforts in Syria. In an interview with a researcher from the largest centre for development research in Scandinavia, the Norwegian Chr. Michelsen Institute, Egeland himself explains the changes that have happened in the field of humanitarian diplomacy in the last two decades. When asked how he reconciles the pursuit of humanitarian standards, which are unwavering, impartial and idealist, with the constraints of diplomacy, which is based upon negotiation, compromise and pragmatism, Egeland states: "Diplomacy is a part of international relations and politics, and humanitarian diplomacy has specific objectives that should be guided by humanitarian principles."[94] He further adds that, as a Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway, he has seen that all states act according to their own interests and ideals, whatever those may be. He ends with saying that humanitarian diplomacy is much more ideational in nature. Because of this, there is increased attention for the way UN member states act in certain situations and the way they make alliances. In effect, the United Nations is the platform to let the humanitarian diplomat run wild.

Oslo is becoming more and more wary of the threats to the multilateral system that has served them so well in the past.[95] The shift in the global balance of power towards China and the renewed polarization in world politics has raised new challenges for international cooperation and mediation. This is because major states choose to resolve conflict on a bilateral or, at worst, unilateral level. This hampers the evolution of a global society and makes the foreign policy behaviour of large and small states alike more fragmented and less predictable. For a country with strong international orientation, this is detrimental to its foreign policy

[94] Turunen, S., "Humanitarian Diplomacy: Interview with Jan Egeland." *Chr. Michelsen Institute* (2020).
[95] "Norway's Role and Interests in Multilateral Cooperation - Meld. St. 27 (2018–2019) Report to the Storting (white paper)." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)* (14/06/2019).

objectives. Humanitarian efforts and the international pursuit of peace, so meticulously interwoven in the liberal international order, are being challenged by non-democratic states. A policy of greater inequality between small and big states is being reinforced by critics of globalization, who undermine the legitimacy and undercut funding of international organizations. The Norwegian government sees another challenge to the multilateral system in the lack of efficiency and representativeness in international cooperation. This is why reforms are so important to the relevance and survival of international organizations. If an organization enjoys greater legitimacy and better results, small states will flock to its banner. International organizations still have an enormous potential to tackle transnational issues, such as terrorism and digital attacks, climate change and cross-border threats to health.

3.6. Conclusion

Norwegian foreign policy depends very much on the country's ability to sway other countries to participate in the liberal multilateral world order and espouse humanitarian ideals. Oslo's foreign behaviour is just as much inspired by realist, constructivist as liberal institutionalist approaches to international relations. In a historical sense, it's still part of the security network provided by NATO and its Western allies. At the same time, it's moving forward with its humanitarian, digital and environmentalist agenda. Norway makes use of international mediation and cooperation infused with these ideals of international peace and justice through international organizations. The Norwegian government firmly believes that if it is able to convince other countries to cooperate in these multilateral systems, this will lead to a stronger and more viable global network for small states to prosper.

4. Conclusion

In the academic debate surrounding the influence of countries on world affairs, hard power elements, such as military capabilities and material wealth, have long dominated the rating scale. However, other factors often tend to be underplayed. Through normative efforts, smaller countries have defined the post-Cold War era as bigger countries have. Countries like New Zealand and Norway have contributed to the international balance of power, while protecting their own sovereign interests. Their commitment to international organizations and multilateral cooperation has opened up possibilities for other small countries to pursue foreign policy objectives beyond self-preservation. This does not mean that Wellington and Oslo are blind to the shift in power dynamics that has taken place in the last twenty years. Unlike other small and large Western allies, they have steered clear of impeding the rise of China in global politics. This has in part been to safeguard their own economic interests. But other aspirations also underlie this acquiescence. For Norway hopes that through international organizations, China will take up the mantle of a benevolent superpower and protect the rights of small powers. In effect, realist security objectives mix and match with humanitarian ideals and the international pursuit of peace through international organizations. In my opinion, this combination of different international relations theories is what defines the foreign policy outlooks of New Zealand and Norway. Moreover, we can adopt this amalgamation as the underlying principle of small power theory.

The cases in this thesis were purposefully chosen as prime examples of small countries who continue to make a dent in international politics. In future research, attention could be paid to other small countries that are much less visible in the global arena. Both Bhutan and Liechtenstein, two of the smallest countries in the world, have already been examined in the light of small power theory.[96] As detailed in both works, these microstates are primarily focused on maintaining their independent political systems, squeezed between greater powers that have always eyed them yearningly. Economically, they are for the most part co-dependent on these greater powers, though their populations are mainly involved in very different economic activities. Agriculture provides the main livelihood to more than half of Bhutan's population, while Liechtenstein is one of the few countries that has more businesses than people (with the financial service sector especially booming). Another option would be to move away from the Eurocentric perspective that has been employed in this thesis. As explained in the

[96] Duursma, J., "Micro-states: The Principality of Liechtenstein." In: Ingebritsen, C. et al., *Small States in International Relations*, 2006; Kaul, N., "Beyond India and China: Bhutan as a Small State in International Relations." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 2022.

introduction, Norway and New Zealand are two very similar case studies, with a shared history, political and economic system, allies and adversaries. However, if we were to choose an entirely different case study like Qatar, such as in the chapter by Saidy, we would be able to delve into a country that has very little in common with the traits that define Norway and New Zealand.[97] Yet, it is still a small state with a far more influential status on the world stage than its population size and land area merit. A last possible avenue to discover would be to shift the focus away from the political framework and carry out a case study according to an existing social, cultural or economic paradigm. A great example is Austvik's working paper on energy policy in Norway, which affects much of its foreign policy and the way it conducts itself in the global arena.[98]

With this thesis, I hope to contribute to the rich academic field of small power theory and international relations as a whole. I believe it is imperative to gain a far better understanding of how the differing international relations theories coincide with a specific topic in that area. As such, it is clear to me now that nuance, as in most academic theories, is needed to understand and depict the foreign policy of any state. Furthermore, it seems to me that the academic debate on the foreign policies of New Zealand and Norway does not transcend the boundaries of its respective country. This is a shame, as both countries may offer a lot of lessons to similar small Western powers with related foreign policy objectives. As long as there is a certain dissymmetry in the policies of larger powers on the one hand and smaller powers on the other, it is beneficial for the global balance of power to recognize and acknowledge the different interests and motives of small powers.

[97] Saidy, B., "Qatar's Military Power and Diplomacy: The Emerging Roles of Small States in International Relations." In: Brady, A. and Thorhallsson, B., *Small States and the New Security Environment*, 2020.
[98] Austvik, O. G., "Norway: Small State in Big Energy Play." *Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government Associate Working Paper Series*, 2017.

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