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Declaration

I, Elisabeth Sørbø Haug, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings.

Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

*Til min kjære bestemor Asta,
med håp om at jeg vil være like nysgjerrig og åpen for nye
inntrykk når jeg passerer nitti. Du er en inspirasjon.*

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Abbreviations

COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives in the European Union
EDA	European Defence Agency
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EU	European Union
IR	International Relations ¹
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRK	The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation
NUPI	The Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs
The MFA	The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The UN	The United Nations
The UNHRC	The United Nations Human Rights Council
The UNSC + The SC	The United Nations Security Council
UNA Norway	United Nations Association of Norway
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WTO	World Trade Organization

¹ Note that “International Relations” refers to the academic field, whereas “international relations” refers to the real life interaction between states.

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Chapter 1: INTROCUCTION

In this chapter I will provide a general introduction of the thesis, before explaining the objective of the thesis and the motivation for choosing this specific topic of investigation. I will then go on to introduce the research questions, which will work as guidelines throughout the thesis.

1.1 General introduction

This thesis will investigate to what degree the Norwegian delegation to the UN in Geneva can be said to inherit characteristics of an autonomous institution. Or rather if it is in all considered purposes an extended arm of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - with decisions being made at home and the delegation working mainly as a mouthpiece and information gatherer. The timeframe has been roughly limited to 2009-2012, when Norway was a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. What was the role of the delegation in Geneva when it came to shaping the official Norwegian policy and stance in the Human Rights Council? And what circumstances determine the role of the delegation? The assumption is that the potential degree of autonomy will vary based on features within and outside the delegation. Based on these features, and the resulting degree of autonomy, the delegation will assumedly fit into different perspectives describing a theoretical approach to institutional autonomy. The perspectives chosen are a rationalist perspective and a neo-institutional perspective on state governance. The thesis thus attempts to look at what factors determine the degree of autonomy, and which perspective is most relevant to apply theoretically. The backdrop for the investigation into the degree of autonomy has been an assumption that when certain criteria in a given situation is met, the delegation will be able to greatly influence official Norwegian foreign politics.

The thesis will consider how diplomacy is affected by an ever increasing complexity and globalization of the world. The choice of focusing on the Norwegian delegation to the UN in Geneva, is due to the fact that as far as I have been able to uncover, no previous research on this delegation or its processes has been conducted. The thesis will also look at how the delegation compare to the UN delegation in New York (while Norway sat in the Security Council 2001-2002) and the EU delegation in Brussels. This is interesting as it sheds light on how external circumstances influence the internal structures of Norways' foreign affairs.

Looking at the varying forms of social and political practices in the three examples, will help explain what factors determine the degree of autonomy in the case of the delegation in Geneva. The diplomats working in the three delegations are in close proximity to the decision making processes of the EU and the UN, forums and other states representatives, which might affect their behaviour. The formal procedures of the decision-making processes, representing the more tangible aspects of the delegations working conditions, will be presented and discussed. It is also necessary to look at how informal processes affects the role of the delegations, and the thesis can thus be said to operate at a micro-level.

There are very few studies on the effect different rules of decision-making and their processes has on an organizations ability to solve problems (Hovi & Underdal 2008:140). In addition we will see that there is generally low national attention to Norwegian UN-diplomacy, both within the media and academia. The Norwegian Society has traditionally always had a strong sense of the importance of the UN, and Norways' role in the organisation. One might imagine a situation where the nationally grounded "positivenss" towards the UN can result in less critical thinking towards the internal processes. This thesis attempt to highlight some of the aspects of these processes, and is thus a contribution to critical research on the matter.

1.2 Objectives and motivation for choice of topic

The objective of this thesis is to go beyond the official bureaucratic lines of delegation and mandate, in order to "unwrap" the state in an international setting. This is done through investigating both the formal and informal processes within and outside the Norwegian delegation to the UN in Geneva especially, and the UN delegation in New York and EU delegation in Brussels for comparison. The traditional model of diplomacy is based on state sovereignty and craft. However, new and influential actors are constantly entering the international system. Where diplomats have previously been somewhat sheltered from policy making, they are increasingly becoming more accessible to non-state actors and demands posed by a globalized and complex reality. It has been claimed on many occasions that the adaptive behaviour of many foreign ministries have not always kept pace with this new reality (See as example Heine 2006). When conducting research prior to landing on a theme for the thesis, I discovered what I saw as a gap in knowledge within International

Relations regarding multi-level governance and institutional autonomy. This lack of academic focus on the combination of the new features of diplomacy and the relationship between different actors on a national level, was thus the inspiration behind the thesis. Paragraph 6.3 is dedicated to *Thesis Relevance*, in which further reflection on the objective and importance of the thesis will be presented.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions will be investigated through an actor-based perspective, and are intentionally quite broad in nature. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, there is little existing research on Norwegian delegations abroad, especially bureaucratic and process related research. Therefore, the research questions are exploratory in nature with a wide basis. They allowed room for continuous adaption of the data collection methods and interview guides, which will be presented in Chapter 2. The main focal point of the thesis is on whether the delegations can be seen as utility-maximizing and well-adjusted instruments for a unitary state, or rather actors with a strong degree of independency and autonomy. Based on the framework described in the previous paragraphs, the following research questions were formulated:

What are the main features of the Norwegian UN delegation in Geneva, when it comes to decision making processes in relation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs home apparatus?

Based on features of the processes within and outside the delegation, does the Norwegian delegation to the UN in Geneva present as an autonomous actor?

Does a Rationalist or a Neo-institutionalist approach present as the best model for explaining the relationship between the delegation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs home apparatus?

How does the processes uncovered compare to the UN delegation in New York, and the EU delegation in Brussels?

Chapter 2: METHODS AND THEORY

In this chapter I will present the methodological aspects of the data collection, in addition to the more general research design. The research design, choice of methods when collecting the data, analysis and interpretation, and reflections on quality and dissemination will be presented. I will also discuss what I saw as limitations and challenges - those I encountered during the writing process and the limitations of the thesis itself. In addition, I will present the research questions and a discussion on the rationalist, neo-institutionalist and principal-agent theories – the perspectives used to approach the research questions.

2.1 Research design and thesis outline

The data for this thesis has been collected through qualitative research methods, which is common when investigating particular characteristics of a phenomenon. It is particularly useful when researching something we know little about beforehand, that there is little previous research about and that we want to understand thoroughly (Johannesen et al. 2010:32). Both interviews, documents and other relevant literature has been used to provide a coherent thesis. This sort of triangulation of methods through different sources of data, strengthens the thesis credibility. Previous research on a thesis-level has also been used, especially in the chapters revolving around the delegations in Brussels and New York¹. The use of a qualitative research design was necessary when being faced with limited resources, in terms of time and informants available to me. The process of writing the thesis was a very inductive process – a roundel of research questions, theory, methodology and data. This is often the case when conducting qualitative research, especially within a culture that can be considered “your own” (Wadel 1991).

¹ Schia (2004) provides a basis for discussion of the delegation in New York, and Claussen (2007) provides the same for the delegation in Brussels.

The thesis is a multiple-case study, where the purpose is to control and compare the main case (the UN delegation in Geneva) with other cases (The delegations in New York and Brussels). The delegation in Geneva is the unit of analysis (Johannesen et al. 2010:87-88). The explanatory variables that will be presented in chapter 4.3, are the features of the organization and its processes. The “skeleton” of the thesis are the official documents and other literature, whereas the interviews provides the “flesh and blood” (Malinowski 1984:17, Schia 2004:44). The thesis thus advocate a holistic approach to research concerning diplomatic practices. The thesis relies on data from a limited timeframe, and is thus a form of cross-sectional study (Johannesen et al. 2010:74). It would have been more preferable to conduct longitudinal research, as that is more likely to weed out personal opinions that are not representative, and it would be possible to state with more certainty which factors influence national decision-making processes in a globalized world.

2.2 Methods for data collection: Interviews

The empirically based qualitative data of this thesis has been collected through a series of interviews conducted personally in Geneva and Oslo, and over phone and e-mail. Key officials from the UN delegation in Geneva, Norwegian NGOs, the media and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs are all represented in the list of informants – that counts ten people. In addition less formal conversations with renowned scientists within the field of IR (with an emphasis on international organizations) gave inspiration when formulating the various interview-guides. The sample size when it came to informants was largely determined by the access I was able to achieve. I would have liked to conduct interviews until I no longer received any new information – when I had reached the saturation point (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). However that was not practically possible, due to the before mentioned access, and the practical restraints such as time and resources. Within smaller research projects it is quite common with 10-15 informants (Johannesen et al. 2010:104), thus I am in that regard content with the sample size achieved.

It was challenging to schedule the interviews. Initial contact with the delegation in Geneva was established months before the interviews were granted, the long time span mainly a result of the extremely busy schedules of the delegations representatives. I first made contact over e-mail, so that I could properly identify who I was and the scope and objection of the research. I believed this to be the most effective way to communicate with the potential informants, as they are often on the go. In addition it was difficult to get a hold of direct phone numbers. However, it became clear that more often than not, I could not expect an answer to my e-mails. At that point I made direct contact with the informants I was most interested to talk to – this time over the phone.

After the first interviews were conducted, it became easier to schedule other appointments - a well appreciated snowball-effect. The snowball-method is when the researcher becomes aware of potentially useful informants through conversations with others. Then these informants may point towards even more people of interest (Johannesen et al. 2010:109). This method may weaken the reliability of a thesis if the informants have underlying motives for their recommendations, or simply because it may cause a less representative sampling. In this particular case the method was combined with a purposeful sampling, where I had strategically thought through which informants I wanted to interview. The use of the term snowball-effect thus mainly refers to how the first informants suggested others it would be expedient to talk to, that I was already aware of, in which I received help getting in touch with said people. I chose to conduct my own interviews in Geneva and Oslo, not in New York and Brussels. This was partly because the main focus of the thesis is on the delegation in Geneva, and also because I was fortunate to have the opportunity to lean on previous studies concerning the two other delegations – research that was recommended to me by scholars affiliated with my study programme. Because of the time restraints I was operating under, it would not have been possible to conduct my own interviews with representatives from these two delegations.

When conducting the interviews I used individually drafted semi-structured interview guides, which worked as guidelines throughout the conversations. I chose to let the interviews flow quite freely, as I believe it to be the best way to obtain information I might not have been aware of pre-interview, and thus would not have thought to ask of. This gave the informants the freedom to express themselves more freely than a structured interview would. The interview guides were good check-lists throughout the sessions, to make sure that no relevant issues were forgotten. This form of interviews based on a guideline can provide a good balance between standardization and flexibility (Johannesen et al. 2010:139). The planned guide for my next interview was often adapted after the previous one, based on new information obtained through the interview. Having a well thought-through interview guide was also important in order to achieve high academic and professional answers. I often noticed that the informants provided more in-depth answers when they realized that I had read up on relevant documents beforehand, and therefore had a good general understanding of their work. One of the main challenges in all of the interviews was obtaining enough details. It was often necessary with concrete follow-up questions in order to break through the loyal and state-centred “narrativeness” of the informants.

I opted not to use a tape-recorder in the interviews, and I believe this choice facilitated the process of making the informants comfortable talking to me. Many guidelines in methodology suggests that the use of tape recorders often pacify the informants, because they are more careful not to say anything of controversy when it might be traced back to them (Rubin & Rubin 2005:110). I was careful to immediately transcribe and process my notes from the interviews after they were done. This was an easier process than I had feared beforehand, since I was careful to take enough relevant notes during the interviews. In the cases where I was not sure if I had a statement down correctly, I followed up with a phone call or e-mail to give the informant a chance to edit. Throughout the entire process I was careful to follow the ethical research guidelines as provided by the University². This is important in order to build trust between the informants and the researcher, and in order to contribute to the general credibility of the world of research.

² The guidelines can be found here: <http://www.umb.no/statisk/personal/etikk/UMBs%20Etiske%20Retningslinjer.pdf>. Retrieved: 13.11.2013

Finally, in relation to the empirical data collection it is worth mentioning that I am very aware of the fact that such data is rarely undisputable facts – there will almost always be some sort of impregnation.

2.3 Documents and other literature

The literature used in this thesis has been of great help in building a basic understanding of the key concepts. Documents such as the UN Charter has provided large-scale context. It has also been important to study earlier research and official documents in order to establish the framework for a reliable and valid thesis. The documents studied in order to write the thesis varies from news articles to operational plans and budgets, and various official and non-official reports. The reliability of a thesis is easier to challenge if data is only collected from interviews. The informants are often in danger of presenting a view one-sidedly, or simply forgetting important aspects of a case (Yin 1994:85). Analysing documents and other literature is therefore important in order to provide a more objective representation of the data. This kind of methodical triangulation through various angles of approach is important in order to increase the credibility of the thesis, making it easier to compensate for potential methodical weaknesses.

When looking at the degree of media attention towards the delegations work, I have investigated a number of articles published in the written form (online or in paper version), from the majority of Norwegian news sources. I have used the database A-tekst for my own investigation, and I was also fortunate that the NGO *United Nations Association Norway* in November 2013 published a report on the media attention during the period Norway was a member of the Human Rights Council.³ Measuring the media attention is a difficult task, since it requires great attention to details when searching the databases. Some articles might be lost in the search if they do not include the relevant key search words. It is also necessary to be aware of the fact that some smaller news sources are not represented in the databases. It was therefore a great relief to discover the report of the UN association, which confirmed I was on the right track.

³ The report can be found here: <http://www.fn.no/Bibliotek/Rapporter/Menneskerettigheter/Norges-innsats-i-FNs-menneskerettighetsraad-2009-2012>. Retrieved 05.01.2014

2.4 Limitations and challenges

The theoretical perspectives used to approach the research questions are traditionally used to analyse more corporate aspects of organizational capacity. In this thesis they have been put to use when analysing bureaucracy and policy within a state. This naturally implies that one needs to be aware of the implicit differences between a corporation attempting to maximise ones financial outcome, and a state attempting to maximise its power and influence.

However, organizational theories can be futile also when exploring the state. It is my argument that the state is in many ways built as a corporation - with central command and outlying units. Whether attempting to increase political or financial outcome, the goal is increased power.

In a methodological sense it is difficult to measure socialization, learning and actions as features of an organization (see Checkel 1999 and Claussen 2007). An example is how different arguments from the various sections and departments is constantly being weighed in the process towards making a decision, and in itself does not present a consistent action pattern. It is also a possible pitfall to analyse certain cases that the delegations has worked on, and then generalize based on such a limited framework. I have chosen to provide a more general description of the delegations. Whenever specific cases are mentioned they are meant to illustrate various points throughout the thesis, not serve as bombastic points of simplification. They are included as a way to strengthen the reliability of the data uncovered through the interviews and document analysis. The main framework of the thesis is as described more general in nature. This may result in a thesis that is perhaps perceived as more shallow than what would be preferable. The choice to only “scratch the surface” is one I felt was necessary to make, in order to be able to provide a coherent thesis within the limited timeframe and resources available.

It has been more challenging than initially thought to gain access to the information needed to write this thesis. This has partly been due to delayed processes when requesting access to the plans and reports relevant to the delegation in Geneva. Norway's transparency laws indicate such requests should be processed without delay. However, as I came to experience, this is not always the case. It took between two and three months to gain access to the delegations operational plans and other relevant documents. Due to many of my informants' tight schedules it was also difficult to arrange meetings, as elaborated upon in paragraph 2.2. I also had the sense that some of the informants were hesitant to share information with someone writing a master thesis, not a higher level research work, albeit this might be a matter of subjective uncertainty. What is certain is that it is important to build a relationship based on trust when conducting qualitative research, especially within the political field. This takes time, and preferably first-hand knowledge or access to the field of study. I had neither, which limited my ability to "get under the skin" of my informants. Some were still able and willing to share personal thoughts and opinions, but it became clear early on that others would only provide answers built around a very official stance. It would have been more than preferable to supplement the investigation of the research questions with direct *observation*. I would then have been able to achieve knowledge of processes that are either not easily formulated or remembered. It is important to be aware of the possibility that what people *say* they do, is not necessarily what they *do* (Johannesen et al. 2010:119). Observing the analysis unit would thus have strengthened both the internal and external validity of the thesis. Unfortunately the limited time, resources and access made this impossible.

Due to the relatively small size of the Norwegian delegation in Geneva, it was also challenging to present their thoughts in such a way that it does not jeopardize their anonymity. Some informants were willing to contribute without being anonymized, however I chose to present their statements without revealing names. This a direct consequence of the small size of the delegation, and how revealing some names could jeopardize the anonymity of others. With regards to the interviews, I believe it could have been beneficial to conduct them with representatives from the home apparatus before I travelled to Geneva. However, the representatives from Geneva replied to my requests before the representatives from the home apparatus, and I therefore chose to seize the opportunity.

I believe I would have benefited in terms of preparedness if I had the opportunity to speak to representatives from the home apparatus beforehand, however I do not think the effect was tremendous – simply noteworthy.

Choosing to study the decision-making processes of these diplomatic missions abroad proved challenging when it came to both formal and informal access. This is the case when studying most relatively closed organizations (Helland et al. 1997:98). The cases are complex, involving actors on various locations and levels. It is therefore difficult to reach any clear conclusions based on the limited amount of data collected in Geneva and Oslo, and through previous research and documents. The thesis thus attempts to provide an overview of the different delegations, with an emphasis on the main organizational features. This is done through looking at various examples of their work, and interviews with a generalized tone. The thesis mainly presents as a basis for further research revolving institutional autonomy within Norwegian foreign affairs. My suspicion that it would prove difficult to study these questions was confirmed through the challenges described in this paragraph, and also explicitly confirmed by one of my informants:

“You are attempting to navigate in a closed landscape. Even though I am sitting here saying that the MFA is a transparent organization, it is going to be difficult to get a comprehensive picture..” – Informant F.

The thesis is limited in such a way that it does not include reflections on the relationship between the delegations and other Norwegian ministries than the MFA to any large extent. This would have been very interesting to include, especially with regards to the EU delegation, but it falls outside the scope and limitations of the thesis. It would also have been interesting, and methodologically more sound, to analyse the delegations over the course of the same time-frame. This would have eliminated the variable that change in time and leadership within the home apparatus or the delegations might pose. However, I was as described dependent upon previous research in order to successfully answer the relatively broad research questions. In addition the choice to focus particularly on periods where the delegations were members of UN-councils provided a natural necessity to focus on different time-periods.

2.5 Approaching the research questions

The theoretical approach of this thesis will mainly focus on a rationalist and a neo-institutional perspective on state governance. The purpose of including a theoretical approach, is to provide a contribution to the two perspectives. They will not be used in an oppositional matter, but rather as complimentary in the approach to the research questions. I find that limiting oneself to a certain perspective or approach hinders the understanding of the case or processes that are being analysed. The thesis thus follows Checkels understanding of complimentary perspectives as a way of covering the width of institutional dynamics (Checkel 1999:546). Therefore, the thesis is constructed with the basis in a broad approach, where the perspectives serve as guidelines in two different directions. The thesis operates under the assumption that depending on the situation and different factors both at a national, international and institutional level, both approaches has something to offer. If or when the delegations operates with what can be seen as a large degree of autonomy, the neo-institutional perspective will provide the best alternative for analysis. And if or when the opposite is true, the rationalist perspective is the better alternative. The thesis will reflect on which perspective present as the best model for explaining the relationship between the delegation and the MFA the majority of the time.

When presenting the choice of theoretical approach, I find it worth mentioning that the academic approach in a broader sense is also something that poses an interesting choice. The academic approach being the field of International Relations. The processes discussed in this thesis might just as well have been studied through anthropologic lenses. In fact, I have been inspired by this field of study when writing the thesis. Within anthropology, the state has always been considered as much less tangible than it is within political sciences such as International Relations. When conducting IR-research through imploding the state-apparatus, it has thus been useful to keep in mind the traditionally anthropological idea of the state as a “fragmentized phenomenon that plays out impacts” (Schia 2004:23). I believe accepting that a joint perspective can have positive effects, elevates academic research.

2.5.1 The rationalist perspective

The rationalist perspective can be placed within the classical realist tradition of Morgenthau and Weber. It assumes that actors are motivated by self-interest, and that they will always act in a manner that is utility-maximizing (Hovi & Rasch 1993:25). Within a rationalist perspective, the delegations would be seen as purely instrumental for the Norwegian ministry of Foreign Affairs, rather than institutions with autonomous bearings. The state is always the main focal point, and even though it delegates responsibility and authority to actors at a lower level in governance, these actors have little to no actual influence on the shaping and execution of Norwegian foreign affairs. Ideally, the state (meaning the core of the political apparatus) then remains superior, and the delegations function as extended and loyal arms of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The rationalist perspective will thus see the delegations as having no or very little degree of institutional autonomy. This has been the most prominent way of seeing foreign affairs within political academia. As an example, well-respected realist Thomas Schellings (1980) research on Diplomacy did not include any notions on the diplomats themselves, and even the embassies were not included in the analysis on how power is used most appropriately on the international arena. This thesis is an attempt to go deeper into the structure of the system, by looking at both the delegations as a whole and the diplomats themselves.

The perspective is criticized for not focusing on individuals within a system, thus ignoring methodological individualism. This may obscure the actual shaping of policies and political actions (Finnemore 1996), if it is taking place outside of the official political channels. Critics of the perspective would also claim that it undermines the importance of influence from other actors than the MFA in a top-down system (Singer 1961: 80). Many have advocated a perspective where all social phenomenon should be understood by analysing the importance of individuals within a system (Hovi & Rasch 1993:29), and the potential importance of their individual thoughts and actions. The same can be said for the importance of different agents within a system, in this case the delegations in New York, Brussels and especially Geneva. Allison's (1969) research on the Cuba Crisis was perhaps the first well known example of research that included focus on individuals within a system, by attempting to shed light on the policy-shaping itself rather than simply its outcomes.

Many esteemed researchers have later supported this way of conducting research on political processes (See Guzzini 1998, Finnemore 1996 and Hovi and Rasch 1993 for examples). However, research like that of Allison is still considered to be a less popular vantage point for research within IR, than perspectives not considering the importance of different actors within a state (Claussen 2007:2). The following table is provided as a figurative way of showing the rationalist perspectives' focus when researching international organizations. The thick lines represents more focused attention than the thin lines.

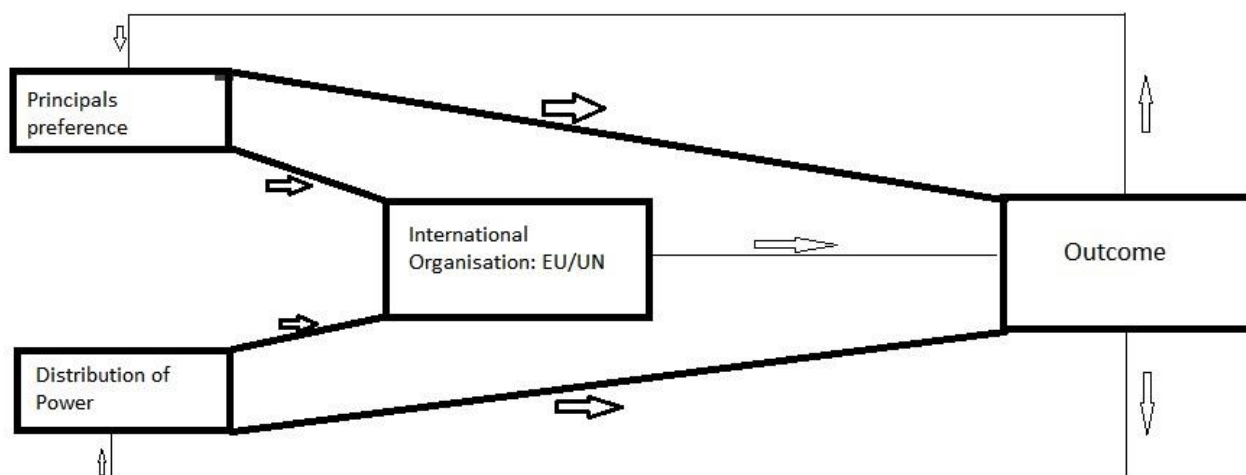


Figure 1: A rationalist perspective on international organization

2.5.2 Principal-agent theory

Principal-agent Theory originates from the field of economics, but has since been applied to political and social sciences as well. The classical aspects of the theory imply that the principal actor (here the state/ministry of foreign affairs) can never fully control the agent (here the delegations in Geneva, New York and Brussels) (Epstein & O'Halloran 1999:28-29). Mark A. Pollacks research on principal-agent relationships touches upon the potential room for autonomy if the agent has contradictory preferences to that of the principal (Pollack 2003:5). He suggests that institutional autonomy is possible in theory, but that through control mechanisms the principal stays in charge. The perspective is system-oriented, and would assume that the Ministry delegate authority to make decisions to the delegations based on an assessment of costs and benefits. It also sees the agents' main responsibility as presenting the principals opinions through principal-made speeches, or implementing instructions.

This would mean that the delegations work as extended arms of the Ministry of Foreign affairs - the latter being a rational central authority. In that regard it can be seen as a sub-theory of the rationalist perspective. However, as Epstein and O'Hallorans' research has shown, the principal can never be fully in control of the agent. This leaves room for the agent to act autonomously if loyalty towards the principal is disregarded, or if the agent believes the principal to be wrong based on their own accumulated knowledge.

Critics of the principle-agent theory have pointed towards what they see as “*methodological nationalism*”, because the discussion on principals and responsible political authorities usually focus solely on national bodies – not considering transnational issue-specific networks or other agencies that span national borders (Egeberg 2006:7). This thesis is an attempt to diminish parts of that gap.

2.5.3 The neo-institutional perspective

The neo-institutional perspective as presented in this thesis mainly builds on the ideas of March and Olsen (1984), presented in the 1980s and developed further up to this date. It was born as a result of newfound academic interest in the modernisation of institutions. In opposition to the rationalist perspective, this perspective tends to highlight the role of institutions and organisations in decision making processes (Olsen 1988:20). It sees the inner dynamics of organisations, including those similar to the MFA delegations, as having utmost importance in the outcome of political processes. It also focuses largely on the bureaucratic aspect of formulating policies. The delegations would be assumed to have developed their own particular organisational capacity and procedures, and the perspective aims to highlight these structures (Claussen 2007:5).

An important aspect of the neo-institutional perspective on governance and organizations, is that within a corporation, or in this case a state, the institutions are seen as “building blocks” in a conglomerate of interests and preferences (Olsen 1988:15). They are pieces of the puzzle, all important in order to see the full picture. Within the neo-institutional perspective, the delegations would be expected to inherit some degree of autonomy. The delegates' behaviour would be assumed to be coloured by a focus on perceived *correct* behaviour rather than utility-maximizing and calculating behaviour (Olsen 1992:7).

March and Olsen (1984:734) adds that the autonomy aspect of the theory also refers to institutions such as laws and bureaucracy, and they define formal institutions in the following matter:

“(...) gatherings of structures, rules and standard procedures that have a partly autonomous role in the political life, which guides officials to systematically weigh certain aspects of the organizational reality” (March & Olsen 2005:4).

This perspective challenges the rationalist assumption of the state as a centralised and well-coordinated actor with clear preferences. It sees the relationship between the agent and the principal as more loosely connected, in the same way Ulf Sverdrup does in his 2000 doctorate *Ambiguity and Adaption: Europeanization of administrative institutions as loosely coupled Processes*. Another important element in the perspective is how influence can vary largely based on *who* is representing the state in a given situation. Informant E, a representative of the UN delegation in Geneva, supports this by telling me:

“The leadership in Geneva can have great importance on how much we push (red: the MFA) under the Ambassadors leadership. How strongly we advocate our own preferences on how we should prioritize cases largely depends on the leadership”.

When Jarle Trondal in 2007 presented a working paper on the *anatomy of autonomy*, he emphasized the organizational factors as a driving force behind bureaucratic autonomy, advocating the strong influence of organizational structures on the behaviour of the officials (Trondal 2007). This influence will naturally vary depending on how long a certain official has worked in the delegation, and thereby also how their sense of connectedness favours the delegation and the UN or the MFA. Within a neo-institutional perspective, the delegations in Geneva, New York and Brussels will be seen as somewhat independent organisations, in the sense that they will develop their own identity and organizational culture over time (Claussen 2007:16). They will also be expected to operate under little degree of central control, and thus be able to draw their own instructions – whether directly or indirectly. This will in practical terms mean that they can decide relatively freely which cases to work on, and how they do it. Under this perspective, the delegations involvement in different trans-governmental networks will also be heavily emphasized.

As will the EU and UN as competing executive centres challenging the national governments (Bartolini 2005) – potentially fragmentizing the state. In sum, the delegations will be seen as relatively autonomous actors, with the possibility of exerting strong influence in Norwegian foreign politics.

Critics of the perspective will see the many complex models favoured in a neo-institutional perspective as unable to provide fruitful generalizations. Checkel (1999:546) criticizes the perspective for what he sees as ignoring social interaction as possible strategic and self-serving behaviour. The neo-institutional perspective would tend to see social institutions as influencing the delegation, rather than the other way around. Critics also see the perspective as some times favouring bureaucracy and organizations to heavily, thereby losing track of the relationship between states and thus the necessary holistic approach to foreign politics (Claussen 2007:17). The following table, as in the paragraph on the rationalist perspective, presents a figurative representation on a perspective on international organizations – in this case the neo-institutional. As we can see, there is a stronger focus on the direct line between international organizations and political outcome. This would imply larger relevance of the delegation tasked with following the organizations work. The lines also goes back and forth – representing a theoretical approach that considers influence both ways.

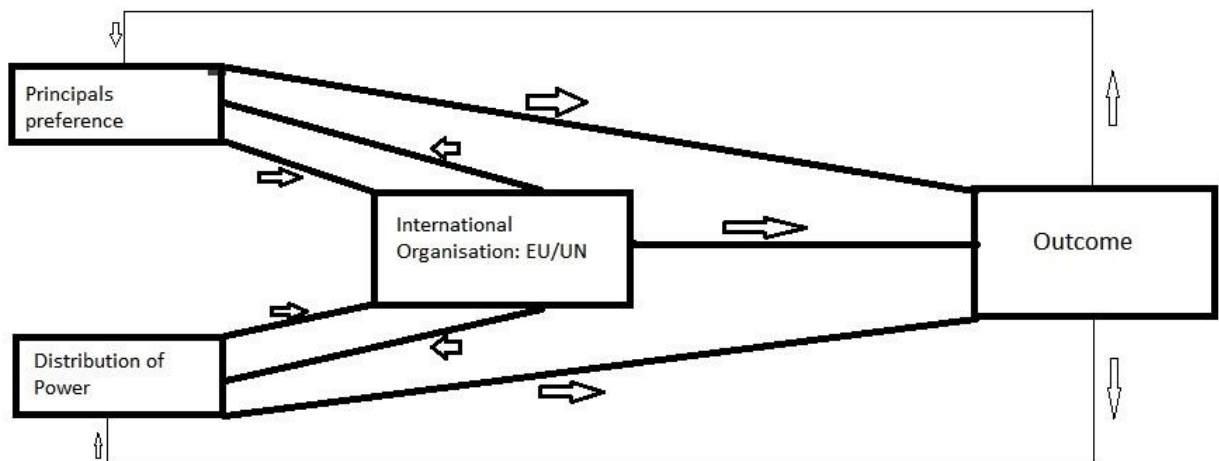


Figure 2: A neo-institutional perspective on international organization

Chapter 3: DIPLOMACY

In this chapter I will reflect on the implication globalization has for diplomatic practices. I will argue that the increased complexity of foreign affairs pose challenges to the traditional model of diplomacy, and a potential fragmentation of the state. I will elaborate on the term institutional autonomy, and a paragraph is dedicated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Norwegian policy of involvement.

3.1 Diplomacy in a complex and globalized world

Globalization has become somewhat of an overused fashionable word within International Relations, thus it is naturally prone to criticism. However, it is still (together with the more nuanced “globalism”) the best way to describe the changing nature of the world, in which information, goods, capital, data, services, images and people cross the planet at an ever increasing rate (Heine 2006: 3) – changes that are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. This affects international governance, and foreign ministries and diplomats alike need to adjust their diplomatic practices to a world where the line between national and international politics is becoming less clear. Many of today’s political institutions were designed for another age, and the notion that foreign politics and diplomacy is a much formalized affair is challenged. Many diplomatic institutions have failed to adapt to the globalized world – the information era where public political mobilization can overwhelm our democratic institutions (Homer-Dixon 2000). Decorated diplomat and researcher Jorge Heine describes the implications of globalization for diplomatic practices the following way:

“(…) established procedures and norms do not always apply, domestic governmental structures are in a flux, and the distinction between internal and foreign affairs is increasingly blurred” (Heine 2006:02).

This provides the basis for a diplomatic world where tasks and responsibilities cannot always be solved through traditional and formalized instructions being provided vertically from a country's home-based foreign affairs ministries to their delegates abroad. This complexity is addressed by researches within complexity theory. The theory is, in a simplified manner, about how the world has become so complex, with examples ranging from car parts⁴ to international relations, that it is impossible to keep track of the development. Layers of complexity is constantly being added to government decision making, turning diplomacy into a form of "complexity management" (Heine 2006:5). In an ever increasingly globalized world, the nation states have to deal with a growing amount of international cases and actors – including but not limited to NGOs, international organizations and the international press. The political reality is becoming more complex by the minute. As the pace of political events intensifies, diplomats increasingly need to adjust to situations rapidly. There is no longer time for drawn-out meetings with complex bargaining in order to reach mutual understandings (Homer-Dixon 2001). This, combined with the public need for rapid information, may hinder the bureaucratic processes. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs thus needs to expand their institutional capabilities in order to effectively manage today's economic and political realities.

A study conducted in the 1980s pointed to what was perceived as a neglect to consider globalization and the growing amount of cases by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (East 1982: 26-27). This has later been supported by Norwegian researchers, and Neumann and Leira (2005:395) go as far as to suggest that the situation has escalated since then, because of the growing amount of cases that needs coordinating, and a decline of coordination within the ministry. When a state finds itself in this situation it can be forced to take action in complex cases, with limited rationality and insecurity (Claussen 2007:13). When informant F was asked whether or not it is becoming more difficult for the home apparatus of the MFA to keep track of and control the Missions abroad, due to the increased workload and complexity, the answer on the following page was provided.

⁴ An example provided by Homer-Dixon.

“It is a good question, and I understand why you ask. In one way, the answer is yes – because there is definitively a lot going on. We have to prioritize continuously. But my opinion is that modern technology outweigh the problematic issues to a large degree. Through the internet, rapid flights, mobile phones, e-mails etc. it has become easier to relate to the work load. But it is obvious that there is a lot to deal with.. To that regard the delegation in Geneva has an important role in sorting important from less important.”

The thesis argues that most traditional theoretical approaches are not suited to explain such a complex reality alone, and that middle-range theories are often more fruitful. The connection between actual practice and standardized formal processes will be discussed in order to shed light on how this combination might help solve problems and ease working conditions within organisations working on complex cases. It will be argued that such an approach invites to individual creativity within the boundaries of a standardized form, and that this has a positive effect on Norway's foreign politics in practice. An example is the UN delegation in New York, which during Norway's time as a Security Council member had to adhere to the Council's Rules of Procedure. These will be discussed more extensively in paragraph 5.1, but it is worth mentioning already that the rules have not been amended since 1982. They were thus written in a different time, and is an example of how the official structure of much of the diplomatic world has not yet caught up in a globalized and complex world system. As we will see, in the case of the Security Council the unofficial customary practice is more important than the official rules of procedure.

Within the MFA as a whole, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has the main responsibility of Norwegian foreign politics. But the amount of cases is so immense, that it would be impossible to control any and all questions and processes that has to be considered. This complexity is precisely what advocates of the complexity theory would point to, even though surprisingly little has been written on the relationship between complexity theory and diplomacy. The Minister is more often than not forced to delegate responsibility of decision-making further down the hierarchy – providing a very interesting basis for research on Norwegian foreign politics within the realms of organizational structures.

3.2 Fragmentation of the nation state

According to a Working Paper published by the University of Oslo's Centre for Europe Research (ARENA), there has been substantial tendencies towards a more fragmented national state over the last few decades. The Paper argues that as far as vertical and horizontal specialization of the governmental apparatus goes, we can see clear "*agencification*" (Egeberg 2007:4-5). That the official framework of a nation state does not coincide with how decisions are increasingly being made on an agency-level. Egeberg has previously also argued that there is an increasing tendency to push processes of coordination to a lower level of governance – in order to relieve some of the work load off the higher levels. He concludes that this can, and has, led to diminished control potential (Egeberg 2003) for the principal and thus fragmentation of the nation state. This idea has been heavily supported, among others by Christensen and Lægreid, who in 2006 published a book on autonomy and regulation within the modern state. They found that political and principal control is increasingly undermined, but that it is sometimes partly compensated for through informal contact between the multiple levels of governance (Christensen & Lægreid 2006). It is also argued that on a Ministry-level the political loyalty is usually high.

Allison (1969:698) presented the idea that politicians can influence and hinder unwanted development, but never fully control the bureaucracy. Informant A supported this, by telling me that political leadership has direct consequences for the delegations work in the sense that they might choose to prioritize cases differently, but that "*there is no difference with it comes to the concrete work we do. They can not affect how the system works*". Egeberg (2007) also supported Allison's idea, by pointing out that national organizations, in this case delegations, within an international regime has to adhere to both their home base and their international surroundings, as a way of fragmentising the nation state. If the delegations are influenced by the regimes pre-established working methods when making choices, it presents as a factor that can possibly undermine the state as a unitary actor. Thus, the politicians are not fully in control of the bureaucracy. However it is important to keep in mind that even if the power-relations that emerge can be considered diffuse and fragmented, they can still be part of a coherent system. And as my informant pointed out, the system is not easily changed.

As described the thesis is looking at the relationship between different actors at a national level – when in combination with a third international actor. This type of multi-level governance might have democratic implications when it comes to national control (or the potential lack thereof) and the degree of accountability (Egeberg 2006: 31-48). When operating on multiple levels it is necessary to look at informal processes as well as formal, in order to determine the degree of autonomy. The formal processes include standardised rules and guidelines, with instructions and plans describing what is expected from the delegations and the results of their work – stipulating the codified order (Schia 2004:9). Whereas the informal processes include the parts of the three delegations work that is not planned or standardized, and can thus not be observed through instructions or rules. These processes are equally important in order to understand and provide a holistic picture of what happens in between instruction and result. When a process is being treated on multiple levels of governance, an element of interpretation and assessment will emerge, exemplified by whenever someone has to make a decision on how far up in the hierarchical system of the MFA a case should be sent for clarification and/or decision-making. Operating on multiple levels can arguably help resolve conflicting processes and ease internal paradoxes within an organization – including those relating to governance. One of the arguments presented in this thesis is that within multi-level governance it is important to study what power exists at the various levels, but also the dynamics between them.

3.3 Institutional autonomy

The concept of “institutional autonomy” is at the core of this thesis. It is necessary to look at how autonomy can be operationalized, and how delegation and coordination is conducted in an institutionalized manner. The degree of autonomy is dependent on many factors, one of which being the mandate given to the delegation (the agent⁵) by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the principal) and the political leadership. When looking at institutional autonomy in a principal-agent perspective, it is natural to mention Mark A. Pollacks two variables for delegation of power in such a relationship. Firstly, he expressed that delegation of power sustains the information rationale of complex cases. Secondly, that it creates credibility for the government (Pollack 2003:7). Pollack also describes the effectiveness and credibility of control mechanisms enforced by the principal as a variable for degree of autonomy.

⁵ See paragraph 2.5.2 for an account of the principal-agent theory.

However, Pollack fails to consider institutional autonomy in a broader context than simply something that is controlled by the principal – in this case the ministry of Foreign Affairs. Where Pollack looks at instrumental factors for autonomy, this thesis will also consider norm-based and identity building factors. The informal aspects if you will. Do the Missions abroad set the tone when it comes to shaping Norwegian UN or EU politics? Do they have the mandate to coach other actors within Norwegian politics when it comes to the organizations they work within? These are examples of questions that when answered will create a more wholesome picture of the institutional autonomy of the delegations, rather than only considering the strictly instrumental factors. It is the argument of this thesis that in order to get a fulfilling understanding of institutional autonomy, both the formal and informal aspects of the delegations and their surroundings need to be uncovered.

The thesis operates with four different indicators in order to help operationalize the term institutional autonomy. The indicators are action-repertoire, access to information, national attention and features of central control, when it comes to the different institutional processes. The reasons for choosing these specific indicators will be elaborated upon in paragraph 4.3: *Features of the Norwegian delegation and its processes*. The necessity of focusing on institutional autonomy is arguably especially important within studies of international organizations such as the EU and UN, which must be said to have a direct impact on both Norway as a state, and living conditions worldwide.

3.4 The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

“The paradox of bureaucracy is that the larger it grows, the more differentiated it becomes internally, and the more easily special interests are able to hide behind a mask of disinterested and objective rationality” (Herzfeld 1992:102)

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a fairly young organization. It is also complex and of great size, yet its external stances are expected to be monolithic and uniform. The Ministry is divided into various main sections (such as the UN-section) and departments, which in turn are divided into different specialized sections. The home apparatus of the MFA delegates authority to its delegations abroad. This is usually done through instructions – a formal process. These instructions should be comprehensive, but can never be fully

exhaustive. When instructions for delegations abroad are being drawn, they usually go through several of the specialized sections and departments, depending on which areas are affected, before being approved by the leadership of the UN-section. In severe cases, the political leadership is naturally heavily involved. This way of formulating instructions, through interaction and collaboration, helps tie the employees together and to the institution (Neumann 2000). So far, the rationalist perspective presents as the best model for explaining the relationship between the delegation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One of my informants, who has extensive knowledge of both the UN and the MFA, described the MFA as working with “*a priority list, almost like an ABC*” (informant D). The A list consisting of cases where Norway has a concrete national interest, and the importance is considered to be great. The procedures in such cases are based on routine, and the division of responsibility follows strict instructions. The B list consisting of cases where there is greater leeway for the delegates to act, usually in cases that are considered not as important and where there is an informational asymmetry favouring the delegations abroad. These cases are often subject to less political attention. Cases from the C list are peripheral in relation to the MFAs list of priorities. Because the home apparatus does not have the capacity to follow up on all cases, the delegates are here working with great leeway.

Informant F stated that the MFA has room to improve when it comes to their routines for training the delegates in specific situations they are likely to run into. There are courses in multilateral negotiation, but the informant states that it would also be beneficial to train the delegates to the UN-system in techniques for network building and lobbying, similar to what exists for the EU-delegation (Claussen 2007). This implies that there are differences in the processes within the EU delegation and the UN delegations, since they have different starting points regarding training.

3.4.1 The policy of involvement and White papers No. 15 and 33

Kenneth Waltz (1927: 126) presented a neo-realist view on state hierarchy when he suggested that states will secure their position in international relations before, or even rather than, increasing their relative power. This adds support to the question of why Norway has been and is still showing strong support for the UN - The infamous cornerstone of Norwegian foreign policy. In 2006 the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Jonas Gahr Støre, initiated a project aimed at presenting a coherent discussion of Norwegian interests and how best to preserve them. He encouraged an open dialogue concerning Norwegian interests in a globalized world, and more than 200 academics, politicians and others contributed (Haug 2011:5). The most relevant contributions were later presented in White Paper no. 15, that was released in 2009. The paper was named “*Interests, responsibility and possibilities, main lines in Norwegian foreign policy*”. One of the key issues that the Paper aimed to answer was what new demands are posed in an increasingly globalized political landscape when it comes to managing foreign policy. This is discussed in relation to political fields such as climate issues, economy/energy, security and engagement/involvement. The involvement policy can be seen as an “umbrella term” which includes peace work, aid, the promotion of human rights and the more general work done to strengthen the UN (White Paper nr. 15 2009: 13). The discussions concerning the latter two being of particular interest to this thesis.

In recent years it has become more common to point out Norway's self-interests in connection to the policy of involvement. The rhetoric and discourse has shifted. When Norway is working towards a strengthened UN, it is first and foremost in order to preserve a peaceful and stable society. This is not just because of an altruistic outlook on the world, the country also has a strong interest in maintaining such a status. Institutions like the UN contribute to asserting international norms and laws – which protects the Norwegian resources. Politics toward the UN and EU might therefore be seen as a form of “small-state realism”, rather than simply a consequence of idealistic involvement politics.

In relation to the release of White Paper No. 33: *Norway and the UN – Common future, common solutions* (2012), state secretary Gry Larsen confirmed this approach, by stating that “we (Red. Norway) are fundamentally benefitting from a world where law goes before power, and power is regulated”⁶. However, this does not necessarily mean that a rationalist perspective focusing on national interests is the most effective way to assess *how* the practical diplomacy towards the UN and EU is conducted.

The reasons for obtaining a strong focus on the involvement policy has previously been stated in terms of selfless ideals and values. Prior to the release of White Paper No. 15, there was a notable change in rhetorics regarding this. The necessity of focusing on and sustaining Norwegian interests is now being openly discussed (Haug 2011:6). The official reasons for focusing Norway’s efforts internationally on involvement politics, is that as one of the richest and most peaceful countries in the world, Norway has an ethical duty (bordering to an obligation) to work against poverty and war (White Paper No. 15 2009:13). But in addition that as an effect of globalization, Norway also has an increasing self-interest in focusing on involvement related politics:

“As a country with limited means of power, it is also in Norway’s interest to strengthen the international society’s community efforts” (White Paper nr. 15 2009:13).

This highlights the role of the delegation in Geneva, and the argument is heavily supported. Researcher Kristian Stokke writes in his 2010 book *“The Soft Power of a Small State”*:

“Peace engagement may also serve Norwegian economic and security interests by reducing long-distance impact of intrastate conflicts and grant recognition and influence that support the pursuit of Norwegian interests in international arenas” (Stokke 2010:138).

Another argument for focusing on involvement politics provided in the Paper, is the notion that Norway through years of peace mediation has accumulated a distinct competence. The best negotiator is traditionally seen as someone that does not have any particular interests on either side of a conflict, because this makes it more likely to be seen as neutral by both or all sides (Nyhamar 2007: 151).

⁶ Stated during a meeting at the Norwegian Literature House in Oslo, September 21st 2012.

When this is combined with a tradition for not openly focusing on interest related politics, the country has succeeded in appearing as having few real-political interests in most conflicts. When Norway was elected to one of the seats in the Human Rights Council, the voting was unanimous, supporting the idea of Norway being perceived as a peace nation, perhaps with additional leeway in the Council. However, as discussed in this thesis, it is clear that cases relating to real-political Norwegian interests are given priority within the MFAs political and bureaucratic systems. Cases that are considered “less important”, the B and C list cases, which belong under the involvement policy umbrella are often subject to less principal control resulting in more autonomous proceedings. This is interesting, as we have seen in this paragraph that these involvement policy-related cases are important also in an interest based perspective.

When White Paper No. 33 was written, it was the first White Paper revolving solely around the UN to be published in 15 years. In relation to this paper, Informant D also mentioned how foreign affairs related politics is now revolving around an intent to promote Norwegian interests, to a larger extent than only a decade ago when such an approach was not explicitly stated. This statement largely confirmed what I have written above. The informants in Geneva informed me that they had been heavily involved in the process of creating the Paper, one stating:

“We wrote a great part of it. The Human Rights and Democracy section in Oslo only had one person in the writing group, so we contributed with a lot of the writing. With everything relating to Human Rights we were involved all the way. It was passed back and forth with the MFA at home, but we were very involved. We wrote a lot of it”.

In the process of writing this White Paper it would thus seem like the neo-institutional perspective, favoring the delegation as an influential actor, would provide the most appropriate model for explaining the relationship between the delegation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Chapter 4: UNHRC AND THE NORWEGIAN DELEGATION

In this chapter I will focus on the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Norwegian delegation to the UN in Geneva. I will start by providing a general description of the Council, before moving on to describe the Norwegian delegation. The features of the processes within and outside the delegation will be described in detail, and paragraphs are dedicated to the action repertoire, resources, competence, organizational capacity, access to information, national- media- and civil society-attention and principal control. Finally, the findings will be summarized.

4.1 The United Nations Human Rights Council

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was established in 2006⁷, as part of the work done to strengthen the focus on Human Rights within the United Nations. It is bureaucratically located directly beneath the General Assembly. The establishment of the UNHRC was heavily supported, with 170 of the UNs 191 member states voting in favor of the resolution. The Council replaced the former Commission on Human Rights, which was regularly criticized for a variety of reasons, among others that they did not meet on a regular basis and that states who breached Human Rights within their own borders were allowed to sit in the Commission. Norway was one of the nations who strongly supported the establishment of a Human Rights Council devoted to spreading and strengthening human rights. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs contact person for the Human Rights Council, Baard Hjelde, stated in an interview with the United Nations Association of Norway that the country had been strongly in favor of the establishment of such a council, and heavily involved in the process of establishing it. He also stated that this was largely due to the fact that the Human Rights Commission did not inherit as much impact as desired (UN association 2014:6).

The Council is situated in Geneva, a city that has always been important in a UN context, and consists of 47 member-nations. These nations must be approved by a majority of the

⁷ See the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on March 15th 2006 here: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/502/66/PDF/N0550266.pdf?OpenElement> Link to the voting results can be found on the same page. Retrieved: 29.11.2013.

members of the UN General Assembly, and holds their seat for a period of three years. All other nations and NGOs may be present during the Councils proceedings, and according to Informant F the NGOs have an important role when it comes to setting the agenda. The Council is obligated to hold at least three sessions of meetings each year, lasting a minimum of ten weeks in total. In addition the Council may call for meetings when extraordinary circumstances suggests this is necessary. During the sessions in the Human Rights Council, human rights related issues are discussed thematically, through meetings in groups, general debates and complaint procedures (UN association 2014:4).

One of the most important tasks of the Council is to conduct the Universal Periodic Review every four or five years. Every member state to the UN is obligated to draw a report on the human rights situation within their state, and what the state is doing to improve the situation. The Human Rights Council will then discuss the reports, and provide advice on how each country can and should work towards improving their efforts. The questions asked by the delegations in relation to the UPRs has to be sent in two weeks prior to the discussion in the Council, and speeches approximately three weeks before (Informant A). These deadlines are examples of how formalized the procedures in the UNHRC are.

There are ongoing discussions on whether or not the current Council is strict enough when it comes to excluding members who breach human rights, but it is clear that the Council works better than the Commission ever did in this regard. As an example, it is worth mentioning that Libya was excluded from the Council in March 2011, after the violent reaction to Libyan citizens' peaceful demonstrations (UN association 2014:4). The council is also subject to political rumblings, as many of its members are often not concerned with consensus – in opposition to the Norwegian stance. This lack of consensus-orientation is a contrast to the Security Council, which will be elaborated upon in paragraph 5.1. The difference can be explained by looking at the mandate of the two Councils. The UNHRC does not have the power to enforce a resolution, as the Security Council can. Paragraph 5 in Resolution 60/251 on the establishment of the UNHRC (see footnote 7 for reference to the full resolution), determines that the Council shall⁸:

⁸ With authors own highlights.

(a) **Promote** human rights education and learning as well as advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building, to be provided in consultation with and with the consent of Member States concerned.

(b) Serve as a **forum** for dialogue on thematic issues on all human rights.

(c) Make **recommendations** to the General Assembly for the further development of international law in the field of human rights.

(d) **Promote** the full implementation of human rights obligations undertaken by States and follow-up to the goals and commitments related to the promotion and protection of human rights emanating from United Nations conferences and summits.

(e) Undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfilment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments in a manner which ensures universality of coverage and equal treatment with respect to all States; the review shall be a cooperative mechanism, based on an interactive dialogue, with the full involvement of the country concerned and with consideration given to its capacity-building needs; such a mechanism shall complement and not duplicate the work of treaty bodies; the Council shall develop the modalities and necessary time allocation for the universal periodic review mechanism within one year after the holding of its first session.

(f) **Contribute, through dialogue** and cooperation, towards the prevention of human rights violations and respond promptly to human rights emergencies.

(g) Assume the role and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights relating to the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as decided by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993.

(h) Work in close cooperation in the field of human rights with Governments, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society.

(i) **Make recommendations** with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights.

(j) Submit an annual report to the General Assembly.

As we can see, the UNHRC can only contribute to promote human rights through recommendations and dialogue – making it more of an *arena* for discussion than an *actor* within international relations. Many of the member nations are as a result not as concerned with achieving consensus. As will be discussed in the paragraph on the Security Council, there is a much greater need to appear coherent in a Council that is able to enforce its decisions. The mandate of the SC is also broader than that of the Council in Geneva. The implications this has for the processes within the delegations to the UN is part of the discussion in paragraphs 4.3, 5.1 and 6.1. On a general note, informant F told me that the Human Rights Council is a very open forum, more so than the SC:

“The Human Rights Council is more transparent, The Security council has another role – it has a broader mandate. The UNHRC has a very clear mandate. It is to follow up on the UNs conventions on human rights.”

4.2 The Norwegian delegation to the UN in Geneva

In 2007, it was decided that Norway was going to apply for one of the seats in the UNHRC⁹. Leading up to this decision, there was a strong political wish for Norway to be part of shaping the relatively newly established council. Informant D described it the following way:

“It was important for Norway to show that the Council was taken seriously, and that we wanted a strong Human Rights Council. Both the MFA at home and the delegation in Geneva worked actively in order to be elected. Among other things, by working closely with other delegations. During this process Norway was very clear on which cases the country wanted to prioritize. The Civil Society in general also wanted Norway to become a member of the council”.

⁹ As stated in paragraph 1.1.c in the Operational Plan for the Geneva delegation, 2008.

The role of the delegation in Geneva during the time Norway held a seat in the Human Rights Council, included an increased responsibility to represent Norway's official political stances, and the duty to report home on the general situation and specific cases being treated in the Council. The role of representation leaves room to play out the role in varying manners, and the role of reporting home leaves informal room to influence the instructions being provided by the home apparatus. They thus had the opportunity to influence the instructions they were later going to represent, on an early layout stage. This leaves room to undermine an official process through unofficial working methods.

During its time in the Council, Norway was as mentioned very concerned with strengthening it due to the negative experiences from the Commission on Human Rights. This made Norway concerned with basing the Council's decisions on a consensus-oriented process, perhaps inspired by the Security Council. They were also concerned with cooperating with a great variation of other delegations (Informant E), and their collaboration was thus often on an ad-hoc basis (Hovi & Underdal 2008:21). Informant A stated that this consensus-driven approach had been increasing in the delegations work in the years leading up to the membership as well.

“The Norwegian work in Geneva has since around 2005 been characterized by want of an including style (...) Some countries look at Norway as a bit weak due to this consensus-driven work. I believe it is a sensible way to work, when we see that some parts of the world are becoming more powerful than they used to be. Norway tries to involve these countries early in a process, largely in order to secure majority in the cases Norway wants approved in the Council”.

4.3 Features of the delegation and its processes

When determining the potential degree of autonomy inherent in the delegation, it is important to look closely at the different processes within and outside the delegation. I will start with the internal processes. When doing so I have looked at both factors that are not subject to rapid change, and factors that are subject to variation in different processes. I have thereby analysed them through March and Olsens before mentioned framework for the study of development of organizational capabilities (1995:91-121). This framework has previously successfully been applied to the study of foreign policy in the case of the Norwegian EU delegation in Brussels (see Claussen 2007).

Using the same framework in this thesis provides a better basis for comparison of the two delegations in chapter 5. March and Olsen highlights resources, knowledge and expertise and organizational capacity as capabilities that are important when it comes to stabilizing attention, mobilize resources and successfully deal with resistance within the field of political governance in democratic systems (March and Olsen 1995:92).

When it comes to factors that are more prone to change depending on the situation, these will be discussed in the following chapters, breaking down the framework described above. For a more visual understanding of the operationalization of autonomy, I have included a figure on the following page depicting a summary of the features. The model in its original form can be found in Claussen 2007 analysis of the Norwegian EU delegation in Brussels. It has been adjusted to include all aspects relevant for the delegation in Geneva, as well as the delegations in Brussels and New York. The importance of each indicator may vary, based on what case is being analysed. In some cases, the action repertoire may be the defining indicator, while in other cases the access to and flow of information may be the most interesting indicator. The model is naturally a simplified version of the reality we are studying, and can not be seen as a definite model for determining degree of autonomy. It is simply intended as a visual aid when summarizing the features of processes within and outside the delegation, and how the assessment of the indicators places within the rationalist and neo-institutionalist perspectives.

Level of Analysis	Indicators	Degree of Autonomy	
		<i>Little</i>	<i>Large</i>
<i>UN/EU-level</i>	<i>Action Repertoire</i>	✓ Narrow	✓ Broad
		✓ Based on instruction and provided speeches	✓ Own initiatives, and room for interpretation
	<i>Flow of information</i>	✓ National government well informed ✓ Informational Symmetry	✓ Information does not flow freely
			✓ Principal not up to speed on possible actions
	✓ Effective and objective reports	✓ Time constraints	
<i>National level</i>	<i>National and media attention</i>	✓ Continuous and/or intens	✓ Sequential and/or screened
	<i>Features of Principal control</i>	✓ Holistic and comprehensive ✓ Detailed instructions	✓ Partial and sporadic ✓ Instructions = Framework
Features of the delegation		Instrumental tendencies (Rationalist perspective)	Autonomous tendencies (Neo-institutionalist perspective)

Figure 3: Summary of the features of processes within and outside the delegations.

4.3.1 Action repertoire

The Norwegian delegation to the UN in Geneva works in the interface between national and international relations, and exists between two different political and cultural systems. When initial contact was made with the delegation, I was told that there were no examples of cases where the delegation had a more autonomous role than in other cases. That their relation, both formal and informal, to the department at home was relatively unchanging from case to case (E-mail informant A)¹⁰. This is in accordance with the rationalist perspective on state governance, where the agent act as a loyal instrument to the central administration in a top-down structure. The delegation is managed from central command (MFA/Principal), through instructions, rules and checks. However, as seen in previous studies on principal-agent relationships within state governance, there is usually varying degree of contact and national control involved in the action repertoire of a peripheral agent. Whether or not the repertoire – the relevant types of action available to manage a given situation (Allison 1969:701), is a result of the agent developing a precedence or the principal setting strict guidelines, is one factor to consider when deciding which perspective is most fruitful. During my empirical research, it became apparent that the UN delegation in Geneva follows relatively strict guidelines compared to the other two Norwegian delegations, which will be presented in chapter 5. The delegations action repertoire is limited by a combination of the UNHRCs speech-based forums, and the MFAs preapproval of such speeches. Informant B told me that this sometimes posed problems:

“The communication between the delegation and the MFA is not always optimal in practice. Sometimes you feel like you have to nag several times to get what you need from the MFA in preparation for a meeting, for example a speech you are to hold. It can happen that you are told from the MFA that you are expected to prioritize a meeting, but then that is not followed up by instructions and speeches on what to say in the meeting (...) It is a question of capacity. You can experience to receive what you are supposed to say while at the meeting.”

Informant A also talked of similar issues, stating the following:

¹⁰ As we will see in the paragraph on the delegation in New York, the initial response given to Norwegian researcher Schia's (2004) same question was that the procedure and role of the delegation, their room for autonomy, varied from case to case.

“When it comes to smaller meetings we ask to get the speeches we are to hold approximately three days beforehand, but sometimes it only gets here hours or less before the meeting. That is not satisfactory. It gets easier the more experience you get, of course. I get crabby and angry when I don’t receive things like that by the deadline. So now I get it by the deadline more often. Maybe it would be smart to not hold all the speeches we do. To do less, but to do it better.»

This shows that the action repertoire can depend on personality, with the agent setting precedence - supporting the neo-institutional perspective. The repertoire also refers to the contact between the delegation in Geneva and the UN-system. This contact includes strategies and coordination with the various organs and other actors within the UN. The delegation can naturally be very active in relation to these actors, without it signifying a large degree of autonomy. The Principal can still be in full control of the situation, as would be expected by the rationalist perspective. However, it is possible to assume that with a broad amount of actions in a repertoire, the national government will be less informed due to information being screened because of complex and large amounts of information. The indicator *Broad Action Repertoire* is therefore not an indicator of autonomy in itself. But when this leeway is combined with the other indicators for autonomy, it provides a reliable holistic picture that this thesis bases its conclusion on. In analysing this picture, one also needs to consider which processes are influencing the delegates the most – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs internalization or the UNs processes.

A rationalist perspective sees the room for manoeuvring as something largely pre-determined by the Principal national governments delegation of responsibility and tasks. The organizing of tasks and proceedings should be successful in such a manner that the agent is optimized to an unaffected actor (Schia 2004:54). Some would see this as a reduction rather than an optimization, but the actor would still function as a loyal agent. Whereas if we were to see the same room through the neo-institutional perspective it would largely depend on the Agents own view when it comes to procedures and preferences (Allison 1969:700). This creates an atmosphere where the diplomats within a delegation could act with a larger degree of autonomy, based on their own initiatives (Claussen 2007:21).

The repertoire will also vary based on an individual's creativity when it comes to manoeuvring the political arena. It should be a goal for all organizations to make room for and encourage collective actions, change and understanding. However, it is also in an organizations nature that this is not always easily done (Olsen 1992:17). It takes creativity and a solution based orientation. This will normally increase over time, depending on factors such as experience in general, time in Geneva specifically or within the UN generally, and individual networks. One of my informants, who at the time had been working within the UN-system for approximately six months, briefly spoke of this when interviewed.

“After six months everything is still quite new. You’re not quite sure where the limit is for what you are allowed to say without specific instructions from the Ministry (red: of Foreign Affairs). But I think that when you get more comfortable with your role, you also get more comfortable taking initiative even when it’s not explicitly stated that you should do so”.

There are several institutionalized “contact-channels” between Geneva and Oslo, and Norway and the UN. However, there is naturally also extensive contact outside of these official channels. The delegation receives few direct instructions from the MFA, which to some degree strengthens the case of a neo-institutionalist perspective. However, the informants emphasize that there is rarely any misconception when it comes to what the home-apparatus of the MFA wants the delegation to prioritize. There is more often than not daily ongoing dialogue that lessens the need for clear official instructions (Informant E).

4.3.2 Resources

When looking at the delegations resources, it is not simply a monetary term. Their resources also includes information, knowledge, expertise, networks, experience and facilities. Within a neo-institutional perspective, where “institutions matter”, these factors will influence the potential autonomy of the delegation. If one is to avoid wasting resources, it is important that the diplomats are continually consulted and listened to on a day to day basis. They need to be involved in the decision making. This requires focused attention from the principal (March & Olsen 1995:95). The resources of the delegation in Geneva thus includes both individual and institutional resources.

One of the most important resources of the delegation is their networks. Through active network building, the delegation gains access to strategically important information. This is important to the home apparatus in order to reach sound decisions in complex cases. Including aspects such as network building in this research, means that one could say the thesis is operating in the interface between several different academic fields. Within anthropology, the study of social relations and cultural phenomenon's in addition to public institutions in order to fully understand structures within international affairs is not a new approach. Malinowski provided the following image to conceptualize the connectedness:

"We are given an excellent skeleton (...) but it lacks flesh and blood" (Malinowski 1984:17).

Such a holistic approach is advocated throughout this thesis, and the inclusion of the factors mentioned above in relation to the delegations resources is an example in itself. Informant A stated that the informal networks they had built with representatives from other delegations was extremely important in order to function in an efficient manner:

"It is definitely very important. You can't send an e-mail from Oslo, asking "Hey, what do you think about this" to another delegation. More often than not they would never put that (Red: what they actually think) in writing. That goes for all areas, especially very political issues. We need to build trust through networking. It is central. To establish cooperation based on trust, built over time. You cannot sit in Oslo and achieve such cooperation. You have to be present."

When it comes to the more tangible forms of resources, such as personnel and facilities, the delegation is stretched thin. Several of the informants state that they are completely dependent on their interns in order to function properly on a day-to-day basis, and the amount of personnel is often described with the lukewarm word *adequate* in official reports¹¹. Informant B was more direct when asked about the personnel-situation, saying that *"they (red: the MFA) want the delegation to prioritize a lot of issues, but the delegation lacks people"*. The Mission in Geneva has two delegations, one to the UN and one to the WTO and EFTA (Operational Plan 2009:2). The delegations share administration. During the period Norway was a member of the UNHRC, one diplomat was added to the UN delegation, which in total counted 9 people in addition to the ambassador. This was

¹¹ See for example paragraph 5.1 in the delegations operational report from 2006.

necessary in order to function effectively with the increased workload. The delegates in Geneva stated during the interviews that the current reduction due to Norway no longer being a member of the UNHRC, is felt on a day-to-day basis. Informant D told me that there has to be very clear political pressure if they are to work on something that has not previously been a priority – a direct result of limited resources. In the Operational plans for the delegations, their facilities are subject to critique. In paragraph 1 in the Operational Plan for 2009, it can be read that “*the physical working conditions are satisfactory, but far from optimal, especially considering the lack of adequate meeting rooms.*”

A great deal of time and thus resources is spent reporting home, as will be elaborated upon in paragraph 4.4.2; Principal control. However, all of the informants stated that this was a necessary and important part of the job. The MFA is aware that the delegation can not prioritize all issues that are of political interest to Norway, as illustrated by paragraph 2.2 in the delegations newest allocated budget within the state budget of 2013: “The Ministry agrees with the UN delegations priorities for 2013, which are in line with the ministry’s guidelines and customized a *demanding resource situation*” (Operational Plan 2013). The fact that so much of the delegations time is spent reporting home, is an indicator that favors the rationalist perspective.

4.3.3 Knowledge and competence

Knowledge and competence are inherit capabilities of both individuals and institutions (March and Olsen 1995:94). Where the UN has often been said to be the cornerstone of Norwegian foreign politics, knowledge is the cornerstone of political capacity in general. It is the premise for sound decisions, and needs to be presented in a summarized, interpreted and facilitated manner in order for official decision makers to be able to connect it to the action-repertoire they are facing (Hovi & Underdal 2008:186). There is thus a mutual dependency between politicians and bureaucrats, which is not always appreciated but very important to address through increased academic attention. The delegation in Geneva has accumulated great competence and knowledge, both as an organization and on an individual level. The competence in an organization such as the UN-delegation, with rapid replacement of staff, is maintained through socialization and transfer of knowledge (March and Olsen 1995:94).

This is important in order to function effectively within an organization such as the UN – with institutional fragmentation and intricate political and administrative procedures.

Informant B confirmed the complexity of the working conditions in Geneva:

“It is a very complex system. I don’t think you fully understand it before you have worked there for years. And by then you are probably returning home soon”.

The transfer of knowledge in order to maintain and expand the delegations competence is thus not only knowledge in the sense of something that can be obtained through reading. It is also the knowledge obtained through experience, particularly regarding informal processes. The Greek word *Metis*, traditionally understood as “*a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment*” (Scott 1998:313), is a good way to describe the knowledge inherit in the delegation. Not only knowing what to do, but when to do it. Informant A expressed satisfaction with the MFA when asked whether or not the delegation as a source of professional and academic input, was listened to enough when decisions and prioritizations were being made.

«On certain issues we work a lot on we absolutely are (red: an advisory organ). We are heavy on knowledge regarding human rights defenders, and human rights and the business sector. On those issues we are a center of expertise. In order to lead the work on this in Geneva, we simply need to know a lot. But human rights defenders they know a lot about at home as well.. In general I perceive the MFA as good enough when it comes to using the competence that exists.”

The fact that the delegation is to an extent an advisory organ, supports the neo-institutional perspective. It provides the delegation with the possibility to influence official Norwegian politics through informational asymmetry.

4.3.4 Organizational capacity

The organizational capacity depends on whether or not there is an effective use of resources such as knowledge, facilities and competence, as described above. The organizational capacity is determined by the ability to successfully coordinate, motivate, interact and plan (March and Olsen 1995:96). The delegation does not only need to utilize the organizational capacities within their organisation in a successful manner, they also need well organized coordination in relation to the home apparatus and the UN. It is therefore important to look at both the informal working methods and home-reporting procedures, in addition to the formal courses of action. The delegation is described as being good at “*throwing themselves around*” whenever there are political signals that they need to work on something new. That they have great working capacity but limited resources, and that they are good at “*working with what they have got*” (both statements informant D). This bears testimony of great organizational capacity. This capacity is also supported by how the delegation intentionally benefits from cooperating with Norwegian embassies based in other countries. This was especially relevant when the UNHRC conducted their Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR). Informant A told me that there is a continuous flow of information before the reviews. The Norwegian delegation cooperates closely with the Norwegian embassy in the country that is being reviewed, before the final drafts are approved by the MFAs home apparatus.

“We get a first draft from the embassy in the country in question. This way the embassies are more involved and engaged, making it easier for them to follow up on the review at a later time – they can use it in their work. I think this is a good system. My impression is that the embassies enjoy this work. And they are the ones that knows the most about the condition in “their” countries. Win-win.”

During my research in Geneva it quickly became clear that not all delegations maximize their organizational capacity this way. My informants told me that some write all of their statements and speeches at the delegations, making it easier for others to influence them and not maximizing their organizational capacity. As described in the paragraph on the neo-institutional approach, the delegation would be assumed to have developed their own particular organizational capacity, which is partly true for the delegation in Geneva. They have developed their own routines for maximizing their organizational capacity, but it is based on clear political signals.

4.3.5 Access to information

An important task of any diplomat is gathering information, and presenting the relevant portion to the home-apparatus. This is naturally an important part of the day-to-day tasks of the delegation in Geneva. The geographic location of the delegation, with its closeness to the processes within the UN-system, makes information gathering one of the top priorities. The delegations access to information early in a process makes it possible for the delegation to achieve a certain “agenda setting power”, in accordance with the neo-institutional perspective. The home apparatus will also be able to gain access to official documents, and the UNHRC works in a more official manner than for example the Security Council¹², but the delegation still has access to informal contact with members of other delegations and within the UN-system that is unique. Informant F described this the following way:

“Distribution of info from Geneva to us goes through the delegation simply because that is the easiest way to do it. That is how we have built the bureaucratic system, and it has been built that way because the experience is that it works well. The Ministry could also have gotten ahold of official information (Red: speeches, notes, minutes etc). It is no problem to get a hold of such information. But the informal information must be collected by the delegation – that can not be substituted by any other working methods.”

Informant E highlights the relationship between the Nordic countries as especially important networks when gathering this kind of informal information:

“(The informal cooperation with other countries or groups) means everything. Who we should have a close informal relationship with changes. Before it was the west against the rest. Now we also cooperate closely with Latin American and African countries. But it is still very nice to have the Nordic countries. We spend a lot on time on them, exchanging information. We are a bit like-minded, and often have alliances with them. There is often a good relation, which plays in positive when gaining access to information.”

¹² See paragraph 5.1

This asymmetry between the delegation and the home apparatus of the MFA increases the delegations organizational resources (Allison 1969:700). Because of this potential power there is a positive correlation between access to information and institutional autonomy. The greater the access to selective and hard to come by information, the greater the autonomy. Because of this informational asymmetry, mutual trust between bureaucratic organs is essential. The channels of communication needs to be open to a running dialogue, where the official decision-makers can question the delegates work on a regular basis and thus increase their ability to control the agent (Hovi & Underdal 2008:187-190). Informant F described open lines of communication as essential.

Within the rationalist perspective, the access to information is given great importance. Pollack writes that the Principal, the home apparatus, will be well oriented through objective reports from the agent, the delegation. This is seen as the main reason for delegating authority (Pollack 2003:29). Within the rationalist perspective the delegation thus works as a loyal, useful and observant “listening post”, aiding the home apparatus in obtaining information. Epstein and O’Halloran adds that the state is in a constant mode of trade-off when it comes to balancing expertise and control when delegating said authority (Epstein and O’Halloran 1999:28). It is necessary in order to gain access to information so that sound decisions can be made, but at the same time the Principal might end up in a position where they have lost the ability to judge the objectivity of the Agents assessments. The geographical distance between the Principal and the Agent in this case further adds to the possibility of informational asymmetry, and increases the need to constantly stay informed.

Within the neo-institutional perspective the focus when it comes to access to information, is on how this access forms the delegations opinions and thus its actions. The access to information is seen as crucial for the Agents influence and abilities. Through having more information than the Principal or other involved actors, the delegation could use this in order to, consciously or in-consciously, screen information in a way that supports their arguments and opinions. This is even more likely to happen in an organization working within the massive system that is the UN, where the flow of information can be overwhelming. The delegations reports and feed back to the MFA can never be fully stripped of subjective content. There will always be some form of simplification and interpretations involved (March and Simon 1958:154).

It is difficult to assess whether or not the delegation is working the best angle when it comes to information gathering – if they have access to the best informants and contacts possible. The question relevant in this thesis is thus mainly on the access to information available to the delegation *compared* to that of the home apparatus. Such unique access is common when dealing with cases that are perceived as sensitive, and very political in nature. Informant A expressed it the following way:

«A lot of the point with us being here is that we snap up information that we otherwise wouldn't get. The people at home do what should be done at home, and we do what should be done here. As an example, when it comes to human rights defenders that is a very controversial issue, there are many who are trying to limit the defenders work. And when it comes to what different countries think regarding this and similar issues there is a lot of info that is nowhere to be found in written form. Things that the countries would never put in writing, which can only be obtained verbally. We are the ones sitting on that info – the main source of information. There aren't many alternative sources. The press certainly doesn't write about it.»

The access to information is thus asymmetrical. As we will see in paragraph 4.4.2; Principal control, the delegation reports home continuously so that the MFAs home apparatus will be up to date on the information uncovered. These reports are rarely completely objective – as the rationalist perspective would assume. However, they are not screened to such an extent that the neo-institutionalist perspective would assume either. Again we are seeing a middle stage, supporting the assumption that the features of national decision making processes in a globalized world needs to be understood through various models of explanation - due to the complexity of the working conditions.

4.4 Features of processes outside the delegation

In the following paragraphs I will focus on the processes “outside” of the delegation, namely national political attention, media pressure, civil society attention through NGOs and the principal’s ability to control the agent.

4.4.1 National, media, and civil society attention

The degree of national attention will vary from case-to-case, but it is natural to assume that when a case is granted heavy attention from the media, the political attention will also rise, thus granting less autonomy to the delegation due to increased political control. As informant E told me: “*The politicians have the final word (...) We are very much controlled by the politicians*”. It is, in an academic sense, difficult to measure national attention. Both be it from the media, NGOs or attention from the home-based politicians. It is however possible to reveal the general tendencies through looking at number of articles published in national newspapers, and through the government databases in order to see if and how a case has been officially discussed in the Parliament. If there is a broad amount of national attention, the assumption is that there will be less room for autonomy for the delegation.

In general, national news-agencies are more often than not in-tune with their government’s official policies, when covering foreign relations¹³. However, the modern media has often had a transformative influence on the management, resolution and transformation of domestic and international conflicts (Gilboa 2002:ix). When studying the media in a conflict-setting, it emerges as an active agent:

“(…) *in its coverage of social conflicts, the mass media serves a variety of roles, including, “interested bystander, advocate, legitimator, mediator, arbitrator, truth-seeker, agenda-setter, watchdog and guard dog (Douglas 1992)”*. Although these roles differ depending on the type of dispute, nature and history of coverage, what surfaces from this research is that the media is an active agent(…)” (Putnam 2002:119).

¹³ Malek (1997) is recommended for a broad analytical introduction on media and foreign relations, including examples of how news-agencies are often in-tuned with their national governments.

Though the UNHRC does not present as a conflict-related actor in the sense Putnam and Gilboa presents, I believe the analysis applies. What is certain is that in all western democratic states, “hype-making” has become a core feature of mass democratic politics (Louw 2008:1), which can affect political outcomes. Generally, the inner workings of the UN and Norwegian UN-politics is voided little attention from the Norwegian media. Informant D expressed a lack of visibility when it came to the delegation in relation to both the media and the civil society, and reasoned this as partly being because “*the MFAs press center is mostly concerned with what the foreign minister does*”. Informant A expressed surprise and pity at this lack of media attention towards the delegations work:

“In general, the Norwegian media covers the UNs work to a surprisingly little extent. There is no interest. And that is a little weird, especially considering for example the work we do relating to certain exile-groups in Norway (..) We have not gotten any requests relating to these groups. Neither from the media nor from the groups themselves. It is a pity that the media only focus on elections and otherwise only negative aspects. We work in a positive way, and that is perhaps not very interesting in a media perspective”.

Informant E confirmed the lack of media attention, when asked if or how the media affected the delegations role in the decision making processes while in the UNHRC:

“There is no media pressure on us. Maybe on the politicians at home, but not towards us. When we prioritize cases we look at how the political landscape is here: where do we have an opportunity to make a difference, plus what is prioritized politically at home. When those two factors coincide we recommend that we work on that case. But the media is not influential in the assessment, at least not here in Geneva”.

A search of the words “Human Rights Council” in the largest national and regional news sources in Norway provided the results shown on the next page, in Figure 4. The figure gives a good impression of the media coverage before, during and after Norway’s membership in the Council. According to the United Nations Association of Norway, *all* cases referring to Norway’s work in the UNHRC originates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the form of press releases or opinion pieces (UN association 2014:13). This substantiates my informants’ statements about limited press interest and initiative.

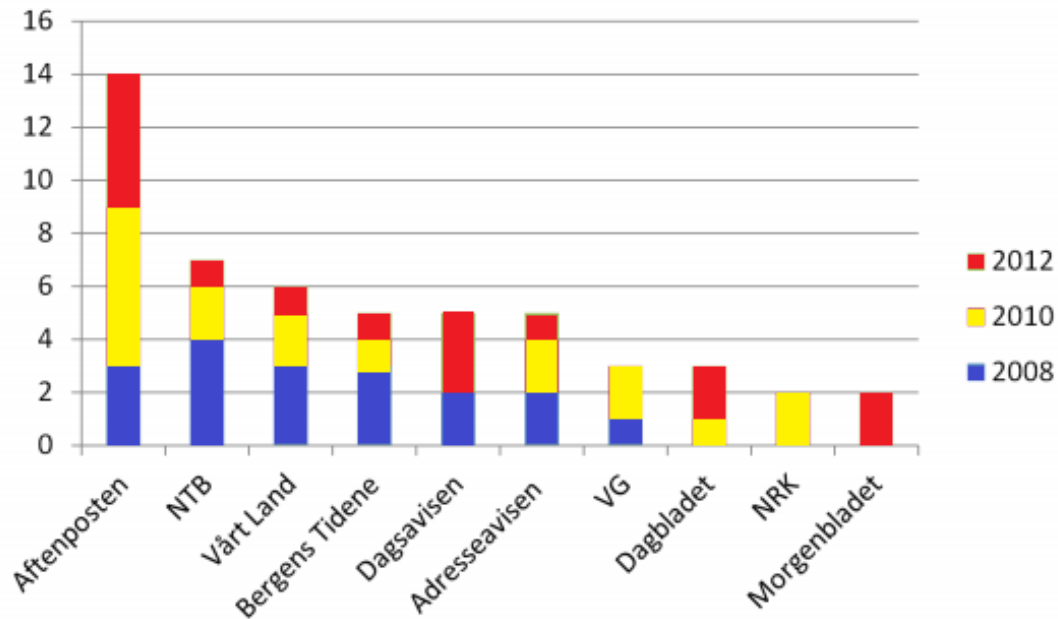


Figure 4: Number of times Norwegian media sources have referred to the Human Rights Council.

One of my informants representing the media told me that the national Norwegian broadcasting company NRK does not have any reporters or journalists dedicated to following the work of the UN. That the coverage is more event-driven, and the reporting thus depending on who is in charge of a specific region. The national-, media-, and civil society influence each other when it comes to attention towards a particular case, creating a roundel of impact. When the media is not attentive, the national government becomes more able to prioritize the way they see fit. As an example, the delegation in Geneva notes that the current government (2014) is more concerned with freedom of expression than the previous government, and that this has direct consequences for the delegations work. It is also affected by different Civil Society organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. The delegation mentions these organizations as the most influential when it comes to Norway's work in Geneva. Informant A elaborated further:

“In general it is the larger and heavy organizations that have the opportunity to be here (Red: In Geneva). Some we also support financially. We are completely dependent on the input they provide. They often have experienced and very professional people working here, who more often than not have been here longer than we have. We sometimes lean on them (..) Their assessments are very important.”

However, I was also told that many NGOs assume that the delegation has a role that they do not have. That the delegation is not able to affect official policy to any great extent.

Informant E told me that this has led many NGOs to change the way they approach the delegation and the MFAs home apparatus. They present the delegation with facts they want them to include in speeches, whereas their lobbying directed at the Norwegian politicians is more based on public awareness campaigns. It was also mentioned that many NGOs approach the delegation too late, after policy has been shaped and speeches written. This is one of the many indicators that the delegation follows guidelines more strictly than many others – especially compared to what the NGOs are used to dealing with.

Another indicator of low national attention emerged when UNA Norway conveyed a survey in October 2013, asking a representative portion of Norwegian citizens about their knowledge of the UNHRC. When asked whether or not they knew what the Human Rights Council was, only 43.9 % answered affirmatively (UN Association 2014:15). The national attention in terms of public knowledge and media attention is thus low. However, there are indications that the political attention is high in terms of control. This will be further elaborated in the following paragraph.

4.4.2 Principal control

Large degree of principal control does not equal no potential room for autonomy for the agent. Even though control mechanisms are in place within an organization, they are usually expensive, rarely consistent over time and thus not fully effective (Pollack 2003:7).

However, it does minimize the room for autonomy. Therefore it is assumed that the more coherent and comprehensive the control of the MFAs home apparatus is, the less room for autonomy. In preparation for Norway's membership in the Human Rights Council, one position was created at the MFAs section for human rights and democracy. This person was tasked with coordinating the work done at home and in Geneva – which in addition to being a resource can also be seen as a control mechanism. There had previously not been a specific contact person between the delegation and the home apparatus. This position is still active in 2014, two years after Norway ended its time as a Council-member. Informant F tells me that this is because the MFA found it to be an extremely helpful addition to the team.

This tells us that the relationship between the MFAs home apparatus and the delegation in Geneva *before* Norway's time in the council, left something to be desired in terms of coordinating the decision making process. Politicians and bureaucrats at home with a deep understanding of UN-politics will be better equipped to deal with control mechanisms towards the delegation. Within the Norwegian MFA there is no lack of competence when it comes to UN-politics, with their sections dedicated solely to UN-politics. If their control is consistent and coherent, it will fall under the rationalist perspective. But as Pollack argues, full informational overview of the agents' actions will never be completely achieved by the Principal, thus potentially hindering evaluations and control (Pollack 2003:26). The Principal is expected to use several control mechanisms, sanctions and incentives to reduce risk of informational asymmetry. Informant A spoke of the great knowledge of UN-politics within the MFA, but also touched upon what can be perceived as a lack of control mechanisms:

“The MFA is obviously a very large organization, with a lot of knowledge. But so is the world. There are a lot of cases to focus on. We use the resources we have, and have a good fluent contact with the MFA. I prefer written contact in how I relate to the ministry and others (...) Except right around the Sessions, then there is so much going on that it is necessary with extensive verbal contact as well. Others that were here before me were perhaps more verbal.. It depends on the person, it varies how much one formalizes the dialogue with the home apparatus. And there will always be people who don't want to adhere to policy signals”

The delegation works largely based on instructions from the Ministry. Within the rationalist perspective this is assumed to be direct instructions drawn in and by the home apparatus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In reality the instructions are formulated after extensive interaction where the officials both receives instructions and strongly recommends their own priorities when it comes to their working tasks (Informant E). The informants explain that they report home regularly, normally multiple times a day, and that they are thus never in doubt of the national and political point of view. Informant A states that *“we point to issues where we feel like we are not able to do enough. And then we say that we are planning to follow these resolutions, not those etc. And then we assume that that is ok. We are very in-tuned, the MFA at home and us, so there are usually no problems”*.

Reporting home naturally involves some degree of informational screening. In addition, if there is both a large degree of informational asymmetry and extensive reporting to the Principal, the amount of information may become overwhelming, resulting in the Principal losing track of the large flow of information. The reports from the Geneva based delegation usually contain some sort of assessment of a situation, with the diplomats' advice on how to proceed:

“We spend a lot of time reporting home. Lots and lots of time. We send things home every day. About what we have done, who we have talked to, what we have said.. And then we add the delegations comments and recommendations. This happens many times every day. We are listened to, but they have to consider a larger picture than what we do. We see our part of reality.” – Informant E.

As explained in the chapter on methods and theory, when an agent is working on something that is part of a longer process, there will be less attention to the case in other parts of the system. This strengthens the autonomy of the agent, because they will often be the only part of the organization providing continual attention to the case. The agent will be the one who has full overview of all possible actions at all times (Claussen 2007:71). A drawn out process is more often than not increasingly bureaucratic in nature, and as has been discussed above – the less political the case the larger is the room for autonomy. A case that is political in nature is more connected to risk, which in turn will be reflected in larger degree of principal control. In such a working climate, it is important for the Principal to deal with a loyal agent. In the case of the MFA, the home apparatus needs their delegations abroad to feel loyalty to the MFA to a larger degree than to the organization they are working within. When conducting the interviews in Geneva it rapidly became clear that the informants had not yet formed an identity where they viewed themselves as working for the UN rather than the MFA. Informant E several times reminded me that working in Geneva for the Norwegian UN delegation is something you only do for a few years before being called back to Norway, adding that this is the case for all Norwegian delegations abroad. Both informant B and informant F told me that this is intentional, so that the diplomats don't lose track of their identity as delegates for the MFA. The delegates thus also remain aware of the larger political picture as illustrated by the previous quote.

This confirmed what I was expecting to hear, after another informant told me the following before I left for Geneva:

“My impression is that those working at the delegation in Geneva is very committed to being an extended arm of the MFA at home. Through informal chats I have also gotten the impression that the delegation in New York is more independent in a negative way. That they sometimes see themselves as working for the UN to a larger degree than working for the MFA” – Informant B.

In addition to the loyalty expressed by and about the delegation in Geneva, it is also described as a very *“open and transparent delegation. The political leadership is always informed about the delegations work”* (Informant D). Informant B adds that *“the MFAs home apparatus wants to have, and have, very good control”*. These statements further confirm the findings presented in this paragraph, where I have pointed towards extensive reporting and close contact between the delegation and the home apparatus. This combined points towards a well-informed Principal, with holistic and comprehensive control – in accordance with the rationalist perspective.

4.5 Summary: The Norwegian UN delegation in Geneva – a loyal agent.

The delegation in Geneva provides the MFA with guidance through, among other factors, personal reviews and recommendations in complex cases. This advisory role is a result of the increased globalization and thus intricacy of the cases that national decision making bodies have to relate to. This is in line with a neo-institutional perspective. Another factor that adds to the delegations possibility of acting with autonomy, is if a case is largely bureaucratically driven – as opposed to politically. If a case is not as political and risk-related in nature, it will more often than not generate less national attention, both in the form of media attention and debate among elected politicians.

The representatives of the delegation interviewed in Geneva, all stressed the importance of networking in their day-to-day workings. Based on what has previously been described about the neo-institutional perspective and information gathering, networking can be seen as supporting the neo-institutional perspective. This in the sense that the representatives through networking are taking part in a socialization process within the UN-system, to a greater extent than they are in the MFA.

However, the representatives also expressed a strong sense of commitment to the MFA, which would indicate a rationalist perspective would be a more accurate explanatory model. It was interesting to observe that this loyalty with regards to statements given to me as a researcher, was much more apparent when I asked questions in written form, through e-mails. When I was conducting face-to-face interviews the informants were much more inclined to provide statements that went against official MFA stances. They exuded a very apparent skepticism to expose the “informal within the formal”, as Schia (2004) would say. He discovered the same with regards to the delegation in New York, with one informant expressing the following when asked about the formality and official stance in written form:

“Diplomats are not allowed to have personal opinions, they shall only act and provide statements after instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” (Schia 2004:40).

The study of the features of the UN delegation in Geneva when it comes to decision making processes in relation to the MFAs home apparatus, indicate that the delegation is disciplined and loyal, but also influential and proactive. It thus inherits a potential for autonomous behavior. But the loyalty is a very important factor, which quickly became apparent during my field work in Geneva. Several of the informants expressed that they would not hold a speech if one was not provided by the MFA in time, even if it was expected of them by the relevant UN-organ. When it comes to the more general instructions and action plans, we have seen that they are developed after extensive dialogue between the delegation and the MFAs home apparatus. It is therefore important not to assess the instructions in an isolated manner – they are part of a longer process.

The action repertoire available to the delegation, and the features that have been described above, draws up the contours of a “mean stage”. Elements supporting both a rationalist and a neo-institutionalist perspective is present. The delegations repertoire is limited to traditional and conventional tasks such as gathering and presenting information, providing advice to a home apparatus with good principal control and participate in meetings within the UN-system. However, there is little degree of direct instructions. There is also little degree of media attention, but the principal is still very well informed. In summary, the analysis has provided a picture of a loyal but important agent, with inherent features of a semi-autonomous actor that are not being exploited. It thus fits the description of an agent within principal-agent theory, while the neo-institutional perspective provides a slightly better description of the day-to-day working conditions of the delegation. The delegation largely by preference works as an extended arm of the MFAs home apparatus, increasing the collective problem solving capacity.

Chapter 5: CASE ANALYSIS – Comparison with other Norwegian Delegations Abroad

In this chapter a presentation and discussion on the Norwegian delegations in New York and Brussels will be provided, with a basis in the framework presented in the earlier chapters. The presentations are as explained in Chapter 2: Methods and Theory, largely built on previous research. This chapter lays out the foundation for the comparative analysis of the delegations that will follow in Chapter 6: Conclusions.

5.1 The Norwegian UN delegation in New York – Loyal, but to who?

“(...) Formal organization is not irrelevant to what is happening – (but) formal organization is not what is happening” (Barth 1993:157).

The UN Security Council is one of very few *actual* supranational actors in the world. It is able to reach binding resolutions without a unanimous vote, and the decisions are binding even to the nations that are not represented in the Council (Hovi & Underdal 2008:148). Norway was a member of the UN Security Council in 2001-2002. This period will provide the main basis for research of the UN delegation in New York, as it provides a closer framework for comparison to that of Norway's time as a member in the Human Rights Council in 2009-2012. The Security Council has, as their main responsibility, the task of maintaining international peace and security. In order to function as an effective actor in international affairs, it must constantly work to remain respected, legitimate and relevant. Schia (2004) argues that the fact that the Security Council works on an event-driven basis, gave the Norwegian delegation extra leeway in relation to formal instructions. Due to this working-basis, the Council has been shaped largely through customary practice (Kirgis 1995:511). Its dependency upon informal structures might also be a result of the sensitive items of discussion. It is necessary to keep internal conflict hidden from the public to remain legitimate (and thus keep it outside the formal channels), until otherwise is deemed justifiable.

In preparation for Norway's membership in the Council, there was a general upgrade of the delegation in New York in the form of resources, and a Security Council Unit was established within the MFAs home apparatus. It was tasked with coordinating all inputs to the delegation. This was intended to streamline coordination, a task that in relation to the delegation in Geneva was as described managed by only one person. The SC unit was also in charge of electronically providing the delegation with all instructions, and making sure that the main political guidelines as stated by the minister of Foreign Affairs was absorbed in these instructions. This effectively meant that the instructions were cleared on the level of Secretary of State, at the same time as a usually hierarchical system provided for horizontal proceedings (Schia 2004:59-60). The communication between the delegation and the home apparatus has been described as particularly extensive during this period, exemplified by a daily telephone conference between the delegation and the Security Council Unit (Schia 2004:34) to make sure everyone were caught up on relevant developments. This often happened directly after a staff team meeting in Oslo, where all relevant parties were heard (Schia 2004:63). This arena for coordination provided more direct contact between the political leadership and the government officials. However, as the officials became more comfortable with their new tasks and goals, the meetings happened more ad-hoc, often moving the clearance process of instructions down to a bureaucratic level. The various actors involved in the decision making processes provided for an extremely complex procedure, yet the contact between the delegation and the home apparatus was as described less extensive than between the home apparatus and the delegation in Geneva.

The Security Council has various official procedural guidelines, dating back to the Councils first meeting in 1946, approximately a year after the UN Charter formalised the tasks of the Council. There are 61 rules of procedure concerning meeting activity, agendas, voting procedures, representation etc. The guidelines are subject to very few amendments, the last being added in 1982, and they can be considered as "*a priori imperatives for social conduct in the Council*" (Schia 2004:49,38). The Council consists of 15 members - 5 permanent members and 10 seats for two-year engagements. The rules of procedure states that the council members decides themselves which of the documents they have treated shall remain confidential, and which should become available to other UN member-states. They also decide whether or not meetings are public or closed (Schia 2004:52-53). This effectively means that the Security Council has the power to determine degree of public access and thus the informational asymmetry can be large.

The procedural guidelines and traditions of the Council meant that Norway had to adjust their expectations of what was possible to achieve during a two-year period. As one of Schias' informants told him:

“Many hoped that Norway was going to be part of setting the daily agenda in the Security Council, but it became apparent that the daily agenda in the Security Council to a large degree set the premises for how Norway organized its work during this period” (Schia 2004:56).

The processes and procedures of the Security Council meant that the delegation had to work mostly with a basis in general instructions, rather than provided speeches. In the official Council meetings, the communication is very formal and speech-based. But in the informal constellations, which provably is where most important discussions were being conducted, the general instructions were the applicable guideline.¹⁴ This is in opposition to the delegation in Geneva, which working conditions meant they more often than not communicated through speeches. Instructions are more dynamic than speeches in nature, leaving more room for an autonomous role. This can arguably be one of the reasons why the delegation in New York have had, in Informant Ds words, *“more loose cannons than the delegation in Geneva”*.

With reference to the list of prioritized cases described in paragraph 3.4 and Figure 3: *Summary of the features of processes within and outside the delegations*, we see examples of both A, B and C list cases from Norway's time in the Security Council. Iraq was subject to great national attention from the media and the national Principal, and was thus treated like an A list priority. The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and its internal conflicts after the genocide in Rwanda, is an example of a case that was of priority to Norway before the time in the Security Council (Schia 2004:72). But due to low media attention and informational asymmetry favouring the delegation in New York, the case moved down in the hierarchy of bureaucracy, and could ultimately be perceived as a B listed case – giving the delegation a more autonomous role.

¹⁴ One of Schias (2004) informants suggested that approximately 90 % of all meetings with the Security Council members were informal, closed and without manuscripts (Schia 2004:105). This is heavily supported, see <http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/188/32941.html> for more information.

NGOs are regularly invited to meetings with all delegations represented in the Security Council, to so-called “Arria-meetings”¹⁵. These meetings are closed to the public – in fact it is only open to official delegates from SC-members and the NGOs themselves. There are no minutes or reports from these meetings. A similar instance of meetings with no official reports or minutes are discussions being held in the small chamber of the UN building in New York (Schia 2004:82). It is even considered to be bad form to quote anything said in these discussions. These meetings are thus more informal in nature and are therefore more difficult to prepare for in a detailed manner. One of Schias’ (2004) informants expressed the need to make decisions in these forums that were not cleared by the MFA beforehand, but that there is room for going back on a statement or decision on this level if the MFA objects at a later stage. *“If we were to or had to clear all steps (...) the process would become hopeless”* (Schia 2004:87). This is a clear example of what delegates abroad often considers to be a genuine need for creative and informal manoeuvrability, but that was not as apparent in the case of Geneva. It is in opposition to most meetings the delegates in Geneva are participating in, which are usually open to all UN-member delegations, creating a more transparent organizational culture that is easier to keep track of from Oslo¹⁶. Informant F states that the Security Council has become more transparent in recent years, saying that

“things have become better in New York since Norway was a member – there is more openness now. There are better possibilities to for example stream meetings online. That has led to more transparency”.

One of the very interesting aspect of the working conditions in New York compared to that of the delegation in Geneva, is the *time difference* between Oslo and New York – with New York being six hours behind. This effectively means that the working day of the delegation in New York does not overlap with that of the MFAs home apparatus to the same extent as it does in the case of the delegation in Geneva. Schia (2004) provides several examples of how this was a factor in increasing the delegations action repertoire:

¹⁵ For more information on “The Arria Formula”, see <http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/185/40088.html>

¹⁶ As touched upon in White Paper No. 33, Paragraph 5.2: *“The management structure is varying in different types of organizations and the possibility to influence and control may vary. If Norway has a formal seat or not is not always essential, since all the member countries has observant status with full speech- and proposal-rights in most boards (Red: In humanitarian and human rights related organs)”*.

“(…) the distance between Oslo and New York in both time and space (represented) a greater need for individual creativity than elsewhere in organizations where this distance does not exist.” (Schia 2004:92).

The issue of the time difference was a contributing factor in the events leading up to the delegation giving their support to the suggestion in the Council that only the P5 were to gain insight into the Iraqi Weapons Declaration. This happened on Saturday December 7th 2002. Norwegian Foreign Minister at the time, Jan Petersen, reacted negatively to the news the following day, and on Monday December 9th, Norway publically opposed the decision – that is known as resolution 1441 (Schia 2004:124-130)¹⁷. When asked whether or not time difference is still an issue when it comes to how coordinated and continual the communication between the home apparatus and the Norwegian UN-delegations is, informant F answered:

“Well.. Yes, it is part of the picture. We are aware of that challenge. And we are very concerned with keeping the channels of communication open. It can weaken the work if there is not continuous dialogue. It is a manageable obstacle, because we are good at communicating. We see that some other countries struggle with it, and that is something we marvel at a bit. They are not well enough coordinated. Our experience is that we are, but it might make the work a bit more difficult in urgent cases.”

Even though the informant express that the communication is continuous and comprehensive, the challenge that time difference poses is confirmed. Another very important difference between the delegations is the Security Council’s unique position in international relations as an actor that is able to use hard power to enforce its resolutions. They also work on time sensitive issues, making it even more necessary for the delegation to be in a position where they could make educated decisions on behalf of the MFA. They needed to get in on discussions at a ground level, if they wanted to keep the pace of other delegations with more extensive mandates, as illustrated by the quote on the following page.

¹⁷ The support was given over the phone to the President of the Security Council, a phone call that came without warning – there was no time to discuss the matter with the home apparatus.

“For a small country (red: Norway) it was absolutely necessary to keep pace time-wise. It was not interesting for other countries to wait for a small country like Norway. Therefore it was not always possible for the delegation to wait for an instruction from Oslo – which often entailed a laborious process.” (Schia 2004:98).

The delegates described a deep loyalty to the president of the Security Council, largely because they knew that they were also going to hold the office, which is rotated between diplomats from all the delegations. Schias’ interviews from 2004 uncovered that the Norwegian delegates did not always address what their instructions told them to, if they felt this would not be appreciated by the president of the Council. This presents as a conflict of loyalty that has arisen due to informal processes. As we can see, the delegation in New York during Norway’s time as a Security Council member, presents as a more autonomous actor than the delegation in Geneva. I asked a high ranking official in Geneva whether or not the New York-delegation sometimes took upon themselves a more autonomous role in relation to the home apparatus of the MFA, than what was intended. The diplomatic answer was diffuse, but spoke volumes: *“Well.. You won’t hear me deny it”*.

5.2 The Norwegian EU delegation in Brussels – A semiautonomous agent

The case of the EU delegation in Brussels largely builds on Claussens’ research from 2007. She describes the delegation as a conglomerate of interests, due to the officials working within the delegation being sent there by various departments - thus working in different areas of EU-politics (Claussen 2007:21). Within the literature focusing on EU diplomacy, the importance of network building and informal relations is central. One of the reasons is the Union being known as a very open organization, something that promotes the possibility of effective information gathering (Wright 1996:151). The importance of network building has also become more important to the field of diplomacy in general. Heine (2006) describes a diplomatic reality that has shifted from the hierarchical “club diplomacy” where the focus was on negotiating agreements between sovereign states, to the flatter structure of “network diplomacy” – largely due to globalization (Heine 2006:4-5).¹⁸

¹⁸ See also Manuel Castells *The Rise of the Network Society* (2009).

The delegation to the EU is, as the delegations to the UN, an important actor when it comes to information gathering. The peculiar situation the delegation works under, with Norway not being a member of the EU, makes the importance of unofficial networks even greater for this delegation. Information about the politics leading up to a decision being made in the EU, or even the fact that a case will be discussed in the near future, would be extremely difficult for the home apparatus of the Ministry to get a hold of. Even though the Union traditionally has been known as a very open organization, it is also in constant change, which in some cases inhibits the flow of information. The EU has gradually been built into the “frame and engine” of European cooperation that we know today (Hovi & Underdal 2008:88). It has been described as “*liquid, ambiguous and hybrid*” (Kassim 2001:12), but even so, the Union is in all its complexity still an organizations with extensive official procedural guidelines. In that sense, it is much more transparent than the UN Security Council as described in the previous paragraph.

The delegation to the EU was established due to a political wish to follow the development of and in the Union more closely (Jeppestøl 1999:84). It has since the establishment been known to have a direct and extensive influence on Norwegian EU-politics (Sverdrup 1998:160). When it comes to degree of national attention, Claussen (2007) found that the delegation in Brussels was more closely monitored by the MFA than other ministries with a traditionally lower degree of attention towards EU related cases, such as the Defence Ministry (Claussen 2007:26). This is also reflected in the instructions given to the different diplomats. The advisory officials employed by the Defence Ministry received fewer direct instructions than those employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Claussen 2007:36). This is a very interesting feature. The knowledge of and focus on EU-related politics within the ministry in charge at any given time, is a determining factor for the degree of autonomy the delegation operates under. This composition of several ministries working together is also reflected in the delegation itself, with employees from a variety of Norwegian Ministries. In relation to this, informant A in Geneva stated that they (the Geneva-delegation) “*probably work more smoothly since we are pretty much all employed by the MFA. Not as in the EU delegation, where they have several different ministries they need to adhere too.*”

The delegation does not have a clearly formulated mandate, and few formal duties¹⁹. It works based on instructions and signals, in addition to the overarching goals in Norway's Europe-policies. Policy documents that largely influence the delegations work are White Papers (especially White Paper nr. 23 (2005-2006) and nr. 5 (2012-2013) and the annual operational plans. Based on these, there are no formal limitations to the delegations ability to act as an autonomous actor in European politics, in the form of impact and influence. In a public report issued in 2012 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this was largely confirmed.

“Generally one can say that when a case is devoted attention from political leaders in Norway, the delegation works loyally to follow up on the case. When the political signals are weaker, however, the delegation has relatively large freedom of action” (See footnote 13).

This quote also confirms my informants' notion of the “ABC priority list”. The lack of attention in some cases may be reinforced due to the Norwegian people having limited knowledge of the processes within the EU. The journal *Folk og Forsvar* published a survey in 2005, where 82 % answered that they had little or no knowledge of EU security policies. In addition, the delegation has been known to operate with little examination and evaluation from the Principle (Claussen 2007:62). An example of a case where the delegation worked with a broad and varied action repertoire, largely due to limited national attention and small degree of Principal control, was the process towards a Norwegian *European Defence Agency*-deal. This was a deal meant to facilitate the collaboration between the EDA and Norway. The Norwegian delegation in Brussels was strongly involved in the policy shaping, and acted largely on their own initiatives (Claussen 2007:51) in accordance with a rationalist perspective. The Ministries involved acted as the driving force politically, but the delegation was in a key position when it came to handling the practical issues. It functioned as a facilitator and an influential source of competence, resources and information.

¹⁹ <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/nou-er/2012/nou-2012-2/10/4/2.html?id=669478>. Retrieved 07.01.2014.

When it comes to national attention media-wise, the work of the delegation in Brussels is subject to more attention than the work of the UN delegations, especially the delegation in Geneva. The larger Norwegian news sources, such as NRK, all have a foreign affairs correspondent in charge of covering the EU. This is, as stated in paragraph 4.4.1, not the case with the UN. The nature of the cases worked on within the EU, ranging from security politics to legislation, is most likely the reason why. The case of the Norwegian disconnection from the EU terror list is an example of such a security related case, where the media attention was high. The terror list was created after the attacks of 9/11, as an attempt to hinder financing and facilitate prosecution of perceived terrorists. In 2006, Norway decided to withdraw from the list. The MFA was in charge of this process alone, in contrast to many other EU related cases where other ministries are also heavily involved. The decision to withdraw came after a relatively fast process, facilitating the principal's possibility to obtain focus on the case – as has been described in previous paragraphs. The role of the delegation was mainly to deliver the decision to the EU (Claussen 2007:80-81). In this case, the role of the delegation can best be understood and described with the rationalist perspective, as the delegation acted as an instrument that was instructed in every detail. Their limited role in the process was a result of the home apparatus deciding it was beneficiary to delegate certain tasks to the delegation – the agent. The relevance of the perspective is further strengthened by the fact that the state presented as a unitary actor, despite great disagreement between different sectors (Claussen 2007:90).

One of the main challenges for the delegation in Brussels, is to gain access to information that Norway is not formally entitled to as a non-member. This is the main practical difference when it comes to the day-to-day tasks of the delegation in Brussels versus the delegations in Geneva and New York. The delegation to the EU is not part of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in the European Union (COREPER). Therefore, the necessity to establish informal networks in order to function as a national advisor, is particularly important to the EU-delegation. If not for the informal networks built by the diplomats in Brussels, the home apparatus of the MFA would simply not have access to important information. In the Action Plans for the delegation, there is thus a continued and intense focus on lobbying and network building – more so than for the delegations to the UN.

Claussen (2007) describes a situation where the delegation is generally satisfied with the amount of resources allocated to lobby and network building activities (Claussen 2007:41). Through informants she also discovered that there is a greater need for the diplomats in the EU-delegation to be able to build relationships, than for the diplomats in – as an example, the NATO-delegation (Claussen 2007:42). This is assumedly also the case for the UN-delegations, as they are not *as* dependent on informal networks as the EU-delegation.

An example of a case where the delegation had a key role when it came to information-gathering, but in other aspects were not as influential, is the process towards participation in the EU *Battle Groups*. The role of the delegation in this situation can best be described as a “listening post” (Claussen 2007:64). After the official establishment of the battle groups, the delegation took on a more autonomous role. They themselves initiated and followed through on the establishment of a Nordic network intended to strengthen the flow of information between the Nordic countries in relation to the battle groups (Claussen 2007:69). This is an example that strongly favours the neo-institutional perspective. In the case of the battle groups, and in general, the delegation has been criticised by the press for delays in the publication of case documents (Ask 2007) - especially when it comes to controversial cases. This is a problem especially when it delays the journalists’ ability to prepare before meetings where the press is invited. The Finnish and Swedish delegations have been described as having “*a level of proficiency that is sky-high over the level of the Norwegian delegation*” when it comes to press events (Claussen 2007:48). Despite this critique, there is still as we have seen a greater media focus on the EU delegation than the UN delegations.

The delegations from other countries to the EU have an immense variation between them when it comes to the degree of autonomy and decision making power. The German delegation has been described as purely an information gatherer, whereas the Portuguese and Greek delegations have been described as working with almost full autonomy (Kassim & Peters 2001:335). This variation exemplifies the importance on focusing on features of national decision-making processes in a globalized world. In this landscape, the Norwegian delegation can be seen as a semi-autonomous actor – as concluded by Claussen (2007). It has large organizational capacity, and is a professional and academic centre of competence with influence over important decisions in EU-related questions. Neither of the theoretical perspectives used in this thesis provides full explanatory value. The delegation can thus be seen as a semi-autonomous actor, with the neo-institutional perspective explaining the delegations role in some cases, and the rationalist perspective working better in other cases.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has looked at the relationship between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs home apparatus and the delegation in Geneva to the UN – and the EU delegation in Brussels and UN delegation in New York for comparison, when it comes to decision making processes in a globalized world. The following conclusions and summary of observations will thus present as a comparative analysis, with the main focus being on the unit of analysis that is the delegation in Geneva. The main focal point has been on whether the delegations can be seen as utility-maximizing and well-adjusted instruments for a unitary state (in accordance with the rationalist perspective), or actors with a stronger degree of independency and autonomy (in accordance with the neo-institutional perspective). The delegations has been compared to each other in an attempt to discover what circumstances and features of the decision-making processes affects the room for autonomy. In this chapter the most important empirical and theoretical findings will be summarized, and reflections on further research and thesis relevance will be presented. Paragraph 4.5, the summary of the delegation in Geneva, is also part of the conclusion. The findings that was summarized in that paragraph will here be compared to the summary of findings regarding the delegations in Brussels and New York.

It is difficult to provide any definitive conclusion within this field of exploratory research. It does not present the whole picture as it is impossible to cover all areas of interest in a thesis of this scope and size. However, the conclusions are based on the features uncovered in this thesis, and is thus an attempt to provide a piece of the puzzle – knowing that further more elaborate research might uncover new and additional information.

6.1 Empirical observations

In the study of Norwegian Foreign Policy, as with other well-functioning states, most research has had a state-outwards approach. How the state as a whole acts and reacts in relation to other states and organisations. However, I have argued that it is equally important to study the relationship between different actors on a national level, in order to “unwrap” the room where politics is being created. This thesis has looked at the relationship between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Norwegian delegations to the UN in New York and Geneva, and the delegation to the EU in Brussels.

It has also compared the roles of the delegations. The thesis raised questions on the role of national delegations in international organisations. What used to be a clear distinction between national and international politics, is not as clear anymore in an increasingly globalized world.

The operationalization of autonomy, as described in paragraph 3.3 and 4.3, suggests that in situations where the delegations have a broad action repertoire, there is low national attention (politically and from the media), they are in possession of unique information and there is little principal control, there is enough basis to label the delegations as an autonomous actor in an organizational sense. If or when this is the case, the neo-institutional perspective will provide the most fruitful explanatory approach. In the other end of the scale, the rationalist perspective with their principal-agent theory will be preeminent. This is whenever an actor operates with a narrow action repertoire, little access to information and large and continual national attention and principal control – often by sections with heavy knowledge on the area (Claussen 2007:89). In that case, Allison's (1969) argument that whenever there is enough political risk, the politicians can and will control the bureaucrats, will be strongly supported. The thesis has found that in more cases than not, the delegations operate in a middle-range landscape, where neither theoretical approach has a suitable explanatory model for explaining the delegations' role in a process.

The variations on how the delegations operate vary – from case to case and between the delegations. They operate under different preconditions, with the Security Council being an event driven crisis-management organ, the Human Rights Council to a larger degree working on long-term development and the EU operating on various levels of legislation and coordination – reaching deep into various civil society activities. The Security Council and the EU can be seen as *actors* within international relations, while I have argued that the UNHRC is more of an *arena*. This affects the delegations' role, and is part of the explanation why the delegation in Geneva presents as a less autonomous actor than the two other delegations. With all three cases we see a correlation between level of priority of specific cases, and the degree of independency in the specific instances. High priority equals less autonomy. However, this is only part of the picture, and one needs to see this specific correlation in relation to the other features presented in the thesis.

The EU delegation can be described as a semi-autonomous actor. It is subject to little instruction and control-mechanisms, and often operates in an independent manner. This is mainly a result of its closeness to the decision-making processes of the EU, the great size of the delegation as Norway's largest Foreign Service delegation, and a broad and ever-changing mandate. The delegation is a center of knowledge, and it is specialized and network oriented (Claussen 2007:88). As the other delegations, the EU delegation has the *preconditions* to affect the Norwegian policy on their area of expertise. Another aspect that is important for all three delegations, is the unique access to information. Because Norway is not a member of the EU, this access is more dependent on network building for the EU delegation than for the other two. Their advice therefore weighs heavier in Oslo than the advice of the other delegations. The EU delegation thus presents more clearly as a possible autonomous actor within their field.

The issue of potentially "going native" is something that has been addressed in relation to all three delegations. The officials working within the EU-system has more often than others been described as being "janus-faced" – facing both Norway and, increasingly, the EU (Claussen 2007:46). This is also an issue of how much time the delegates spends abroad in order to get familiar with the institutional aspects of their working conditions. In the case of the UN delegations, I have looked specifically at their short time as delegates in the Security and Human Rights Councils. They had little time to familiarize themselves with the unique features, codified structure and working methods of those systems – thus were in less "danger" of going native. However, we have seen that the delegates in New York has been described as more UN-faced than the delegates in Geneva.

All three delegations regularly conduct morning meetings with all staff-members, in order to exchange important information, discuss prioritization and give each other professional input. In the case of the EU this is a way of avoiding potential sectorial fragmentation between officials from different ministries (Claussen 2007:47). In the case of the UN delegation in New York, this was essential in order to communicate the opinions and instructions from the home apparatus, since the end of the working day in Norway roughly correlates with the start of the working day in New York. The thesis has shown that this time-difference is an essential element in explaining why the delegation in New York presents as a more autonomous actor than the delegation in Geneva.

The aspect of time-difference is a quite banal but very interesting finding, as it is one of very few factors within international affairs we know will always be consistent. No matter how globalized and complex the working conditions become, there will always be the element of time-difference to consider. The fact that the Geneva-based delegation largely because of the lack of time-difference were in much more regular contact with the home-apparatus, contributed greatly to their less autonomous role. They functioned more as a mediating facilitator between the MFA and the Human Rights Council.

Empirically we are seeing a middle-range situation when it comes to informational asymmetry. The possible asymmetry is stronger when it comes to the EU-delegation than the UN-delegations, largely due to the nature of working within the system as a non-member, and the knowledge of the two institutions within the home apparatus. As we have seen, the knowledge of the UN-system is greater than that of the EU-system. The delegation in New York worked within a system (the Security Council) that was very consensus-oriented in fear of being paralyzed, and often dealt with time sensitive matters. They were also in a time zone that in addition to the features of the system made it difficult – if not impossible – to adhere to detailed and pre-approved instructions. We have also seen that the Security Council is largely based around informal processes, which largely affected the Norwegian delegations working methods. The Human Rights Council on the other hand, as a relatively new organ within international relations, has not had the same time to build similar accepted procedures. It is my argument that this makes the Council in Geneva much easier for the home apparatus of the MFA to relate to, giving them more control and thus lessening the delegations room for autonomy. The delegates function well in their intended role as representatives and information gatherers of the MFA, whereas the delegates in New York had an expanded role.

6.2 Theoretical observations and implications

The case analysis has painted a picture favoring the rationalist perspective when it comes to the principals' ability to control the agent. If politicians has focused and continual attention on a case, and especially if there is political risk associated with a case, the principal can control the bureaucratic agent and thus present the state as a unitary actor. We have seen that the formal standardizations of the delegations work in principle provides a narrow action repertoire, but that the informal working methods and other factors such as informational asymmetry gives room for more autonomy than the formal codes of conduct imply. Scott (1998) and Schia (2004) provides an example from the nautical world that I find very fitting when attempting to describe the relationship between the MFAs home apparatus and the delegations abroad. When a ship is in open water the captain is in charge of maneuvering and controlling the ship. However, when the ship is entering unknown waters, closing in on a harbor, a local los will take over, maneuvering the ship to where the captain wants to go – based on his or hers previous knowledge of the local waters, traffic, rocks and reefs. The captain steps back, knowing that the los is better equipped for the task. This is very describing for the relationship between the delegations and the home apparatus when it comes to decision making processes. Interestingly, informant F provided a similar imagery:

“The delegation in Geneva has to separate what is important from what is less important, through recommending where we might contribute the most. Compared to where we can let things sail on its own without great consequences. The delegation does a huge job when it comes to maneuvering these waters”.

We have seen that there was a varying degree of room for personal and institutional influence on decision making processes relating to the three delegations. Both the delegation in Brussels and the delegation in New York bared more autonomous markers than the delegation in Geneva. However, all three delegations has shown that a standardized formal structure can be considered reductionist. The theoretical implication of the relationship between both the formal and informal working processes, and the relationship between the principal and the agent, should thus be considered dichotomous.

On a day to day basis, looking at how the delegations interact with the systems they are working within, they all bear resemblance of what the neo-institutional perspective would consider autonomous actors. The action repertoire is often not given, information does not flow freely and the national attention and control is sequential. This is the case especially for the EU delegation as its work is more based on network building as a non-member than the other two. Where the rationalist perspective sometimes ignores the importance of the different pieces of a puzzle, by focusing too much on the whole picture, the neo-institutional perspective sometimes loses track of the whole picture by mainly focusing on one piece of the puzzle at a time. Therefore it has been fruitful to focus on a *middle range* approach, without a predetermined notion on which perspective would provide the best explanatory model.

As has been seen throughout this thesis, the action repertoire of the delegation in Geneva can often be described as being neither narrow nor broad – a situation that is not covered by either perspective. The two different theoretical approaches are not sufficient on their own, they have to be used together, and supplemented by additional explanatory factors, in order to provide an adequate description of the features of the delegation. The two theoretical approaches is better seen as two extremes on a scale, where the indicators for autonomy serve as a guide to where on the scale a certain institution or process places autonomy-wise. Complementary, rather than competing. This thesis serves as proof that such a complex but wholesome approach to theories within International Relations and organizational theory is often preferable. As has been described on the complexity of a globalized world, reality is becoming increasingly difficult to micro-manage. Diplomacy is no exception. It is the argument of this thesis that due to its multiplicity it needs to be understood with complex and middle-range models, which can focus on and explain different parts of the social world of diplomacy – even though this may diminish the scope of a model.

6.3 Thesis Relevance

The observations discussed in this thesis sheds light on a theme within foreign affairs that as discussed traditionally has not received much attention. The thesis has shown the relevance of “unwrapping” the state in international politics, in order to establish whether or not it acts as a unitary actor – and whether or not it *should* act as a unitary actor. The thesis supports the presumption that decisions are being made on multiple levels of governance, which may lead to fragmentation of the state (Egeberg 2006), and that the paradigm of a unitary state in a globalized world is thus losing some of its relevance (see Matlary and Østerud 2005 and Hocking 2004). It is therefore important to study power-discourses at both principal and agent level in order to uncover how politics is shaped in both centre and periphery.

Analysing these questions with the EU and UN as backdrops is particularly relevant, since the organizations are the most comprehensive attempts to regulate relationships between states the world has ever seen. The choice to focus the attention on the delegation in Geneva especially on the time Norway was a member of the Human Rights Council, presents as especially relevant as the delegation truly found itself in the interface between an international organization and the national decision making system. We have seen that both the transnational organizations use different approaches to decision-making in their various organs, or even within an organ, depending on which cases are being discussed. There are also a wide range of official rules that applies in the different settings. The thesis relevance lies in its attempt to analyse how these processes affects national delegations, and thus provides basis for further research on how national delegations should adapt to an increasingly complex and globalized world.

The thesis has also shown that the home apparatus delegates power where necessary or practical. Previous research has pointed to this as a way to fragmentise the state as decisions are being made at multiple levels (Egeberg 2006, 2007). The paragraphs on globalization and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs points to a development where the ministry is losing the ability to keep track of and fully control all relevant processes within their organization. One can assume that this issue will only increase in the years to come, with expanded areas of expertise for the EU and UN and the general tendency of increased globalization on all areas. The scope of this thesis will thus become ever more relevant, as a guideline to diminish the negative effects such fragmentation might have.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

For further research it would be very interesting to conduct more in-depth analysis of the differences between the UN delegations in New York and Geneva when it comes to the degree of institutional autonomy. While it has been interesting to do a relatively superficial analysis of the similarities and differences between the UN delegations, and the EU delegation in Brussels, for further research it is likely that an in-depth analysis focusing solely on the UN delegations in Geneva and New York will be of most interest. This is due to the inherent differences between a delegation working within the EU-system and one working within the UN-system. In order to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of the differences between the delegations and their degree of autonomy, it would be necessary to conduct more long-term research. This has not been possible in this thesis due to the time-restraints, but would be very interesting to follow up on. By investigating the delegations over time, one would avoid the possible methodological pitfall of being too influenced by the current political atmosphere or personal opinions of the informants.

The thesis has also described what I find to be a lack of focus within the field of International Relations on the power structure within states - when not apparent through, or despite, formalised distribution of power. It would therefore be interesting to conduct several in-depth studies of actual manifestations of power based on social and political processes, between states of varying political size and influence, between clusters of states based on a sense of identity or language, and within other international organizations and state organs. This thesis has discussed three different MFA related delegations, working under varying preconditions. It would be fascinating to conduct similar research analysing various Norwegian embassies, where the preconditions in terms of organizational framework would be more alike. One of the interesting findings in this thesis, the element of time difference as an important factor when it comes to degree of autonomy, would also be interesting to investigate further. I would very much like to read research done on how time difference influence the relationship between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs home apparatus and a variety of Norwegian embassies abroad, that could otherwise be considered similar in nature. I would recommend triangulating the methods in such research – approaching the questions through both qualitative interviews, documents and observation if given access.

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