

CONCEPTUALIZING THE STATE WITHIN: NORWAY, THE NOBEL COMMITTEE AND THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

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1. INTRODUCTION

«... anyone who does a thorough analysis of Norway will know about the Nobel Committee's independence, and the distinct separation between the committee and Norwegian authorities.»¹

1.0. Introduction

Discussions about the Nobel Committee's independence from the Norwegian state are almost as old as the committee itself. Drawing a line between the committee and the state was not seen as very important during the first decades, however. Up until 1936 the committee was seen by many as one of the committees of Parliament, and cabinet ministers frequently served as ministers. During the first decades it was quite common for political representatives to have several other important mandates and functions. One reason specific to foreign relations was the fact that the people with knowledge and understanding of foreign policy amounted to a small group of people. This is demonstrated also in Halvdan Koht's alleged complaint to the British ambassador that: "the Norwegians in general, including the press, knew nothing whatever about foreign affairs. He had found it quite useless to say anything to them because there was no bottom to their ignorance."² The foreign ministry was also small, which was common for small states at the time, with only sixteen officials and seven secretaries in 1906.³ In addition the ideas about impartiality and independence were different from ours. Impartiality was quite natural – something which was part of being a free individual. One might also see this in connection to the view that Norway itself is impartial – a small state without a colonial past.⁴ As a consequence, it was not very controversial when Foreign Minister Jørgen Løvland said the following words at the opening of the Nobel Institute in 1906: "The Institute is situated here ... as a conjuring call to the Norwegian people and the Norwegian Parliament that they will solve the task which is given to them with honour. I want to state a wish, which I address to the President, that Parliament must succeed in thinking highly of this task so that it year by year will become a more glorious memorial of the founder and honour for our fatherland."⁵

In recent decades, and especially after the prize to Liu Xiaobo in 2010, the Norwegian government has stressed the committee's independence. Issues of independence and

¹ Jonas Gahr Støre quoted in *Dagens Næringsliv*, "Støre ber om fred med Kina" (11.10.11.)

² Geir Lundestad, "Lange linjer i norsk utenrikspolitikk," *Internasjonal politikk* 57, 2 (1999): 290. Halvdan Koht was Foreign Minister 1935-41.

³ Iver B. Neumann & Halvard Leira, *Aktiv og avventende* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2005), 61.

⁴ A more recent example of this view is presented in Egeland, Jan, *Impotent superpower - potent small state* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1988).

⁵ Jørgen Løvland quoted in Mathias Brynildsen Reinart, "Lille land – hva da? Nobelinstituttet og begynnelsen på den norske fredstradisjonen, 1897-1913" (Institutt for sosiologi og statsvitenskap, NTNU, 2011): 83.

impartiality involve understandings of state and society, and the border between the two. If the Nobel Committee is independent, it must be a part of society, and distinctly *not* a part of the state. No one in Norway today would accuse the Norwegian government of interfering with the committee's decisions. In other words, while the purely bureaucratic and organizational independence of the Nobel committee is a fact, what is at stake is something else. My research question is thus: *Is the Nobel Committee and the Nobel Peace Prize a part of Norwegian state or society? How do these institutions function in Norway?*

1.1. Existing research

The most recent name on the list of writers on the Nobel Peace Prize, Jay Nordlinger writes that "A history of the Nobel Peace Prize is, among other things, a collection of people, a parade of personalities."⁶ This relates to many of the books and articles that have been written about the prize. The major reference work was written by the American historian Irwin Abrams in 1989, (centennial edition in 2001).⁷ It gives an overview of the winners and the procedures of nomination and selection and views the work of the Nobel Committees sympathetically: "The Norwegian Nobel Committees have become used to criticism for their decisions. Unlike the other Nobel Prizes, there are no 'authorities' in the field of peacemaking, and everyone feels confident in expressing an opinion. There is general agreement, however, that the Nobel Peace Prize has come to represent the most prestigious world prize for service to humanity. In the midst of stories about violence, terrorism, and conflict, twice a year peace makes news – in October, when the Nobel Prize is announced, and in December, when it is awarded."⁸ Øyvind Tønnesson has written about trends in Nobel Peace Prizes in the twentieth century based on who has received the prize. He notes one of the difficulties of studying the peace prize: "We know most about the laureates themselves because their character and accomplishments become public knowledge. We know a good deal about the Nobel Committee, because its members are public figures, but less about its deliberations. The committee has the assistance of professional advisers, but makes its decisions alone and, in fact, these deliberations ... are not even to be recorded."⁹ In other words we will never have access to material which can clarify why and how the Nobel Committee reached its decision.

⁶ Jay Nordlinger, *Peace, they say* (New York: Encounter Books, 2012), 3.

⁷ Irwin Abrams, *The Nobel Peace Prize and the Laureates* (Nantucket: Watson Publishing International, 2001).

⁸ Abrams, *The Nobel Peace Prize and the Laureates*: ix.

⁹ Øyvind Tønnesson, «Trends in the Nobel Peace Prizes in the Twentieth Century,» *Peace & Change* 26, 4 (2001).

Another challenge to assessments of the peace prize is that peace is an elusive concept. Geir Lundestad calls peace “a treacherous field” and Halvard Leira states that the committee operates in “a minefield.”¹⁰ When Nobel wrote his will in 1895 the world looked very different and obviously the concept of peace was also in many ways different. Douglas Bulloch looks at the three measures for awarding the prize in the sentence which provides the “entire institutional and symbolic edifice of the Nobel Peace Prize.”¹¹ In the will it is stated that the prize should be awarded “to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.”¹² Assuming that Nobel saw peace as order, in line with the European colonial order of the time, Bulloch sums this sentence up in the following manner:

Nobel’s notion of peace therefore can be seen as consistent with the prevailing system of order. It was directed at reducing standing armies – not the Royal Navy – concerned to foster friendship between recognised states – rather than questioning the constitution of those states – and supportive of ‘peace congresses’ – which historically served the function of carving up territory according to prevailing conceptions of the power balance between European states.¹³

Most recent prizes would not by far be conceived within this moral framework and the committee is often criticised for not being true to the will, most fiercely by the Norwegian lawyer Fredrik S. Heffermehl.¹⁴ As Bulloch observes, it is an unquestioned fact that peace is desirable, yet it is contested what it entails. The concepts of war and peace have become increasingly blurred in the 20th and 21st centuries. Maybe this blurring even started with Augustine, who made it possible, through rhetoric, to wage war in the name of Christendom. Bulloch points to Kant: “We know from Kant that peace has a double aspect – being found both in the absence of war, and in the graveyard – and this is reinforced by glancing through Wikipedia and finding a Colt army handgun, the B-36 bomber and a land-based nuclear ICBM, all nicknamed ‘Peacemaker’.”¹⁵

Ronald R. Krebs criticises the tendency to award “aspirational” prizes. He sees these prizes as political tools where the goal is to institute change rather than award achievements, one prominent example being the 2009 prize to Barack Obama: “Recognizing those who have already succeeded in changing the world – that is, the criterion of *accomplishment* that guides

¹⁰ Halvard Leira, “En pris til besvær?” *Internasjonal Politikk* 68, 4 (2010): 637; Geir Lundestad, “The Nobel Peace Prize 1901-2000.” Retrieved 15.12.12. http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/articles/lundestad-review/.

¹¹ Douglas Bulloch, «For Whom Nobel Tolls? An Interpretive Account of the Migration of the Concept of Peace as Perceived through the Solemn Eyes of Norwegian Lawmakers» *Millennium* 36, 3 (2008): 583.

¹² The Norwegian Nobel Committee, “Alfred Nobel’s Will.” Retrieved 15.12.12. http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en_GB/alfred-nobel/testament/.

¹³ Bulloch, “For Whom Nobel Tolls?” 583-4.

¹⁴ Fredrik S Heffermehl, *The Nobel Peace Prize* (Oxford: Praeger, 2010).

¹⁵ Bulloch, “For Whom Nobel Tolls?” 576.

the rest of the Nobel prizes – is secondary for the Peace Prize...”¹⁶ This is obviously an exaggeration, but Krebs can document a growing tendency to award aspiration rather than accomplishment and as such it can be seen as increasingly political.

The standard work on the prize and the laureates written by Norwegian historians is Øivind Stenersen, Ivar Libæk and Asle Sveen’s *The Nobel Peace Prize: One Hundred Year’s for Peace*, which is more oriented towards the internal discussions in the committee.¹⁷ Stenersen, Libæk and Sveen have also published separate articles on the decision-making process in the Nobel Committee from 1901 until 1939. Here the authors find that the prize on many occasions have been influenced by Norwegian foreign policy interests.¹⁸ The Nobel Institute Series also include other more politically and socially oriented articles, such as one about how the Nobel system has been identified as Norwegian instead of international, and how it functioned during the process which led to Norway’s independence.¹⁹ The fiercest critic of the Nobel Committee, however, is Fredrik S. Heffermehl, who has written about what Nobel’s will and how the committee deviates from it.²⁰ The already mentioned Jay Nordlinger, an American journalist, is also oriented towards the political and social aspects of the prize. As well as giving an overview of the laureates from 1901 through 2011, Nordlinger provides a critical take on “Norway the peaceful” and the importance of “Norwegianness” in understanding the prize.²¹ Libæk, Stenersen and Sveen’s *The Nobel Peace Prize* is published this year as part of the series Norwegian Heritage, “a series of books about a range of Norway’s best-known national icons.”²²

1.2. Disposition

¹⁶ Ronald R. Krebs, “The False Promise of the Nobel Peace Prize,” *Political Science Quarterly* 124, 4 (2009-10): 593.

¹⁷ The ‘classic’ text written by a Norwegian author is Oscar J. Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Peace Prize* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938). Here he gives the historical context of the prize by describing the peace movement in Norway, how the Parliament was involved in peace efforts, how the will was implemented and the early ‘life’ of the committee.

¹⁸ Ivar Libæk, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1901-17,” *The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series* 1, 2 (2000); Asle Sveen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1919-31,” *The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series* 1, 3 (2000); Øivind Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” *The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series* 1, 4 (2000); see also Ivar Libæk, Asle Sveen and Øivind Stenersen “The Nobel Peace Prize, 1901-1939: The Decision-Making Process,” *Peace & Change* 26, 4 (2001); and Patrick Salmon, “The ambiguities of peace : the Nobel Peace Prize and international relations between the wars” *The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series* 2, 2 (2001).

¹⁹ Ivar Libæk, “Utenlandsk innflytelse eller nasjonal kontroll? Noen sider ved det norske nobelsystemet 1897-2003,” *The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series* 3, 1 (2002); Ivar Libæk, “Nobels fredspris og unionsoppløsningen mellom Norge og Sverige i 1905 : Nobelkomiteen, Nobelinstituttet og fredsprisvinnere,” *The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series* 4, 1 (2004).

²⁰ Fredrik S. Heffermehl, *The Nobel Peace Prize : what Nobel really wanted* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010).

²¹ Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*.

²² See Font Forlag. Retrieved 14.12.12. <http://www.fontforlag.com/en/books-in-english/17/the-nobel-peace-prize-9788281692060.html>.

The committee's history up until today can be seen as the history of a changing governmentality.²³ This changing governmentality can in turn be seen as a parallel to general changes in how states govern. Instead of governing directly, states increasingly govern from a distance, through other actors.²⁴ This development has blurred the distinction between state and society. As Robert W. Cox wrote thirty years ago this distinction made sense in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries, when it referred to distinct spheres of activity: "to an emergent society of individuals based on contract and market relations which replaced a status-based society, on the one hand, and a state with functions limited to maintaining internal peace, external defense and the requisite conditions for markets, on the other."²⁵ Today, Cox writes, state and society are so interpenetrated that the distinction is almost purely an analytical one.²⁶ The underlying premise of this thesis is in other words that the state should be studied not as "preconstituted institutions that perform given functions", but as "produced through every day practices and encounters and through public cultural representations and performances."²⁷ To employ this open conception of the state is useful for the purposes of this thesis because it enables me to evaluate whether the Nobel Committee is a part of the Norwegian state or society, or if it must be placed in the grey area in between: "It enables us to examine the dispersed institutional and social networks through which rule is coordinated and consolidated, and the roles that 'non-state' institutions, communities and individuals play in mundane processes of governance – processes which Foucault named the 'etatisation of society' and that Nikolas Rose has called the 'de-statization of government.'"²⁸

In chapter 2 I lay out the historical background – the history of the committee and the prize since 1897. I focus on how the border between the committee and the state has been drawn, challenged and redrawn. The chapter shows that even though the committee has been distanced from the Norwegian state, it is still closely connected to Parliament. The practices of, and discussions in, Parliament, demonstrate that the distance is not as large as it is presented in the public sphere.

²³ Governmentality is a concept of power which implies a focus on the mentality of governing, on practices and techniques instead of institutions, so that power is seen as something which can function from afar, through other agents. Iver B. Neumann & Ole Jacob Sending, *Governing the Global Polity: practice, mentality, rationality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010). See chapter 3.

²⁴ Neumann & Sending, *Governing the Global Polity*.

²⁵ Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium* 10, 2 (1981):126-155, 126-7.

²⁶ Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders," 127.

²⁷ Aradhana Sharma & Akhil Gupta "Introduction: Rethinking Theories of the State in an Age of Globalization" in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, eds. *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 27.

²⁸ Sharma & Gupta "Introduction," 9.

In chapter 3 I provide a theoretical and methodological approach and demonstrate both the theoretical grounds for defining the committee as independent, and provide a more satisfying theoretical analysis of the committee. I also view theories of the state in relation to what kind of ideas the actors themselves draw upon when they argue that the Nobel Committee is independent. These ideas are parts of the social epistemology they inhabit. In line with John Ruggies understanding I see social epistemology as “the mental equipment that people drew upon in imagining and symbolizing” roles and mandates in states as well as committees.²⁹ In addition to employing the broader view which denies the categorical separation of state and society, I turn to Louis Althusser’s concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) which by virtue of growing out of a structural theory can provide guidance in the analysis of the Nobel Committee. Situated in the context of the broader developments in national and international politics – namely that the state governs to a larger extent through other actors – the question of the Nobel Committee’s independence becomes all the more difficult to answer, but it also becomes a question which has implications which are broader than those specific to the case. As Cox writes “...the prospect that there exists a plurality of forms of state, expressing different configurations of state/society complexes, remains very largely unexplored...”³⁰

In chapter 4 I establish how the prize gives Norway status internationally, and by implication how the peace prize can be seen as a part of foreign policy. This chapter gives an explanation of why it is so important for Norwegian authorities to keep the prize close.

In line with the general development that states increasingly govern from a distance, we have seen an increasing distance between the Nobel Committee and the Norwegian state. But, in addition to the blurring of the dividing lines between state and society there are empirical reasons for rejecting the committee’s independence. While many would claim that today the committee is completely independent, I argue in this thesis that it is so closely connected to the Parliament, to Norwegian identity, and to Norwegian foreign policy and international status that it cannot be seen as independent.

1.3. Contribution

As we have seen the existing literature on the Nobel Committee and the Nobel Peace Prize predominantly consists of biographies of the winners and influential members of the

²⁹ John Gerard Ruggie, “Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations” *International Organization* 47, 1 (1993): 139-174, 157.

³⁰ Cox, “Social Forces, States and World Orders,” 127.

committee in addition to historical reviews of the decision-making process in the committee. The political aspects of the peace prize have been touched upon, but mainly in reviews of the first decades of the prize and of the potential effects of the prize on peace work. This thesis takes the political role of the prize seriously, but not by looking at how it affects peace work. The contribution of this thesis to the literature is that it links the question of the committee's independence to theories of the state. I argue that the committee and the prize can be seen as parts of a peace ISA, which upholds Norwegian identity. I also demonstrate how the paradox that the government claims that the committee is independent while official practices and discourse in fact tie the prize closely to the state can be seen as one effect of this ISA.

One objection to this approach is that the lacking distinction between state and society also makes analysis impossible. However, my argument is not that no distinction can be made, only that it cannot be made categorically. In the case of the peace prize and the committee this distinction is less clear than in other areas because of the importance peace has in Norwegian identity. This is what chapter 4 delves into as it provides the justification for claiming that the peace prize is closely linked to Norwegian foreign policy and status.

1.4. Methodological approach

Although I draw on structural, positivist, theories of the state, I combine them with what many would label a post-modern methodology. While 'positivists' in most cases "resist including language as a form of observable behaviour" and in turn avoid taking a stand on how meaning is constructed, 'post-modernists' see language as the site where the social world is constructed.³¹ Because my goal is not only to relate the discussion about the Nobel Committee to theories of the state, but also to investigate the social practices which constitute what the committee is, I need to look what central actors do and say. In all the chapters I thus use statements and descriptions of action to support my claims that the Nobel Committee and the peace prize are closely connected to the Norwegian state, identity and foreign policy. Locating meaning and our access to social reality in language is not the same as claiming that there is no reality outside language. Neither is it the same as claiming that the social is not structured, and that structures don't function as preconditions for actors' understanding of the world. As Iver B. Neumann writes "Like any balanced approach to social analysis, the

³¹ Audie Clotz, "Introduction" in Audie Clotz & Deepa Prakash, eds. *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 63.

23 Audie Clotz, "Introduction," 1. For an example of the latter see Stefano Guzzini, "A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 6, 2 (2000); Erik Ringmar, "On the Ontological Status of the State," *European Journal of International Relations* 2, 4 (1996).

linguistic turn, as well as its sub-set discourse analysis, has had to own up to the challenge of studying how humans make their own history, but not under conditions they themselves have chosen. The seminal thinkers for discourse analysis, Wittgenstein and Foucault, both went about this by focussing on language in use—on discursive practices.”³² What is implied here is also that statements cannot be studied outside of the contexts they are made, and that practices and discourse are mutually interdependent: “it is always necessary to ask what disposes people to enact the practices they do, how and when they do; and their aims, their lived experience and their inherited knowledge will surely figure amongst the factors of interest here.”³³ The aim here is to support two main claims about the Nobel Committee and the peace prize through looking at actors’ statements and practices: That the way of thinking one is socialized into in the state is brought into the Nobel Committee by its members, and that central actors in Norwegian politics construct the committee and peace prize as part of the state. What I conceptualize as ‘effects’ of the peace ISA, namely that political representatives contradict themselves when they both say that the committee is independent and that it is an expression of Norwegian values and politics (see chapter 3) is also an illustration that meaning is located not only in the conscious, individual realm, but also in the unconscious, habitual realm, on the level of the impersonal discourse.³⁴ Or, in other words, on the level of culture.³⁵ While the post-modern or post-structural approach has the merit of taking the creation of meaning seriously, one of its challenges is how to generalize – “The social analyst is, after all, not interested in one particular action as such, but in what that particular action can tell us about something more far-reaching.”³⁶

To be able to do that, the social analyst must locate phenomena which are more permanent than others. The history of the Nobel committee is a history of changing practices, but not necessarily a history which ends with independence. New practices, such as new criteria for selecting members to the committee – have simply been incorporated into the larger story of the committee and the peace prize. The reluctance to separate the peace prize and Norwegian politics is one result of this story. The relatively stable Norwegian identity and the foreign policy goal of uniting ideals and interests, provide the framework for analysing discourse and practice in this thesis.

³² Iver B. Neumann, “Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn” *Millennium* 31, 3 (2002): 627.

³³ Barry Barnes quoted in Neumann, “Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn,” 629.

³⁴ Neumann quotes Ann Swindler who writes that when combining a study of discourse and practice the sociological attention is moved “‘down’ from conscious ideas and values to the physical and the habitual. But this move is complemented by a move ‘up’, from ideas located in individual consciousness to the impersonal arena of ‘discourse’”, 630.

³⁵ Neumann, “Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn”.

³⁶ Neumann, “Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn,” 633.

2. CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AND THE NOBEL COMMITTEE (1897-2012)

2.0. Introduction

In this chapter I will look at how the Nobel Peace Prize and the Norwegian Nobel Committee have been constructed as separate from the Norwegian state and foreign policy since 1897. The question I am asking is: How has the Norwegian Nobel Committee and the Peace Prize been delineated and separated from Norwegian foreign policy and the Norwegian state? Due to constraints I will focus on those incidents which provide answers to this question, and the chapter will thus not provide an account of all prizes and important actors. The examples have been chosen because they are either controversial or interesting, in other words they illustrate how the workings of the Nobel Committee and its relations to the Norwegian government have functioned, and still function.

The ways the prize and the committee have been constructed – the formal rules, the discursive construction and the practices related to the ‘Nobel system’ – have changed over their 115 years of history. At the same time, however, central elements have remained the same. Although the committee formally has been distanced more and more from the Norwegian government, its members are still chosen based on the relative strength of the political parties and they are still mostly former members of the Parliament or the cabinet. In other words there has never been a non-Norwegian in the committee despite the fact that it has been debated several times – even the very first election committee in 1897 considered this question. What the review of the history of the committee and the prize will show is that both practices and what has been said have often emphasized a connection between the prize and Norway instead of a distinction. This can even be said about the prizes awarded in the last four years. This review, thus, grows out of the reflection that the Norwegian government increasingly has had to balance two seemingly contradictory goals, to 1) separate Norwegian politics, and foreign policy in particular, from the prize and the committee, and 2) keep the prize as Norwegian as possible.

Especially interesting are instances when the construction of separation has been more intense than normal, in 1935-7, 1973-7 and in 2010. In addition I will look at how the prize and the committee were perceived in the early years. The Norwegian engagement with the peace prize is about eight years older than Norway as an independent state, which implies that there is a close connection between leading political figures’ ambitions for, and visions of, Norway and the awarding of the prize. The people who had any kind of competence within

the field of foreign policy were somehow engaged in the ‘Nobel system’. During the first years it seems it was often too tempting to use the powerful symbol of the peace prize to affect foreign policy, or at the very least to avoid that it conflicted with it. Even in 2005, the link between the peace prize and Norway as an independent nation was underlined, when the Nobel peace center was opened as a part of the celebration of 100 years of independence. It could be argued, in other words, that the Nobel Peace Prize has played a central role in Norwegian nation building, and that it is still an important part of Norwegian identity.

2.0.1. Why Norway?

Just after New Year’s Day in 1897 Alfred Nobel’s will was made public.³⁷ The will instructed that five Nobel prizes were to be established within the fields of literature, physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, and peace. While the four first prizes were to be awarded by Swedish institutions of expertise in each area, the will stated that the prize “for advocates of peace” shall be awarded “by a committee of five persons to be selected by the Norwegian Parliament.”³⁸ When the Parliament discussed the news in 1897 it was received with excitement, and the Parliament eagerly accepted the task.³⁹ As Oscar J. Falnes writes: “It was indeed an honor that, after placing the administration of the other four prizes in Swedish hands, the great benefactor should have singled out the Norwegian Parliament as the trustee, so to speak, of the Peace Prize.”⁴⁰ The Nobel Prizes are in general seen as the “most distinguished of international awards.”⁴¹ The peace prize was first awarded in 1901 and has since then attained considerable fame. Many other awards for the effort to promote peace exist (more than 300 according to Lundestad⁴²), but “none of these prizes enjoys the global fame and prestige associated with the Nobel prize.”⁴³ The peace prize also stands out from the others awarded on the basis of Alfred Nobel’s will because of its “inherently politicized character” as elaborated in the introductory chapter.⁴⁴

The dominating explanation for Nobel’s choice is that he gave the Norwegian parliament the task of electing the Nobel committee because Norway was in a union with

³⁷ Oscar J. Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Peace Prize* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938): 135.

³⁸ Nobelprize.org, “Full text of Alfred Nobel’s Will.” Retrieved 15.12.12.
http://www.nobelprize.org/alfred_nobel/will/will-full.html.

³⁹ Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Prize*, 135.

⁴⁰ Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Prize*, 135

⁴¹ Ronald R. Krebs, “The False Promise of the Nobel Peace Prize” *Political Science Quarterly* 124, 4 (2009-10): 593.

⁴² Geir Lundestad, “The Nobel Peace Prize” in Agneta Wallin Levinovitz & Nils Ringertz, eds. *The Nobel Prize: the first 100 years* (London : Imperial College Press, 2001), 163-187, 163.

⁴³ Peter van den Dungen, “What makes the Nobel Peace Prize Unique?” *Peace & Change* 26, 4 (2001): 510.

⁴⁴ Krebs, “The False Promise of the Nobel Peace Prize,” 595.

Sweden and had no foreign relations to manage at the time. Because of this, the parliament would “naturally consider the very political question of peace more objectively than its Swedish counterpart.”⁴⁵ The current Secretary of the Nobel Institute, Professor Geir Lundestad, speculates that “Since the scientific prizes were to be awarded by the most competent, i.e. Swedish, committees at least the remaining prize for peace ought to be awarded by a Norwegian committee,” while he also points to the fact that the Norwegian Parliament was engaged in finding peaceful solutions to international disputes in the 1890s.⁴⁶ Øyvind Tønnesson writes that

Nobel may ... have feared that the highly political nature of the peace prize would make it a tool in power politics and thereby reduce its significance as an instrument for peace. A prize committee selected by a rather progressive parliament from a small nation on the periphery of Europe, without its own foreign policy and with only a very distant past as an autonomous military power, may perhaps have been expected to be more innocent in matters of power politics than would a committee from the most powerful of the Scandinavian countries.⁴⁷

Since 1905 this situation has changed drastically, and the tension between foreign policy and the prize has grown – “the highly political nature of the peace prize” has been exposed. The Nobel Committee itself cannot acknowledge this tension, and there are also others who see the prize as independent. Asking the question “What makes the Nobel peace prize unique?” Peter van den Dungen asserts that the Nobel peace prize is general in scope in the sense that it is not limited to specific regions or actors. He goes on to state that “The decision making body is independent, and not linked to any social grouping or ideology. While the only purpose of the Norwegian Nobel Committee is to award its peace prize, for virtually all other bodies that award peace prizes it is an instrument, among others, for the pursuit of the particular objectives of the founders.”⁴⁸ He acknowledges that the committee has held certain views, “in which liberal internationalism and Norwegian national interests have come naturally together”, but “To all intents and purposes ... the process leading to the selection of the Nobel laureate is as objective and detached as possible...”⁴⁹ Quite to the contrary, Jay Nordlinger concludes: “This prize has always rested with Norway, and that is something to bear strongly in mind: From 1901 onward, the Nobel Peace Prize, this monumental world honor, has been awarded by five Norwegians, sitting on a committee. These five are chosen by Norway’s parliament. You could say that, as Norwegian politics go, so goes the Nobel Peace Prize. It pays us to consider Norway and what some call

⁴⁵Douglas Bulloch, «For Whom Nobel Tolls? An Interpretive Account of the Migration of the Concept of Peace as Perceived through the Solemn Eyes of Norwegian Lawmakers» *Millennium* 36, 3 (2008): 584.

⁴⁶ Lundestad, “The Nobel Peace Prize,” 164-5.

⁴⁷ Tønnesson in Jay Nordlinger, *Peace, They Say*, (New York: Encounter Books, 2012), 26.

⁴⁸ van den Dungen, “What makes the Nobel Peace Prize Unique?” 510.

⁴⁹ van den Dungen, “What makes the Nobel Peace Prize Unique?” 516.

‘Norwegianness’ in understanding the prize.”⁵⁰ In his reflections on the first hundred years of the peace prize, Geir Lundestad similarly asserts that even though the “Norwegian government did not determine the choices of the Norwegian Nobel committee” its choices “reflected the same mixture of idealism and realism that characterized Norwegian ... foreign policy in general.”⁵¹ Some choices “fitted well into government policy” while other candidates might have been ignored because they would conflict with it, the non-award to Ghandi being a possible example.⁵²

2.1. Preliminary administrative duties or honourable mandate?

In Nobel’s will there were no prerequisites as to what kind of competences the committee members should possess, only a note that the members did not have to be Norwegians.⁵³ When the request in Nobel’s will was discussed in the Parliament in 1897, President Steen said that: “...our people have special occasion to remember Mr. Nobel with gratitude because of the recognition he has given to Norway’s efforts, and the confidence he has shown the Norwegian Parliament and thereby the Norwegian people, by entrusting us with this task which is both an honour and laden with responsibility.”⁵⁴ The Parliament was in other words greatly honoured to be given such a responsibility, and at least Steen saw it as a task that the entire nation was given. When the first election committee was to propose five members in 1897, it considered whether foreigners should be suggested: “The committee has elaborated whether foreigners should also be proposed as members to the present group, but has found that this time one should exclusively nominate Norwegians.”⁵⁵ The first prize was awarded in 1901, after legal disputes with Nobel’s relatives were solved and statutes for the Nobel Institutes were established. Since the Parliament already in 1897 had elected a Nobel committee, two seats were up for election in 1900. Although the two members Jørgen Løvland and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson were reelected, this occasion provided opportunity for a long debate in the Parliament on how the committee should be constituted.⁵⁶ There was a relatively strong pressure group who wanted the committee to include foreigners as members. Falnes writes about this debate that: “It was as if a deeper realization of the significance of the

⁵⁰ Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 27.

⁵¹ Geir Lundestad, "The Nobel Peace Prize 1901-2000." Retrieved 15.12.12.
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/articles/lundestad-review/.

⁵² Lundestad, "The Nobel Peace Prize 1901-2000".

⁵³ Nobelprize.org, "Full text of Alfred Nobel’s Will."

⁵⁴ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, "Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente," book 5, document 7, 14.

⁵⁵ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, "Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente," 15.

⁵⁶ Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Peace Prize*, 139; Ivar Libæk, "Utenlandsk innflytelse eller nasjonal kontroll? Noen sider ved det norske nobelsystemet 1897-2003" *The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series* 3, 1 (2002).

Nobel Committee had made its way since 1897 – a realization that the proper constitution of such a Committee was a responsibility which Parliament now owed not alone to Nobel’s memory but to the world at large.”⁵⁷ Ferdinand Christian Prah1 argued that the committee should include foreigners as well as Norwegians, in Falnes’ words:

He therefore wanted to postpone until autumn decision on the proposal before the house to reelect the two members whose term had just been terminated by lot. If circumstances then seemed to warrant it, he wished to have all the members of the Committee place their positions at the disposal of the Parliament. Basic changes, if they were to be made, he insisted, should be made promptly; by the time elections to the committee were again in order, in another three years, several prizes would already have been awarded and it would be awkward to make fundamental changes.⁵⁸

But representative John Lund fiercely disagreed with Prah1 and the others, saying that according to Nobel’s intentions “‘little Norway’ should have the ‘exclusive’ honour of administering the Peace Prize ... It would, said Lund, be a ‘sin’ against Nobel’s will to deprive the Norwegians of this honour, while it certainly would be most advantageous and beneficial if they kept the control in their own hands.”⁵⁹ Lund saw it as an insult to Nobel’s memory “that we Norwegians, who have received this honourable mandate, this distinguished commission, which has brought flattering attention to our fatherland from elsewhere in Europe, should now hand ourselves that ‘vote of lack of confidence’ which a decision to include foreigners would imply.”⁶⁰ The men in the Parliament, at least many of them, had a broad impression of what Nobel’s will meant which far exceeded a view of the will as giving them a set of “preliminary administrative duties” in relation to an independent committee.⁶¹ They also clearly perceived the prize as an important tool that Norway should hold on to.

This debate is also interesting because it mirrors the debates that were to come on the issue of how the committee should be composed. As Prah1 advocated, it was important to change the committee as fast as possible so that it would not be seen in connection to the awarded prizes. This problem has made it difficult to reform the committee later – in 1974 for instance, it was one of the main arguments against a reform. In 1900, the newspaper *Morgenbladet* supported the suggestion to elect foreigners to the committee and argued that it would “assure foreigners that a real effort was being made to give the Committee a nonpartisan composition, untouched by political considerations.”⁶² This is also a well known

⁵⁷ Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Prize*, 139

⁵⁸ Falnes also writes that “Prah1, it may be added, contemplated the possibility that Christiania might become an international peace center, boasting a substantial peace institute, and annually visited by peace pilgrims from various parts of the world.” This idea in other words preceded former Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik. It was realized in 2005, *Norway and the Nobel Prize*, 140.

⁵⁹ Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Peace Prize*, 141.

⁶⁰ Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Peace Prize*, 141.

⁶¹ Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Peace Prize*, vii.

⁶² Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Peace Prize*, 143.

theme in debates about the committee. In the earliest years, of course, the prize meant even more to the Parliament than it does today. When Lund spoke of a “vote of lack of confidence” it was a lack of confidence in Norway the state he seems to have referred to. The Parliament was after all given the responsibility for selecting the committee only four years before Norway became independent. The peace prize must have functioned as a great symbol at a time when Norway was trying to establish itself as a sovereign state. Accordingly, despite the debate, “...the principle of the first elections became a precedent. Only Norwegians had been recommended for the Committee the first time, in 1897, and these nominations the Parliament had approved. Then in 1900, in spite of sentiment in favour of some foreign representation, Norwegians were chosen to fill the first vacancies. Since then this procedure has never been seriously questioned”, Falnes wrote in 1938.⁶³

2.2. The Nobel Institute as ‘foreign policy institution’

In general, leading politicians in the early years had a very different view on the Nobel Committee than the view presented in 2012. While Jonas Gahr Støre in 2010 had to repeat endlessly that there is no connection between the committee and the Norwegian government, Jørgen Løvland wanted to tie the committee *closer* to the government. Løvland became the second chairman of the committee in 1901. He sat until 1922 and served as both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister during this period. Løvland changed the name from the Norwegian Nobel Committee to the Norwegian *Parliament’s* Nobel Committee. In a proposal to Parliament in 1936 the presidium noted that while Løvland’s predecessor Berhard Getz wanted an independent Nobel Institute, “the new chairman and deputy chairman wanted to link the prize to the Parliament as much as possible ... the Parliament’s president (Bærner) who was a deputy member of the committee underlined the new committee’s attitude further by saying that ‘dr. Alfred Nobel conferred upon the Norwegian Parliament, through 5 elected men, the honorary office’ ...”⁶⁴ The first four years the prize was even announced in Parliament. In retrospect, in 1936 when the structure around the committee was being evaluated, it was noted that “There were no deliberations, neither in the presidium nor the Parliament, on whether this practice was the most fortunate formally.”⁶⁵

As opposed to most committees of Parliament, the Nobel Committee, in other words, also had direct access to the cabinet. For instance, one of the members, Johannes Steen, was

⁶³ Falnes, *Norway and the Nobel Peace Prize*, 144.

⁶⁴ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente,” 18.

⁶⁵ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente,” 18.

Prime Minister from 1898 until 1902, and Jørgen Løvland was Norwegian Prime Minister in Stockholm in 1905, Foreign Minister 1905 -7, and both from 1907-8. Mathias Brynhildsen Reinar writes amusingly on Løvland's double hatting:

Between 1905 until 1908 Jørgen Løvland was thus the leader of both institutions which dealt with foreign policy in Norway: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Nobel Institute. These two institutions were also located close to each other geographically. The first year the Nobel Committee met on a regular basis it rented two small rooms in Victoria Terrasse number 3 ... Perhaps it was the view from here which affected Løvland to rent number 7 for the foreign ministry ... in 1905. The foreign ministry has been located here ever since, but the Nobel Committee moved a few blocks further up, to Drammensveien 19 ... Løvland hence got a few minutes of fresh air as he strolled between his two offices and pondered on Norway's place in the world.⁶⁶

In his study, Brynhildsen Reinar finds so many commonalities between the foreign ministry and the Nobel Institute and Committee, that he actually calls the Nobel Institute a "foreign policy institution." The same people were involved in both, and he finds it to be likely that a shared *habitus* was developed between the two "foreign policy institutions."⁶⁷ Because the Nobel Institute was established first, he also concludes that it probably influenced the foreign ministry more than the other way around.⁶⁸

From the very beginning it was prestigious to be a part of the committee, and it was not seen as problematic that the chairman should also be responsible for Norway's foreign affairs. The presidium of Parliament summed up this first period of the Nobel committee in 1937:

During the first years after Parliament accepted the task to appoint a committee which would award the Nobel Peace Prize, and until 1914, the committee itself existed in a condition of harmony, both nationally and internationally. In the leading circles of Parliament one appreciated the office Nobel had conferred on Parliament; it was seen as a national honour that the peace prize was awarded in Norway; one tried to attach it as closely as possible to Parliament, even closer than formally warranted.⁶⁹

The winners were announced from the podium in Parliament, which definitely enhanced the national character of the prize. It also had implications for the discussions about who should be members of the committee:

The fact that the Parliament podium was utilized to announce the winners during the first years strengthened the national character of the prize. The internationalists in Parliament, who argued that the committee should include foreign members, had a difficult task when the awarding of the prize was so closely linked to the Norwegian national assembly – an assembly which during these years fought for a higher degree of national autonomy.⁷⁰

In 1905, the new Nobel Institute was finished and the prize was awarded in the new building: In the 1937 proposal to Parliament it is related that the King and Queen, all

⁶⁶ Mathias Brynhildsen Reinar, "Lille land – hva da? Nobelinstituttet og begynnelsen på den norske fredstradisjonen" (Institutt for sosiologi og statsvitenskap, NTNU, 2011), 49.

⁶⁷ Reinar, "Lille land – hva da?" 50.

⁶⁸ Reinar, "Lille land – hva da?" 50.

⁶⁹ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, "Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente," 23.

⁷⁰ Reinar, "Lille land – hva da?" 48-9.

members of Parliament, the cabinet and the *corps diplomatique* were present. Chairman of the committee, Løvland, took the opportunity to underline an imperative view in his opinion – that it was the Parliament which awarded the prize.⁷¹ He said that Nobel “left the awarding of the peace prize to the Norwegian Parliament.” The proposal reads: “To what large extent one had imparted to the members of the Parliament that the awarding of the prize was a regular task on the agenda (“et ordinært Stortingsanliggende”) was expressed even clearer through an exchange of views in the Parliament on December 6.”⁷² At the end of the meeting, representative Brandt spoke and complained that the awarding should take place in the new venue of the Nobel Institute, because one thereby abandoned the practice of awarding the Nobel Prizes in Parliament: “It is Parliament which should award the Nobel Prize”, Brandt said. The representatives had seemingly forgotten the formalities in the ties between the Parliament and the Nobel Committee. The evaluation of 1936 noted that Parliament was to have a different relationship to the prize than the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and the Karolinska Institutet, for instance. While the ‘Swedish’ prizes were to be selected by these institutions, the peace prize was to be selected not by Parliament, but by a committee selected by Parliament.⁷³ But the whole ‘Nobel system’ was established at a time when Norwegian diplomacy was at its most intense period. The Nobel Institute even functioned as a semi-diplomatic tool during the process which led to Norwegian independence.⁷⁴ In a politically tense period the Institute was valuable because the people there were well-connected, they had close ties to the political elite (and to some extent consisted of it), and could communicate the Norwegian stance to other states.⁷⁵

2.3. Awards in line with foreign policy?

With these connections in mind, I will proceed to look at some of the disputed prizes the committee awarded during the first decades of the ‘Nobel system’.⁷⁶ The first years the committee to a large extent awarded the organized peace movement in Europe and the US, but there were also prizes to statesmen. The award to Roosevelt in 1906 was one of the most controversial awards in the history of the prize. The official reason why he received it was the role he played as a mediator in the Russo-Japanese war and his support of the international

⁷¹ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente,” 21.

⁷² Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente,” 21.

⁷³ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente,” 23.

⁷⁴ Reinar, “Lille land – hva da?” 51.

⁷⁵ Reinar, “Lille land – hva da?” 51.

⁷⁶ The examples here are largely taken from Libæk, Sveen and Stenersen.

court at The Hague.⁷⁷ Advisor to the Nobel Committee, Halvdan Koht, wrote a negative report on Roosevelt: “In Koht’s opinion, Roosevelt believed that US expansion was ‘a great blessing for all mankind, and even though it may take place with armed force and injustice, he believes that it will ultimately create peace and happiness.’”⁷⁸ Chairman Løvland became foreign minister in 1905, and more than one source speculates that his dedication to Norwegian foreign policy was the reason Roosevelt received the prize. Per Eivind Hem writes that the announcement came “at a time when Løvland for a long time must have been pondering how a small state like Norway could achieve anything with the great powers.”⁷⁹ He had worked hard at getting security guarantees from the great powers, especially Britain. As nothing is known of the voting of the committee, the reasoning behind the decision is also uncertain. But based on other sources, “idealistic peace thoughts and pragmatic Norwegian foreign policy seem to have been decisive in this case.”⁸⁰ Koht certainly knew why it had gone so wrong, in his opinion. He wrote in his diary:

It is once again obvious that the Norwegian people have been damaged spiritually by the long period of dependence or else all this wretchedness could not have taken hold. Ever since June 7 we have seen the politics of fear in an unbroken chain ... all of it to gain support from abroad. That Roosevelt received the peace prize is pushed through by Løvland and Bjørnson, with Berner, against John Lund and Horst, and that political considerations have been made is beyond doubt. ‘I said’ related John Lund a week ago, ‘that it might be wise politically, but...’ When I look at all this and think of how dependent we now will be on the guarantees of the great powers, I am positively ashamed of being Norwegian.⁸¹

American media also reacted to the prize. The New York Times wrote that “a broad smile illuminated the face of the globe when the prize was awarded ... to the most warlike citizen of these United States”, and cartoonists “had a field day in drawing Roosevelt with the Dove of Peace on his shoulder and the Big Stick in his hand.”⁸² The American ambassador came to Parliament to accept the prize on behalf of Roosevelt, and the president of Parliament ventured to give him the prize on behalf of the assembly itself.⁸³

Asle Sveen writes about the period from 1919 to 1931 that “it was necessary for the candidates to have advocates among the members of the Nobel Committee in order to have a chance of being chosen ... Another qualification to get the prize was to be of significance for Norwegian foreign policy.”⁸⁴ Two illustrating examples are the prizes in 1925 and 1926

⁷⁷ Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 69 ; Ivar Libæk, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1901-17”.

⁷⁸ Libæk “The Nobel Peace Prize: Some aspects of the decision-making process, 1901-17,” 20.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Reinart, “Lille land – hva nå?” 62.

⁸⁰ Libæk, *The Nobel Peace Prize: Some aspects of the decision-making process, 1901-17*,” 22.

⁸¹ Quoted in Reinart, “Lille land – hva nå?” 63.

⁸² Quoted in Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 68 ; Irwin Abrams, “Reflections on the first century of the Nobel Peace Prize” *The Norwegian Nobel Institute Series* 1, 5 (2000): 12.

⁸³ Reinart, “Lille land – hva da?” 63.

⁸⁴ Sveen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: Some aspects of the decision-making process, 1919-1931,” 27.

which were awarded the US Vice President and prominent members of the foreign ministries of Great Britain, France and Germany. Geir Lundestad sees this as an “effort by the committee to strengthen Norway’s relations with the four international powers that mattered most for its interests.”⁸⁵ There were obviously other reasons for awarding these four with the prize, the most obvious being the negotiation of the pact of Locarno which eased the tension between France and Germany. But it might be that Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, who was now a member of the committee, found that he could achieve more than one goal with the prize. At the time, Norway was pursuing an expansionist policy in the Arctic and Antarctic regions, and was trying to avoid conflicts with Britain among others.⁸⁶ Mowinckel also led difficult negotiations with Britain on the fisheries protection zone.⁸⁷ One could in other words agree with Christian Lous Lange, who wrote in a letter to Halvdan Koht that “I have formed my own opinion as to your feelings about the Peace Prize award. Mowinckel – as I wrote on another occasion – reacted very crossly when I said I had the impression that four exclusive visiting cards had been deposited with the four major powers.”⁸⁸

In the period between 1932-39 there was a shift in Norwegian foreign policy from collective security to neutrality and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mowinckel was one of the protagonists for this shift, while also a being member of the committee.⁸⁹ Stenersen writes that “the foreign policy debate had a bearing on the decisions of the Nobel Committee” also during this period.⁹⁰ Especially the award to the British Foreign Minister Arthur Henderson is seen as an example of this. Mowinckel was the one who nominated Henderson, and although he knew him personally the most important thing was that Henderson’s views were “in harmony with central elements in Mowinckel’s foreign policy. This fact no doubt counted for more in the nominator’s deliberations than the assessments in the adviser’s report, which that year only contained a single point in favour of Henderson’s candidacy...”⁹¹ It was Mowinckel himself who gave the address to Henderson, in which a “particularly important point for the Prime Minister to bring out was that the Laureate shared the government’s view of the use of sanctions against aggressive states ...”⁹² It is also possible to see this award as a

⁸⁵ In Bulloch, “For Whom Nobel Tolls?” 584.

⁸⁶ Sveen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: Some aspects of the decision-making process, 1919-1931,” 20.

⁸⁷ Sveen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: Some aspects of the decision-making process, 1919-1931,” 28.

⁸⁸ In Sveen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: Some aspects of the decision-making process, 1919-1931,” 21.

⁸⁹ Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39”.

⁹⁰ Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” 9.

⁹¹ Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” 14.

⁹² Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” 15.

way of signalling goodwill in the midst of the continuing conflict between Norway and Britain over fishing rights.⁹³

2.4. The prize to Ossietzky and the need for a clearer delineation

The prize in 1935 (awarded in 1936) marked a new era both because Carl von Ossietzky was a new kind of laureate and because the statutes of the Norwegian Nobel Institute were changed as a result. A prize to Ossietzky was considered also in 1935, but was voted down. That year the Committee could not find a suitable winner. But in 1936 pressure on the committee to award Ossietzky with the prize had grown. They were also more convinced themselves, but probably wary of both German and Norwegian reactions as many in Norway supported the German government.⁹⁴ Before the final decision was made, Foreign Minister Koht and Mowinckel stepped down from the committee in order to signal that the committee was independent of the Norwegian government, but to small effect: "...as expected the German government sharply condemned the award. Foreign Minister Halvdan Koht underlined that Norwegian State Bodies had no part in the Nobel Committee's decision. In order to make this point still clearer, he may have contacted the royal family to ask it to stay away from the award ceremony in December."⁹⁵ It has not been established if this was the reason for the Royal family's absence from the ceremony.⁹⁶ In any case it was a breach with a well-established tradition, and interesting that it was only seen as necessary when the peace prize caused a diplomatic conflict. In comparison, the Royal family took part in the celebration of Liu Xiaobo in 2010. In any case, the German government reacted as if the Norwegian government had awarded the prize, which is understandable since both the acting and the former foreign minister had been members of the committee until the decision was made.⁹⁷

After this controversy it was decided in 1937 that no cabinet minister could be a member of the committee. The added rule in the regulations of the Nobel Committee is as follows: "If a member of the Committee is appointed a member of the cabinet during his

⁹³ Stenersen, "The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39," 15.

⁹⁴ Stenersen, Stenersen, "The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39," 18; Elisabeth Thue, "Nobels fredspris - og diplomatiske forviklinger" *Forsvarsstudier* 5 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 1994): 14.

⁹⁵ Stenersen, "The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39," 19.

⁹⁶ Stenersen, "The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39," 19.

⁹⁷ In addition to Koht and Mowinckel, former foreign minister and prime minister, the other three members were Fredrik Stang, former Minister of Justice, former member of Parliament and an important actor in Norway's acquisition of Svalbard, Cornelius Bernhard Hanssen, former member of Parliament, and Christian Lous Lange, politically independent, on the Norwegian delegation to the Second Hague Peace Conference and winner of the peace prize in 1921.

period or office, or if a member of the cabinet is elected a member of the Committee, he shall resign from the Committee for as long as he continues in office as a Minister, and his place on the Committee shall be assumed in his stead by the first deputy member.”⁹⁸ In the proposal with the suggested amendment the presidium of Parliament looked back to the early years of the Nobel Committee and wrote that one seemingly did not think that the offices of foreign minister and committee chairman should not be combined. If they at all thought about the combination of these offices they must have concluded that it was for the better both for the country and for the Nobel Committee (and so people must have thought all the way up to 1937.) But because of the way “the international situation has changed”, the presidium saw it as essential to change the statutes to communicate clearly that “the awarding of the prize in no way is an act of government.”⁹⁹

Foreign Minister in Argentina Carlos Saavedra Lamas won the 1936 prize. The Norwegian ambassador to Argentina, Rolf Andvord, worked hard to convince the committee that he deserved it. Saavedra Lamas was delighted with the news and ambassador Andvord took advantage of this goodwill towards Norway. He approached the laureate expressing a wish for a reduction on Argentinian customs duties on Norwegian stockfish, “Saavedra Lamas instructed his civil servants to respond favourably to the Norwegian initiative, and negotiations on the matter began.”¹⁰⁰ A deal was agreed upon that secured lower duties for Norwegian fish in return for reduced duties on Argentinian apples.¹⁰¹ Benjamin Vogt had nominated Saavedra Lamas to the peace prize because he had worked towards an anti-war act, and for negotiating a peace agreement between Bolivia and Paraguay. Andvord’s motivation on the other hand, was to “advance Norwegian interests in Argentina.”¹⁰² Stenersen writes that “Only the former aspect was associated with the prize when it was awarded. That the distinction had anything to do with stockfish and apples only came to the knowledge of the public nearly forty years later.”¹⁰³ The award to Lord Cecil in 1937 is also interesting because of the part played by the advisers, and because foreign policy motivated their support for the candidate. Stenersen writes that “The warmth of the advisers’ support for Lord Cecil’s candidacy must be viewed in the light of their active involvement in the debate on Norway’s

⁹⁸ The Nobel Foundation, “Statutes of the Nobel Foundation” (2005), 21.

⁹⁹ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente,” 24.

¹⁰⁰ Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” 23.

¹⁰¹ Stenersen writes about the agreement: “This did not mean granting Argentinian apple exports lower tariff rates than other apple exporters. In the agreement Norway simply undertook to lay down in a treaty an already established practice, which would cost the country nothing.” “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” 23.

¹⁰² Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” 24.

¹⁰³ Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” 24.

foreign policy. Both Wilhelm Keilhau and Frede Castberg were in the founding committee of ‘The Norwegian Association for foreign policy and the League of Nations’,” which was a national version of the International Peace Campaign that Cecil was chairman of.¹⁰⁴

2.5. The Parliament’s construction of the committee: “the nation’s oldest and greyest men”¹⁰⁵

There has not been a formal change in the Statutes of the Norwegian Nobel Institute since 1937, but since 1977 there has been general agreement that no member of Parliament should be a member of the Nobel Committee. In a meeting on March 30 1976, The Norwegian Parliament’s Nobel Committee changed its name back to The Norwegian Nobel Committee.¹⁰⁶ The award to Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho was the context for both developments. It caused both national and international uproar and it became more important to draw a clear line between the Nobel Committee and the Norwegian government. A proposal to change the regulations to the effect that current representatives could not be elected to the committee was debated in 1974, but it was not adopted. Torild Skard and Berit Aas (both from the Socialist Left Party) presented suggestions to internationalize the committee. In the debate over this issue in the parliament, the speaker, Guttorm Hansen (the Labour Party), said that the Nobel Committee must be able to make choices which are not in line with the official foreign policy of Norway, which are in opposition to what the majority of the Parliament thinks, and in opposition to the people’s opinion.¹⁰⁷: “It has often happened that the Nobel Committee has made awards which has caused great conflict in Norway. But this is something the Nobel Committee can do only if it is free and unlimited, without direct or indirect instructions.” Torild Skard went further in explicating why parliamentarians should not be members:

when it with such force is claimed that the Nobel Committee should be sovereign in its decisions I find it most illogical that not only regular representatives in the Norwegian Parliament, but also prominent politicians take part in the committee’s work. When Presidents of Parliament ... are elected to the Nobel Committee, or when high standing party representatives are elected, any talk of independence from Parliament seems both strange and hypocritical. The issue is not only whether there are instructions directly or indirectly, it is about people and what people stand for.¹⁰⁸

Another aspect of this was highlighted by Berit Ås, who said that: “It is very serious that Parliament representatives are on the committee as this will invariably make the group they

¹⁰⁴ Stenersen, “The Nobel Peace Prize: some aspects of the decision-making process, 1932-39,” 26.

¹⁰⁵ This description was provided by Stein Ørnhøi, Parliament proceedings 1981-1982, 1769.

¹⁰⁶ Libæk “Utenlandsk innflytelse eller nasjonal kontroll? Noen sider ved det norske Nobelsystemet 1897-2003.” This was also proposed in 1937 by Halvdan Koht, but it was thought that it could be misinterpreted at the time.

¹⁰⁷ Kristian Berg Harpviken, “På tide med nytenkning,” *Aftenposten* (21.10.2010).

¹⁰⁸ Parliament proceedings 1977-1978

belong to defend their comrades, and in turn become exposed to an acknowledged or unacknowledged pressure towards not discussing one's group members."¹⁰⁹

The already mentioned Hansen, along with the majority, nonetheless did not support a change in the committee in 1974, because it would send a signal about the previous year's award to Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. He and others thought that changing the committee at that point would in fact be an example of the Parliament interfering with the committee and as such the opposite of what they, and the Socialist Left, wanted to achieve. A similar suggestion was proposed by Hanna Kvanmo (the Socialist Left Party) in 1978, but Parliament did not vote on it.

This argument against changing the committee or the statutes which regulates it seems to be a major obstacle to such a change. When Hanna Kvanmo raised the issue in 1978 she also criticised the choice of the former committee, which gave the prize both to Kissinger and prime minister of Japan, Eisaku Satō. She ended by repeating the proposal from 1974 to elect committee members from the five Nordic countries. The election committee at the time said that the issue of internationalization would be discussed 'at a later time.' "When have we reached 'a later time' when the issue has not yet been brought up, four years later?" Kvanmo asked in the Parliament.¹¹⁰ Kåre Willoch (the Conservative Party) was not only negative to the proposal, he saw it as conflicting with Nobel's will: "Regarding her proposal to change the composition of the Nobel Committee, I will just quickly point out that it is clearly contrary to the will of the prize's founder."¹¹¹ Seemingly Willoch thought the Parliament could not change the composition of the committee, because that would mean interference and hence in conflict with the will. It is unclear exactly what he meant, obviously the Parliament is allowed to change the norms it follows in electing members, but that he deployed this kind of rhetorical device to end all discussion is telling. It points to one of the major, tautological obstacles to changing the committee's composition: The Parliament is accused of selecting members from the Norwegian political elite with the result that Parliament seems to interfere with the committee, but the Parliament cannot change this practice as that would be interfering with the committee.

Guttorm Hansen expressed his concern about the potential problems an internationalization of the committee would entail: "One knows that representatives from different parts of the world tend to conceive of themselves and feel as representatives of their

¹⁰⁹ Parliament proceedings 1977-1978

¹¹⁰ Parliament proceedings 1978-1979, 1879.

¹¹¹ Parliament proceedings 1977-1978, 1880. His type of argument is reminiscent of Prahls, see above.

nation under such circumstances ... I also think, for my part, that a ‘nordification’ of the committee will run into problems with the nations’ attachments to different places.”¹¹² How can it be that the representatives, here exemplified by Hansen, are so politically sensitive in their assessments of foreigners on the committee, or changing the committee’s composition in general, but blind as to how Parliament’s relationship with the committee in no way can be seen as impartial as it was and is? Trygve Bratteli (the Labour Party) provides one explanation, as he stated in the same debate that “I am reluctant to support the judgement that it is not possible to find responsible and useable candidates within Norway to perform this relatively straight-forward committee task.”¹¹³

Since 1977 it has been common that *former* politicians are members of the committee. Currently, four out of five are former members of parliament, the other is a former state secretary, two of them have also served in a cabinet, and their political background is from four different political parties. The chairman Thorbjørn Jagland (the Labour Party) is former Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and speaker of the Parliament. He is also currently the secretary general of the Council of Europe. The Nobel Committee has traditionally been composed according to the principle of proportional representation. The election committee writes the following on all its proposals to new members: “On the basis of the mathematical distribution of the members and deputy members on election now, the election committee has received proposals of candidates from the party groups in question.”¹¹⁴ In other words there are calculations first on how the parties are positioned in relation to each other, and then it is decided who can suggest candidates – the committee reflects the composition of Parliament. In 1993 there was debate when both the Centre Party and the Labour Party got good results in the preceding election, and both wanted to nominate a candidate to the committee. Kjell Magne Bondevik (the Christian Democratic Party) supported the Centre Party’s claim and suggested that if their candidate was elected this time, the labour party would get a second candidate next time there were to be elections – in three years: “In that way all the larger parties will be represented on the committee.”¹¹⁵ Nordlinger sums the system up as follows: “In brief, the Norwegian people elect the Parliament, and the Parliament elect the committee.

¹¹² Parliament proceedings 1978-1979, 1880.

¹¹³ Parliament proceedings 1978-1979, 1881.

¹¹⁴ From Proposal to Parliament from the election committee, nr. 84 (2008-2009), but is seen in all newer proposals.

¹¹⁵ Parliament proceedings 1993-1994, 1722.

Therefore, we can say that the committee is a reflection of the Norwegian people and its political culture.”¹¹⁶

There is growing unease over the way the committee is selected. Kristian Berg Harpviken is one among the many who see the need for further reform of the committee. Not because the prize should not be political: “The peace prize is at its core political; it is only interesting when it takes a stand.”¹¹⁷ But the committee cannot reflect the balance of power between political parties in Norway and recruit its members exclusively from the political elite and still claim to be independent. In 2008, the election of members to the committee was not as straight-forward as it normally is. Two of the proposed candidates for the committee were representatives in Parliament; one of them was also speaker of Parliament and leader of the election committee (Jagland). The proposal from the election committee read that “The majority of the committee, all except the representatives from the Progress Party, point to the fact that there are no formal obstacles to elect Parliament representatives as members of the committee in the regulations.”¹¹⁸ But despite the fact that the regulations would not inhibit the election of parliamentarians, the election committee pointed out that there has been a general view that they *should not* be elected. This view had one exception, however – parliamentarians who were not going to run for reelection the following year. The majority in 2008 found support in a recommendation from ‘Ingvaldsen-utvalget’: “Representatives of Parliament should not be elected or appointed to assemblies or boards in corporations or institutions which are under Parliament control, or organs which prepare cases which Parliament later decide upon, except in the case where the representative does not run for reelection.”¹¹⁹ The representatives from the Progress Party were against the nomination. They would accept the proposal from the election committee if the following statement were to be adopted: “Parliament sets as a precondition that Parliament representatives who are elected as members of the Nobel Committee do not attend its meetings until they have resigned as members of Parliament.”¹²⁰ It was not adopted, however, and no one voted against the six candidates for members and deputy members of the Nobel Committee.¹²¹

It seems the issue of how the committee is composed has not been debated inside Parliament – by those who can actually change the rules – since 1978. One could argue that the raising of the issue in 2008 was no exception as there were only two people who spoke

¹¹⁶ Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 43.

¹¹⁷ Harpviken, “På tide med nytenkning”.

¹¹⁸ Proposal to Parliament from the election committee, nr. 84 (2008-2009).

¹¹⁹ Proposal to Parliament from the election committee, nr. 84 (2008-2009).

¹²⁰ Proposal to Parliament from the election committee, nr. 84 (2008-2009).

¹²¹ Parliament proceedings 2008-2009, 967.

when the matter was on the agenda, and no real debate unfolded. The majority's arguments against non-Norwegians from 1900 until today have been for instance that it would be a bad sign if one could not find competent people within Norway's borders, and the time has never been right to change the rules with regard to current parliamentarians. After all, there is a peace prize awarded every year and changes could always be interpreted in relation to it. A possible change in the practice of electing former parliamentarians and high-standing politicians in general would not require a change in the statutes as it is only dependent on how the Parliament members view their task. The same goes for the practice of basing the right to nominate on the composition of the Parliament. In 1977 the suggestions to change the composition of the committee came from the Socialist Left Party, and in 2008 it came from the Progress Party. It seems as if the large parties in the middle of the political spectrum are more likely to support the arrangement as it is, perhaps because members of the committee are selected on the basis of the parties' size in the Parliament? In either case, none of these practices can be seen as a clear demarcation between the Nobel system and Norway the state, here in the shape of the Parliament and its representatives.

2.6. Recent prizes, 2009 - 2012

After Obama won the prize in 2009 Erik Bergesen wrote that even if he was a devoted Obama fan, it was his experience from comedy that provided him with the best perspective on the prize.¹²² The prize inspired a new expression – Thorbjørned – which seemingly means to overwhelm someone with an award they don't think they deserve and which constrains their freedom of action.¹²³ When Obama landed on Gardermoen in Air Force One he was met by the deputy chairman of the Nobel Committee, Kaci Kullman Five. But he was also met by Minister of Foreign Affairs Støre and representatives from the Norwegian military.¹²⁴ Most laureates meet with the Prime Minister, but on this meeting some other ministers found it useful to come along: Minister of the Environment, Erik Solheim, Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Terje Riis-Johansen, Minister of Defense, Grete Faremo, and Støre also joined the meeting.¹²⁵ According to NRK topics in the meeting would be climate change, the war in Afghanistan, and relations between Norway and the USA. In other words the awarding of the peace prize gave the Norwegian government a nice opportunity to talk to Obama about many

¹²² Erik Bergesen, "Obama var her," *Internasjonal politikk* 68, 4 (2010): 629.

¹²³ Bergesen, "Obama var her," 630.

¹²⁴ NRK, "Obama landet på Gardermoen," Retrieved 16.12.12.

http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/nobels_fredspris/1.6904060.

¹²⁵ NRK, "Stoltenbergs Obama-møte på overtid." Retrieved 16.12.12.

http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/nobels_fredspris/1.6904245.

issues, and the chance to have a personal conversation with the ‘most powerful man in the world.’ To the Stoltenberg government it was also an opportunity to show that Norway is on good terms with this great power. It was in short an opportunity to practice diplomacy, and the peace prize provided an excellent frame for it. When someone as important as the American president visits Norway, all talk of independence of the prize is less important. And of course, it would be strange if Stoltenberg did not meet Obama. But if it was very important to underline the demarcation between Norway and the Nobel system, it would be better to keep diplomatic meetings and the awarding of the peace prize separate to a larger extent. Bergesen writes that if “Lakhdar Brahimi, Mary Kaldor, Seymour Hersh, Thomas Friedman, Desmond Tutu and Rigoberta Menchu” had been the committee members who awarded the prize to Obama, the debate afterwards would probably have taken a different direction.¹²⁶ As it was, the awarding of the prize was by many seen as giving Obama a reason for coming to Norway. It is also a fact that the country with the most peace prize laureates is the United States, with 21 laureates. Next in line are Great Britain and France with eight laureates. Among the American winners are “three sitting presidents (Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson and Obama), one former president (Carter), two former vice presidents (...), five sitting or former secretaries of state, and at least two heroes ...”¹²⁷

The 2010 Nobel prize was met with stark criticism from Chinese authorities and a substantial amount of “discursive work” has been needed to try to uphold the image of an independent committee.¹²⁸ Meetings between Norwegian and Chinese representatives were cancelled, and trade negotiations were put on hold. In addition, spokespersons for the Chinese foreign ministry continually expressed dissatisfaction with what they saw as interference in the internal affairs of China. Norwegian Minister of foreign affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, had to defend himself against accusations in Norwegian media that he tried to interfere with the committee’s decision because of pressure from Chinese authorities. In his defense he wrote that in several meetings with Chinese leaders in 2010 they had addressed the issue of a possible Nobel prize to a Chinese dissident: “I have on all occasions given the same message about the independence of the Nobel committee, I have denied that this is something the Norwegian government would wish, or be able, to discuss with the committee, and that if an attempt to sway the committee would have any effect, it would be the opposite.”¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Bergesen, “Obama var her,” 634.

¹²⁷ Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 54.

¹²⁸ Iver B. Neumann, *Mening, materialitet, makt* (Oslo: Fagbokforlaget, 2001), 143.

¹²⁹ Jonas Gahr Støre, “Ikke press” *Aftenposten* (18.10.10).

When asked how serious such interference would be, if it had taken place, Jan Egeland expressed that it was something that could not take place because the Nobel prize “is the most important international award. If it at any time looked as if this is a prize which is adapted according to Norway’s national interests, it would be worthless.”¹³⁰ In another comment, Støre repeated how he had reacted to the Chinese criticism: “I expressed that we are bewildered by the Chinese reactions. We uphold the integrity of the Nobel committee, and I repeated that Norway has expressed its view on Liu Xiaobo’s imprisonment long before the Nobel committee announced its decision.”¹³¹ Also Jens Stoltenberg has expressed that it is a mistake when Chinese authorities criticize Norwegian authorities: “when an independent Nobel committee makes a decision, this should not lead to the detriment of the relationship between two states, Norway and China.”¹³² In this way the Nobel committee is constructed as independent, an institution which Norway, as a state, has nothing to do with. There are two good reasons for repeating these apparent truths in political discourse. One is to protect the relevance of the prize, as Jan Egeland’s comment shows. The other is to secure that Norwegian interests are not harmed in cases where the prize might create conflict.

On the surface it seems that the 2010 prize was one that created conflicts and harmed interests. But as Støre stated, the prize was not in opposition to Norwegian foreign policy. Trade agreements might be postponed, although Chinese reactions could be regarded mainly as a display for the audience at home¹³³, but Norway has also put down a large effort in human rights dialogues with China. These dialogues have taken place once a year since 1997, and concerns over human rights thus have a rightful place in Norwegian foreign policy.¹³⁴ In a press release from the prime minister’s office on the announcement of the prize, it is stated that “Norway enjoys close and extensive cooperation with China. Our ties are longstanding and cover all the areas that link our countries together. Discussions of human rights issues are part of these relations (...) Norway has raised Liu Xiaobo’s case with the Chinese authorities on several occasions.”¹³⁵ Hence there is a continual blurring of the distinctions between Norway the state and the Nobel peace prize, even as its independence is upheld.

¹³⁰ *Aftenposten*, “Ville ha avvist enhver slik kontakt.” (17.10.10).

¹³¹ *Klassekampen*, “Støre beklager Kinas reaksjon.” (16.10.10).

¹³² *NTB*, “Norge ser rolig på Kinas nye, harde utfall.” (02.12.10).

¹³³ *E24*, “Statoil ga Kina milliardavtale.” Retrieved 13.12.10. <http://e24.no/boers-og-finans/article3947271.ece>.

¹³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Norway’s human rights dialogue with China.” Retrieved 16.12.12.

<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/tema/menneskerettigheter/menneskerettighetsdialoger/kina.html?id=447061>.

¹³⁵ Office of the Prime Minister, “Norwegian Prime Minister congratulates winner of 2010 Nobel Peace Prize”, Press release no. 132/10 Retrieved 16.12.12.

<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/smk/pressemeldinger/2010/fredspris.html?id=620551>.

The impact of Norwegian politics on the awarding of the prize was also commented upon by the secretary of the Nobel committee when he some years ago stated that the EU should have been awarded the prize, but that this would not happen due to the political climate in Norway. Today that claim would have to be modified somewhat since the EU won this year's prize, but the essence remains the same: The prize is a product of the 'political climate' in Norway all the while the committee members are almost a perfect, aged, replica of the Parliament.

2.7. Conclusion

During the first years of the Nobel Peace Prize there was no real separation between the Nobel system and the Norwegian government and foreign policy. Instead, the Nobel Institute was an important 'foreign policy institution' in the years before and after 1905. Also in the following decades it was common for government ministers to be members of the committee, a practice which did not end until 1937 when it was added to the statutes that ministers could not take part in Nobel Committee meetings while still in office. As Libæk, Sveen and Stenersen sum up the period from 1901 to 1939: "In this period ... most of the members either held a seat in Parliament or were ministers of government; some members were even prime ministers and foreign ministers ... Most of the advisors before 1939 took an active part in the political debates of the time; some were members of peace organizations and had close connections with Nobel Committee members, as well as with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."¹³⁶

Today, the committee is no longer composed of ministers or even current parliamentarians. The line drawn between the committee and the whole Nobel system has become clearer and clearer, both formally – with the changes in 1937 and the change of the name in 1976-7 – and in the way central actors talk about the committee. But there seems to be some resistance in the Norwegian parliament to cutting all the bonds to the committee: 1) Candidates are still proposed on the basis of the composition of the Parliament – the relative strength of the parties – which could almost be seen as a kind of 'parliamentarism.' As representative Inge Lønning said in 2008 this also leads to a random composition of the committee with no sense of what the whole looks like.¹³⁷ But a change in this tradition would mean less influence to the political parties as groups, and the large parties, at least, do not seem to want such a change. 2) Most members have a clear connection to the party which

¹³⁶ Libæk, Sveen and Stenersen, "The Nobel Peace Prize, 1901-1939: The Decision-Making Process", 444.

¹³⁷ Parliament proceedings 2008-2009, 918.

proposed them and are in many cases former parliamentarians and/or former ministers. As has been seen throughout history, the effect of this is that there is a mutual loyalty between members of the committee who don't want to disappoint their fellow party members, and those members of the Parliament. It is not only foreign pressure which might affect the decisions of the committee: "There is no doubt that the reason why Koht withdrew from the committee was Ossietzky's candidacy. If Koht had remained in the committee he would have been almost committed to vote for Ossietzky. Ossietzky was proposed for the peace prize by the Labour Party's leader group and group in Parliament."¹³⁸ Similarly, Helga Pedersen of the Labour party justified their choice of Berit Reiss-Andersen to the Nobel Committee by saying that "She has a clear anchoring in Norwegian politics, which is an important qualification, ... Experience beyond this is obviously also an asset."¹³⁹ In other words, bonds of loyalty to the internal political groupings in Norway seem to be the basis upon which members are nominated and elected to the Nobel Committee. Once they are in the committee, those bonds will continue to exist.

In his reflections on how the committee is composed today Jay Nordlinger writes that "Committee members are often former parliamentarians, or former government ministers, or both. Norwegian officialdom is a pretty small pond. In 1981, giving his presentation speech ... the chairman, John Sanness, made a strong statement. He said, 'In making its awards, the Norwegian Nobel Committee is never swayed by the hope of maximum popularity and general approval. It must never act under pressure from public opinion or from any other form of political pressure. It is independent of all authorities, and its duty is to arrive at its decision in accordance with its best judgment and conviction.'"¹⁴⁰ Nordlinger obviously does not think that the combination of the former politicians on the committee and the "small pond" of Norwegian officialdom is conducive of the kind of independence Sanness speaks of, neither today nor in the early history of the Nobel system.

Additionally, even if the prize and the committee have to a larger and larger extent become separated from the state in contemporary times, a new challenge is that foreign policy today implies a much broader field of practices than earlier. The heightened importance of public diplomacy, the speed of internet communication and total media coverage means that everything a "state" does, is incorporated into its overall image. Besides, what is a state, and

¹³⁸ Thue, "Nobels fredspris - og diplomatiske forviklinger" *Forsvarsstudier* 5 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 1994): 15.

¹³⁹ *Aftenposten*, "Berit Reiss-Andersen inn i Nobelkomiteen." Retrieved 16.12.12.

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/Berit-Reiss-Andersen-inn-i-Nobelkomiteen-6693651.html>.

¹⁴⁰ Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 48.

how do we draw a line between state and society so that independence can be established?

This is the topic of chapter 3.

3. THEORISING THE NOBEL COMMITTEE

“The distinction between the public and the private is a distinction internal to bourgeois law, and valid in the (subordinate) domains in which bourgeois law exercises its ‘authority’. The domain of the State escapes it because the latter is ‘above the law’: the State, which is the State of the ruling class, is neither public nor private; on the contrary, it is the precondition for any distinction between public and private.”¹⁴¹

3.0. Introduction: Notes on the difficulty of studying the state¹⁴²

For decades, it has been debated in the social sciences whether to dispose of the state or bring it back in. Philip Abrams wrote in 1988 that fifty years of asking the question ‘what is the state?’ had not resulted in any satisfactory answer: “We are variously urged to respect the state, or smash the state or study the state; but for want of clarity about the nature of the state such projects remain beset with difficulties.”¹⁴³ The struggle to define the Nobel Committee, and by implication the Nobel Peace Prize, as independent exemplifies this “want of clarity.” In IR the various predictions about the state’s future has further complicated the research agenda. There is large agreement that other actors, such as NGOs and IOs, have become more influential, and information and communication technologies have made the world smaller in terms of what people know, and how fast they find out. The state is no longer privileged when it comes to attaining information, or presenting itself internationally. All of these developments make it more difficult to draw a clear boundary between state and society, while some will claim that such a boundary never has been clear.

Erik Ringmar positions his exploration of the ontological status of the state in the debate on the future of the state and in the landscape of IR theories. ‘Realists’ see the state as pre-given. Its existence does not depend on the investigator’s presence or stance, or on the state’s relations with other states: “The state is given exogenously to the analysis of it, and hence endowed with something akin to a transcendental ontological status.”¹⁴⁴ ‘Pluralists’, on the other hand, think that science should not take the existence of certain objects for granted, but arrive at conclusions on the basis of empirical investigations. While the former perspective makes the state disappear because it is seen as a predefined object, the latter results in the state disappearing because all one sees is “a multitude of different subnational bureaucracies and organizations, each with its own agenda ... an enormous aggregation of individual preference schedules which will always be contingent on day-to-day

¹⁴¹ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, eds. Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gaupa (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 93.

¹⁴² Philip Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State” in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, eds. Aradhana Sharma & Akhil Gaupa (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

¹⁴³ Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State,” 112.

¹⁴⁴ Erik Ringmar, “On the Ontological Status of the State,” 441.

politicking.”¹⁴⁵ The state disappears in a myriad of actors and processes, and unclear boundaries between inside and outside.

The opposition of realists and pluralists – who both lose sight of the state – can be seen as a parallel to the fronts in American political science in the latter half of the 20th century.¹⁴⁶ Two schools of studying the political could be identified. On one ‘side’ was a group of scholars who rejected the concept of the state because it was too ideological. One of these, David Easton, struggled with the theory of the state as presented by Marxist Nicos Poulantzas because the latter presented what the state does and how it can be glimpsed in practices, working through apparatuses, shaped by class struggles and contradictions, but not what it *is* and how it can be delineated. Easton concluded: “either the state is the very instrumental ‘substance’ or ‘site’ which Poulantzas persistently rejects, or it is some kind of undefined and undefinable essence, a ‘ghost in the machine,’ knowable only through its variable manifestations.”¹⁴⁷ Easton consequently rejected the state and promoted instead the political system as an object of study and proposed that it would make social science more empirical and researchable.¹⁴⁸ The scholars who advanced the political system claimed that functions, processes and practice were essential in the study of the political, not structures, institutions and apparatuses. Easton defined political science as the “study of the authoritative allocation of values (valued things) for a society.”¹⁴⁹ This shift was among other things influenced by the Cold War when it was essential to be able to influence foreign *societies* – to focus on states was not enough.¹⁵⁰

When mapping the development of American political science until 1985, Easton identifies four stages. In the formal stage one emphasised the formal, legal arrangements that distributed power in the state. The second, traditional, stage was defined by a “major discovery” that a formal view of politics was insufficient:

To everyone's surprise, they¹⁵¹ found that around the formal structure of political offices and institutions there were all kinds of informal behavior and organizations in which power over decision making might lie. [They] discovered them in the informal committees of their respective legislatures and in the political parties. Later scholars added interest or pressure groups to a growing list of informal institutions to be taken into account.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Ringmar, “Ontological Status of the State,” 442.

¹⁴⁶ Although their conceptualisations were developed for the state level, not primarily the systemic level.

¹⁴⁷ David Easton, “The Political System Besieged by the State” *Political Theory* 9, 3 (1981): 316.

¹⁴⁸ Easton, “Political System,” 304.

¹⁴⁹ David Easton, “Political science in the United States: past and present” *International Political Science Review* 6, 1 (1985): 134.

¹⁵⁰ Besides, the ideological (Marxist) connotations of the concept state did not sit well with the general scientific environment in the US. Timothy Mitchell, “Society, Economy, and the State Effect” in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, eds. Aradhana Sharma & Akhil Gupta (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 172.

¹⁵¹ Easton mentions especially Walter Bagehot and Woodrow Wilson.

¹⁵² Easton, “Political science in the United States,” 134.

The following stages, Easton writes, were behaviouralism and postbehaviouralism, during which the notion of the political system was developed. During the latter stage there also was a ‘revival’ of theories influenced by Marxism. Easton writes that the “revival of Marxist thinking has brought to political science a renewed awareness of the importance of history and of the significance of the economy, social classes, and ideology as well as of the total social context.”¹⁵³ One of these thinkers, Louis Althusser, had (as a Marxist) the state, not the political system as his point of departure, but he can be seen in connection to Easton because he found the repressive state apparatus to be insufficient for theorising how the state functions. Institutions belonging to ‘society’ needed to be considered as well because they are involved in the ideological interpellation of individuals which made it possible to imagine a state in the first place. In other words we could say that also he studied the “authoritative allocation of values ... for a society.”¹⁵⁴

Despite Easton’s attempts to create a more empirical basis for the study of politics the political system was no more clearly delineated and defined than the state, however. While the other school prompted the return of the state as the preferred concept, partially with the book *Bringing the State Back In*¹⁵⁵, this problem was not solved:

How are the porous edges where official practice mixes with the semiofficial and the semiofficial with the unofficial to be turned into lines of separation...? The customary Weberian definition of the state, as an organization that claims a monopoly within a fixed territory over the legitimate use of violence, is only a residual characterization. It does not tell us how the actual contours of this amorphous organization are to be drawn.¹⁵⁶

The statist literature emphasized that there was a clear distinction between state and society. Timothy Mitchell’s interpretation is that it separated between a conceptual realm – the state – and an empirical realm – society, an opposition which is just like the realists’ and the pluralists’ respective views of the state seen from the systemic level. According to ‘statists’ the state was not reducible to forces in society, but an autonomous entity.¹⁵⁷ Arguably, this way of framing the state is underlying in the claims that the Nobel Committee is independent.

The preceding paragraphs have provided the context for this chapter, but also some central questions to consider – how can we establish a concept of the state which neither places it in a pre-social conceptual realm, nor simply points to an empirical investigation of

¹⁵³ Easton, “Political science in the United States,” 145.

¹⁵⁴ Easton, “Political science in the United States,” 134.

¹⁵⁵ Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.) *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁵⁶ Timothy Mitchell, “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and their Critics,” *The American Political Science Review*, 85, 1 (1991): 82.

¹⁵⁷ Mitchell, “Society, Economy, and the State Effect,” 173.

day to day events and concrete relationships? Or in the language of this particular case, how can we analyse the Nobel system without either categorically defining it as independent of the state, or simply claiming that every new Nobel committee is a brand new case, simply an “aggregation of individual preference”?

The two main questions the first section of this chapter aims to answer are: What kind of conception of the state is employed by those who argue that the Nobel Committee and Peace Prize are independent? And by implication, what conception *should* be employed to understand the Nobel system? By reviewing two main strands of theorization of the state, I argue that the view of the state which is inherent in claiming that the Nobel Committee is independent is one of a pre-social structure, in many ways resembling the realist state actor and a view of the state as a fictitious person. In the second section I present an approach which is better suited to analyse the Nobel Committee, namely Althusser’s concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). I argue that the Nobel system can be viewed as part of a ‘peace ISA’, which confirms and upholds Norwegian identity.

3.1. What is the state?

‘What is the state?’ is a question of ontology. Theorists’ view on what the state is and how it should be conceptualized derives from their ontological commitments, in other words what they think we can know about the world around us. With regard to social phenomena such as the state, questions of ontology have often boiled down to a question of structure or agent. What has been called the agent-structure problem in the social sciences concerns how to capture both the changing and the permanent in the social world. Individuals have a certain extent of freedom, they are creative, and they are the ones who interpret their surroundings. But their interpretation and how they perceive their opportunities are dependent on the structure they find themselves in. Individuals constitute society, but are also constituted by it. The problem has been how to balance these two factors in social theory: “Although very few theorists would deny that social structure is a human product, or, that this product shapes individuals and their interactions, successive theoretical developments have inclined towards either structure or action.”¹⁵⁸ In other words, more weight has generally been put on one or the other. Wight mentions structural Marxism as an obvious example of emphasizing structure, and interpretive sociology as an example of a scientific branch which emphasizes

¹⁵⁸ Colin Wight, “State agency: social action without human activity?” *Review of International Studies*, 30, 2 (2004): 274.

agency. Here, I will focus on structural theories, because it is here a distinction between state and society might be found.

On a continuum of structuralist conceptions of the state one could place Alf Ross on one end, and Alexander Wendt on the other. Ross views the state as a procedural, legal order, which only ‘exists’ when certain preconditions are fulfilled.¹⁵⁹ Wendt on the other hand, sees the state as a person; not only an entity which exists independently of the people who inhabit it, but a person who acts, feels and has agency.¹⁶⁰

3.1.1. The state as a procedural legal order

The state is commonly talked about as an actor in international politics. The media, political representatives, scholars and the general public all tend to represent the state as if it acts and feels. Alf Ross has evaluated the tendency to see the state as an actor from a juridical point of view. Asking the question ‘what is the state?’ is by him seen as meaningless. Ross writes that such questions on the one hand imply that it is “... the task of science to grasp and to reveal in definitions the hidden nature or essence of things.”¹⁶¹ Second, they are not apt to establish what the sense of the expression is in actual usage.¹⁶² He seeks to explain the discrepancy between reality, and the way we talk and conceive of the state: “When the legislative organ has enacted a statute we do not attribute this act to the physical persons – the King and the members of Parliament – who have contributed to this enactment, but regard the legislative act as a State act performed through the action of the legislative organ. In the same way we say that the State, with the King as its instrument or organ, enters into treaties with foreign powers, or that it delivers judgments through its judges, or constructs railways, builds hospitals, and runs schools through its ministers.”¹⁶³ In short, he finds that “The common feature in this usage is that certain *acts that are in reality performed by definite individuals – and who else could perform an act? – are spoken of as being performed not by the physical*

¹⁵⁹ Alf Ross “On the Concepts ‘State’ and ‘State Organs’ in Constitutional Law” *Scandinavian Studies in Law* 5 (1960).

¹⁶⁰ Alexander Wendt, “The state as person in international theory” *Review of International Studies* 30, 2 (2004). Wendt classifies himself as a critical realist, while Ross might be classified as neopositivist. What makes critical realists differ from what Patrick T. Jackson calls “hypothesis-testers” or neopositivists, is their view on what we have access to through science: “The key issue here is whether knowledge is purely related to things that can be experienced and empirically observed, or whether it is possible to generate knowledge of in-principle unobservable objects.”¹⁶⁰ The critical realists hold that we can know things also about phenomena we cannot observe – such as the state – and fall under the category Jackson calls transfactualism. Patrick T. Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2011), 37.

¹⁶¹ Ross, “On the Concepts ‘State’ and ‘State Organs,’” 113.

¹⁶² Ross, “On the Concepts ‘State’ and ‘State Organs,’” 113.

¹⁶³ Ross, “On the Concepts ‘State’ and ‘State Organs,’” 115.

person in question but by a subject called 'the State'."¹⁶⁴ Ross consequently asks two questions: Under what circumstances is an act attributed to 'the State', and not to the individual or group which performed it? What is the meaning of 'the State' when it is attributed such acts?

First of all the acts must be an expression of public authority, as opposed to private autonomy which every individual possesses. Public authority is qualified in that it is designated according to law. The person with public authority has the "capacity to create rules that bind others" but only in a way which is unprejudiced and impartial, and to promote "certain social purposes."¹⁶⁵ In extension of the qualification that the act is an expression of public authority, Ross identifies that one can talk of the state as acting under two sets of circumstances. First, an act of official coercive power or public authority, if it happens in line with an established legal order, can be attributed to the state.¹⁶⁶ Second, if the act is paid for by the public treasury, rendering the treasury liable, the act can be called a state act. These are "the factual circumstances that must be present, in order to hold the statement to be true", this is when the state comes into being, in a sense.¹⁶⁷ Ross sees nothing surprising or remarkable about the fact that the meaning of the concept 'the state' is impossible to establish, except by pointing to the legal rules under which it makes sense to speak of it as an actor. The same is true of many other legal concepts as well, 'ownership' for instance, – they are not defined universally, but take shape when certain conditions are fulfilled.¹⁶⁸

'The state' is simply not a logical subject, although it can be the grammatical subject of sentences such as "the state has built a house." The reason why we create such sentences "is attributable largely to the fact that with the word 'State' we associate various unrealistic (metaphysical) ideas of an invisible force, energy, or entity, conceived more or less in analogy with man, as an acting subject."¹⁶⁹ Whether this way of speaking about the state, the grammatical structure, is produced by a metaphysical notion, or the other way around, Ross is uncertain of. To him the important thing is that metaphysical notions of the state should be left out of theory. «The question of whether the State is a reality (organism), a fiction, or a sum of psychological processes is also a fictitious problem...» because the state cannot be defined once and for all.¹⁷⁰ Ross concludes that: "It should now be easy to understand that this

¹⁶⁴ Ross, "On the Concepts 'State' and 'State Organs,'" 115.

¹⁶⁵ Ross, "On the Concepts 'State' and 'State Organs,'" 118.

¹⁶⁶ Ross, "On the Concepts 'State' and 'State Organs,'" 123.

¹⁶⁷ Ross, "On the Concepts 'State' and 'State Organs,'" 124.

¹⁶⁸ Ross, "On the Concepts 'State' and 'State Organs,'" 124.

¹⁶⁹ Ross, "On the Concepts 'State' and 'State Organs,'" 125; see also Ringmar, "Ontological Status of the State".

¹⁷⁰ Ross, "On the Concepts 'State' and 'State Organs,'" 125.

difference in legal position – enhanced by centuries of practice – between individuals as holders of private autonomy and certain qualified persons ... possessing public authority, has given rise to the idea that the power which has the character of public authority and the acts in which it finds expression cannot ‘properly’ be ascribed to the acting individual as his power and his acts but must be ascribed to a being which is on a higher plane and is more powerful than man, a being called the ‘State’.”¹⁷¹

Ross’ view of the state can be seen as supporting the idea that the Nobel Committee is independent. It is mirrored in what lawyer Fredrik S. Heffermehl writes about the Nobel Committee’s peculiar relationship to the Norwegian parliament:

It is indeed unique for a Parliament to assist a private person in the implementation of his will. But there can be no mistake: even if Parliament is a political body, the task of appointing the Nobel committee is not within Parliament’s *political* functions under the Norwegian constitution. The Nobel committee is not one of the committees of Parliament, but rather it is one of several thousands of Norwegian boards of foundations. Handling Nobel business, *even Parliament itself* must appoint, decide, and operate in accordance with the applicable, general laws of Norway to fulfil a role circumscribed by acts regulating private (not public) affairs.¹⁷²

If the state can only be observed when it acts through a public office or spends the money of the public treasury, it never engages with the Nobel Committee. The Norwegian Parliament does sponsor the library at the Nobel Institute every year, in 2011 with the sum of NOK 1.4 million.¹⁷³ However, the public treasury is also involved in financing the awarding of the prize, which in 2009, when Obama won, and this year, with a large number of EU state leaders and delegates coming to Oslo, involved expenses because of security measures.¹⁷⁴

Ross’ conceptualisation of the state was an attempt at defining what the term ‘state’ means in constitutional law, and he does not problematise that people still have to embody the public authority he attributes to the state. There is obviously something more to how these individuals act than merely constitutional law and the regulations on state authority. People, as well as committees, may have larger authority than their mandate would indicate because law, as Weber has written, is only one source of legitimacy.¹⁷⁵ In other words, it is necessary to turn to a more extensive account of the state to understand the Nobel Committee. Turning to Alexander Wendt, we find an example of the view of the state which Ross criticises. But

¹⁷¹ Ross, “On the Concepts ‘State’ and ‘State Organs,’” 118.

¹⁷² Heffermehl, *The Nobel Peace Prize*, 122.

¹⁷³ The total income of the Nobel Institute was in 2011 NOK 12 866 790, NOK 10 million of these are transfers from the Nobel Foundation. The awarding of the prize cost in 2011 almost NOK 5.8 million. The Norwegian Nobel Institute, “Årsrapport og regnskap” (Oslo 2011).

¹⁷⁴ In the Norwegian Nobel Institute’s report from 2009 it is stated that the Institute had valuable support from the police and the Foreign Ministry’s department for kultur, norgesfremme og protokoll during the awarding of the prize. The Norwegian Nobel Institute, “Årsrapport og regnskap” (Oslo 2009)

¹⁷⁵ Max Weber, “The three types of legitimate rule,” *Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions*, 4, 1 (1958).

first, a look at what kind of theory of the state underlies the view of the Nobel Committee as independent.

3.1.2. *State theory and the construction of independence*

The view of the state, which Ross criticises (and Wendt promotes) – that it acts, and exists on a plane above the social one – can be illustrated with two examples. This view implies, as Ross has shown, that the individuals in the state apparatus also were on a higher plane, so to speak, since the state only acts *through* them. Seen as social epistemology (see chapter 1) they can be viewed as examples of a view of individuals versus associations.¹⁷⁶

Chairman of the Nobel Committee, Thorbjørn Jagland, also serves as Secretary General of the Council of Europe. He has been criticised because of this dual role, most recently by professor of law, Eivind Smith, who said that Jagland's impartiality should be questioned. Smith, and researcher Julie Wilhelmsen, pointed out that Jagland would be inhibited by his role as secretary general in awarding the peace prize to a Russian dissident, for instance, Russia being one of the members in the Council of Europe¹⁷⁷. He could definitely not give the prize to the council itself which illustrates that there is a dilemma connected to the two roles. Smith pointed to the saying that it is not enough for justice to be done; it must be done in a visible and trustworthy manner. Jagland's answer was that Eivind Smith would not have voiced this criticism if he had known what the Council of Europe is, namely an organisation which only answers to the European Convention on Human Rights and monitors that the member states acts in accord with it: "It means that I have to be completely independent in relation to all member states, and I have even sworn an oath in the Committee of Ministers when I was appointed to the effect that I shall not receive instructions from any government or other authority than the Council of Europe. So, I am in fact required to act independently, and required to intervene in connection to human rights violations in the member states. The truth is the opposite of what Eivind Smith says ... I actually think I am the most impartial person in Europe, and I am required to be."¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ David Runciman writes that "The question of how men form themselves into associations lies at the heart of Western political thought. An association is a group of human beings possessed of a distinct, formal identity based on the relation subsisting between its members, and it may be fairly said that it is around such groups that our political understanding has been constructed." The below examples illustrate a social point, namely that these individuals think of associations – the state and others – in a certain way. A view upon associations in general is implicit in views of the state (and vice versa), as "the state's identity rests on the identity of associations other than itself." David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), 3.

¹⁷⁷ NRK, "Jagland: -Jeg er den mest uavhengige personen i hele Europa." Retrieved 16.12.12. http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/nobels_fredspris/1.8356655.

¹⁷⁸ NRK, "- Jeg er den mest uavhengige".

This is an example of a view of the state as something which precedes the social. The offices people are appointed are defined prior to their actions and personalities, people can simply step into them and become whatever the office requires. There is an obvious tension between that view of mandates and authority which transcends the individual and the view that the state is reducible to the people which are part of the government, and that their personal and social qualities are just as important as their mandate. This tension was demonstrated in the previous chapter, especially in relation to the border which was drawn between the state and the Nobel Committee in 1936-7, and in the discussions in the Parliament in the 1970s (see chapter 2.) In this process, the view of the state as something which precedes the social was (sought) balanced with the view that a mandate, or a requirement, to be impartial is not enough – it had to be obvious to others that a committee member was impartial.

When foreign minister Halvdan Koht withdrew from the Nobel Committee in 1937 he gave the committee the following reason: “It is easy to see the objections which here arise. Especially since the voting in the committee is secret, and all disagreements are hidden from both the protocol and the public, the cabinet itself might easily be held responsible for the decisions made in the committee while the foreign minister was part of it. Additionally it is always possible that both he and other members, more or less consciously, take this into account in their decisions.”¹⁷⁹ Koht withdrew from the committee before the decision to award Ossietzky the peace prize. Reluctantly, also Mowinckel, until recently prime minister and foreign minister, withdrew from the committee. But he did not agree entirely with Koht: “on my own behalf I want to express that I have never felt that consideration of my political position has affected my work in the committee, or that such consideration has affected any of the other committee members. I can therefore safely claim that, during the period I have been a member of the Nobel Committee, political considerations have neither directly nor indirectly been given weight when the question of the peace prize has been considered.”¹⁸⁰ Professor Frederik Stang, who was chairman of the committee at the time expressed that there were obvious reasons to end the practice of having acting foreign ministers on the committee: “I see it as right that this practice should end. I put emphasis on the fact that this practice has been criticised in recent years from many quarters. With regard to judges our legislation prescribes that when a judge’s qualification is considered, the parties may request that the judge steps down...this rule ... expresses a correct principle, which is generally valid: It is not

¹⁷⁹ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testament,” 10.

¹⁸⁰ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testament,” 10.

enough that a judge really is impartial and feels impartial. Emphasis must be put on whether the rest of the world sees him as impartial.”¹⁸¹ As we see, Stang’s comment is in essence the same as the observation made by Eivind Smith. Impartiality is not a question of roles – it is constituted socially. However, Stang was not willing to let this principle be the sole guide for the selection of members to the committee. He thought that limiting all ministers from taking part in the committee would be too strict. Only the foreign minister should be restricted otherwise too many competent people would not be eligible for the committee.¹⁸² As we have seen, the accepted truth with regard to the Nobel Committee has developed throughout its history. The debates about the committee in recent years show that the current ‘truth’ is not entirely accepted, but so far the majority of the Parliament’s wish to anchor the committee in Norwegian politics has inhibited further changes.

The same view of the state can also be seen as mirrored in the statement (already quoted in the previous chapter) by former committee chairman John Sanness: “In making its awards, the Norwegian Nobel Committee is never swayed by the hope of maximum popularity and general approval. It must never act under pressure from public opinion or from any other form of political pressure. It is independent of all authorities, and its duty is to arrive at its decision in accordance with its best judgment and conviction.”¹⁸³ The functioning of government in general is of course dependent on the idea that judges, other officials in the bureaucracy, the prime minister, the royal family, and so on, can somehow leave themselves behind and ‘become’ a higher, fictitious role as a representative of the state. But as we have seen, the actual functioning of this idea is dependent also on a distance socially – a distance which can be perceived not simply through the role itself, but through the lack of social bonds or influence, whether it is direct or indirect. The truth is what is accepted at any one point, and questions of independence and impartiality can only be settled by pointing to whether people perceive someone as independent.¹⁸⁴

3.1.3. The state as a (fictional) person

I argue here that the proponents of the categorical independence of the Nobel Committee share Alexander Wendt’s basic idea of what the state is. Wendt’s insistence that the state is a person is, as mentioned, in line with how most of us talk about the state. As he writes, “To say

¹⁸¹ Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente,” 11.

¹⁸² Parliament proceedings 1973-1974, “Nobelkomiteen og Alfred Nobels testamente,” 12.

¹⁸³ In Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 48.

¹⁸⁴ With these reflections we have moved out of the question of ontology, and into what must be established empirically, or as a question of which story or narrative is accepted.

that states are ‘actors’ or ‘persons’ is to attribute to them properties we associate first with human beings – rationality, identities, interests, beliefs, and so on. Such attributions pervade social science and International Relations (IR) scholarship in particular ...” and are also common in the wider public.¹⁸⁵ But when pressed on the issue, Wendt observes, most people also agree that the state is not *really* a person. As Oleg Kharkhordin writes, “We are aware that we cannot empirically see, hear, or touch an entity called the state, while individuals appear in their full empirical splendor.”¹⁸⁶ One of the thinkers who established the thought of the state as a fictitious person is Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes elaborated on how it comes to be that a person can represent someone else by opposing the ‘Naturall’ person to a ‘Feigned or Artificiall’ person.¹⁸⁷ If someone speaks or acts on their own behalf, it is as a natural person, but if they represent the “words or actions” of someone else, they act as an artificial person. To establish a political order each and every individual must be willing to let the sovereign represent them. When they agree to such a covenant they create two persons, the artificial person – the sovereign – who represents each individual, and the individuals themselves who are united in authorizing the sovereign to speak for them: “The Multitude so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH...”, or a state.¹⁸⁸ To Hobbes, in other words, the “state is a person distinct from both rulers and ruled ... While sovereigns come and go, and while the unity of the multitude continually alters as its members are born and die, the person of the state endures.”¹⁸⁹

This is very similar to Wendt’s notion of how the state becomes a person. It happens because “individuals accept the obligation to act jointly on behalf of collective beliefs, whether or not they subscribe to them personally.”¹⁹⁰ Wendt, however, does not see the state as a fictitious person – but a real one. In his view, it is problematic that scholars treat the state as a person when they don’t actually believe that it is: “State personhood is a useful fiction, analogy, metaphor, or shorthand for something else. That something else, what state persons really are, is the behavior and discourse of the individual human beings who make them

¹⁸⁵ Wendt, “The state as person,” 289; see also Todd H. Hall, “We will not Swallow this Bitter Fruit: Theorizing a Diplomacy of Anger,” *Security Studies*, 20, 4 (2011).

¹⁸⁶ Oleg Kharkhordin, “What is the State? The Russian concept of gosudarstvo in the European context,” *History and Theory*, 40, 2 (2001): 206-7. To view the state as an actor is a relatively modern invention. Jack H. Hexter’s analysis of *Il Principe* showed that “*lo stato* is never worked for, helped, served, revered, admired, feared, loved; it is added to, assaulted, possessed, occupied, seized, taken, acquired, kept or lost.” It was in other words not the active, organized body politic we imagine today, but an “inert lump.” Kharkhordin, “What is the state?” 208.

¹⁸⁷ Quentin Skinner, “A Genealogy of the Modern State,” *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 162 (2009): 344.

¹⁸⁸ Skinner, “A Genealogy of the Modern State,” 345.

¹⁸⁹ Skinner, “A Genealogy of the Modern State,” 346.

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Wight, “State agency,” 276.

up.”¹⁹¹ This makes most IR scholars reductionists, rather than holists, as states are seen as the actual people who constitute them and their interactions.¹⁹² Wendt, on the other hand, wishes to establish a theory of state persons which is in line with scientific realism, in other words which is based on descriptions of objective, mind-independent facts. He argues that “state persons are real in at least one important sense: they are ‘intentional’ or purposive actors”, and he wants to find out how far the view of the state person might be extended to also include more complex notions of personhood, namely whether the state can be viewed as an organism or as having consciousness. While Ringmar finds that the concept of the state as a person is so useful because there is a long tradition for understanding ‘state’ and ‘man’ in relation to each other, to Wendt it suggests a “miracle argument”: “as with other unobservables like atoms or preferences, given how well theories based on state personhood work, it would be a miracle if it did not refer to something real.”¹⁹³

Colin Wight’s main criticism of Wendt’s attempt to justify that the state is a person is that ‘person’ seems to be just another word for structure. There is agency in the state person, but no “human activity.”¹⁹⁴ If Wendt simply gives the state person agency – on behalf of the people – he displaces the question of how to balance agent and structure. The state becomes structure and agent in one move.¹⁹⁵ In opposition to this Wight contends that “Nothing happens in society ‘save in virtue of something human beings do or have done.’ Or as Bob Jessop puts it, ‘it is not the state which acts: it is always specific sets of politicians and state officials located in specific parts of the state system.’”¹⁹⁶ But Wight also puts emphasis on structure, as “Human activity always takes place in a structured social context and this context is integral to both the activity and its explanation.”¹⁹⁷ He further sees agency as something more than the “freedom of subjectivity.” It is a capacity to do, but this is something which can also be attributed to stones or apples falling from trees, for instance. Agency means to be an “agent of something”, which takes into account that agents have different opportunities depending on the social context they operate in.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹¹ Wendt, “The state as person,” 289.

¹⁹² Quentin Skinner also promotes the view of the state as a fictional person, for instance by pointing to the decision of a state to incur a public debt: «Who becomes the debtor? We can hardly answer, in the manner of the populist theory, that the debt must be owed by the sovereign body of the people ... But nor does it make any better sense to suggest, in prevailing reductionist style, that the debt must be owed by the government who incurred it.» Skinner, “A Genealogy of the Modern State,” 364.

¹⁹³ Wendt, “The state as person,” 290; Ringmar, “Ontological Status of the State”.

¹⁹⁴ Wight, “State agency,” 270.

¹⁹⁵ Wight, “State agency,” 274-5.

¹⁹⁶ Wight, “State agency,” 275.

¹⁹⁷ Wight, “State agency,” 275.

¹⁹⁸ Wight, “State agency,” 275.

As we have seen, outside of theory, a mandate is not seen as pre-social, nor is the state. The trouble with Wendt's stance is also that it presupposes that thoughts and feelings – which are individually experienced – can be attributed to the collective. How is that possible? To explain why group intentions are not reducible to the sum of its members' intentions, Wendt points to “a number of philosophical counter-examples showing that groups can intend things that none of their members intend ... Moreover, the identity of group intentions, such as state persons can persist over time, despite a 100 per cent turnover in their membership. [Another], arguably decisive, problem is that groups can do things individuals cannot, making some group intentions ‘indivisible.’”¹⁹⁹ Émile Durkheim's description of elections resonates with this. Elections are often seen as an aggregation of individually expressed opinions, a view which Pierre Bourdieu likens to how action is conceptualized in theories of the market: “...by bringing into existence, on a specific day, the succession of individuals who ‘pass one after another before the ballot box’ and by suspending, ‘for a moment,’ just long enough to make a choice, all social bonds, between husband and wife, father and son, employer and employee, priest and parishioner, teacher and pupil, and, by the same token, dependencies and commitments ... it reduces groups to a detotalized series of individuals whose ‘opinion’ will never be more than statistical aggregation of individual opinions individually expressed.”²⁰⁰ Bourdieu writes that whatever one thinks of the ‘corporatist’ philosophy Durkheim opposes to the liberal philosophy of choice and freedom, “...Durkheim has the merit of showing that one must distinguish the *mode of production or elaboration of opinion* ... from the *mode of expression* of that opinion...”²⁰¹

In this connection this is interesting because both the view of state and society and the view of the individual and the group connect to the larger discussion of whether agents or structures are what create social reality. Is there such a thing as a completely independent individual agent? Following Durkheim and Bourdieu, the answer is no. Does that mean that we should, with Wendt, in fact treat the group – or the state as a person – as the agent?²⁰² And, more importantly, Durkheim's view is interesting because it applies directly to the discussion of whether the Nobel Committee is independent or not, as he ridicules the notion of completely independent individual voters. To further extend the view of the state to incorporate how individuals are shaped, we will in the next chapter turn to Louis Althusser's

¹⁹⁹ Wendt, “The state as person,” 299.

²⁰⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Mystery of Ministry: from Particular Wills to the General Will,” in *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics: The Mystery of Ministry*, ed. Lóic Wacquant (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 56.

²⁰¹ Bourdieu, “The Mystery of Ministry,” 56.

²⁰² Wight, “State agency”.

concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). This theoretical position also has the merit of elaborating on how we can, or cannot, distinguish between state and society.

3.2. The Nobel system as peace ISA

Many, including the majority of the Norwegian government – the cabinet and the Parliament – would say that the Nobel Committee is completely independent, and hence a part of Norwegian society. This question presupposes that society and the state can be clearly delineated, and that sources of power can be delineated similarly. If the state is defined as the institution which can legitimately claim monopoly on the use of force, the Nobel Committee seemingly has nothing to do with it, but as we have seen most scholars would not be satisfied with this narrow definition. And, if independence from the state means being somehow isolated from influence from the state apparatus, Foucault's view of power would imply that such independence is impossible, as "One cannot confine oneself to analyzing the State apparatus alone if one wants to grasp the mechanisms of power in their detail and complexity ... In reality, power in its exercise goes much further, passes through much finer channels, and is much more ambiguous."²⁰³ In relation to this Timothy Mitchell asks "At what point does power enter channels fine enough and its exercise become ambiguous enough that one recognizes the edge of this apparatus? Where is the exterior that enables one to identify it as an apparatus?"²⁰⁴ As an answer here it is tempting to say that the connection between the state and the Nobel Committee is not a channel fine enough for it to be seen as completely independent of the state. According to what criteria can we draw "lines of separation" between the Nobel Committee and the Norwegian state? While Norwegian authorities still struggle to construct the committee as independent, other theories of the state render a distinction between state and society meaningless.

Louis Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) broadens the state to comprise a whole range of 'private' institutions and organizations, the point being that they *function* in a specific way, not where they are found on the bureaucratic map.²⁰⁵ The view this thesis promotes is that one cannot decide what belongs to state and what belongs to society categorically; independence can only be established by looking at the social context. The reason why this does not leave us in the pluralist forest of individuals and bureaucracies Erik Ringmar pointed to (see introduction to this chapter) is that the Nobel system is analysed with

²⁰³ Quoted in Mitchell, "Society, Economy and the State Effect," 169.

²⁰⁴ Mitchell, "Society, Economy and the State Effect," 170.

²⁰⁵ Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 93.

regard to how it *functions*, how it is an important part of the state identity, and as such a stable element, which none the less is socially constructed.

In this section I will thus ask two questions: How can state and society be delineated? And: How does the Nobel system function? Through answering these questions I argue that the theories of the state presented in the previous chapter do not capture the nature of the relationship between the Nobel Committee and the Norwegian state. Althusser's view on ISAs, brings ideology, and hence power into the analysis. I propose that the Nobel system can be seen as part of a peace ISA, with the modification that I do not see it as a tool in the elite's oppression of the people, but as the combination of identity and its institutionalization in state *and* society which creates a specific rationality – a precondition for thinking and acting. To do this, I draw on governmentality as a conception of power which “decenters the analysis of power from any particular actor and looks instead at the different processes and techniques of the ‘conduct of conduct’”.²⁰⁶ In Norway, the peace prize is constructed as part of the Norwegian state through practices and discourse despite the fact that politicization of the prize is harmful both for Norwegian foreign policy and the prize itself. The reason why central actors do not seem to realize this fact is that the peace ISA is such a central part of what Norway is, and gives Norway a place in the world (as will be elaborated in chapter 4.) Second, within the Norwegian ‘narrative’, the Parliament is in fact constructed as a part of the people, not the state.²⁰⁷ The result is that the Nobel Committee can be closely connected to the Parliament, but still be viewed as independent.²⁰⁸

3.2.1. *Ideological state apparatuses*

In revising the Marxist theory of the state, Louis Althusser also made a contribution to the debate on how the state should be understood. The failure of the protest movements in the 1960s and 70s prompted a search for the explanation as to why it was not possible to reconstruct society and politics. In other words there was seemingly something which prevented revolutions from happening, even when they had the best preconditions. Althusser, like Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*, wanted both to explain this and to formulate what kind of effort was necessary to succeed in forging a transition to communism.²⁰⁹ The answer to the puzzle was found in ideology, or rather ideologies, and the apparatuses through

²⁰⁶ Iver B. Neumann & Ole Jacob Sending, *Governing the Global Polity* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), 3.

²⁰⁷ Iver B. Neumann, *Norge – en kritikk* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2001).

²⁰⁸ What this narrative consists of in a broader sense is investigated in the next chapter.

²⁰⁹ Richard D. Wolff, “Ideological State Apparatuses, Consumerism, and U.S. Capitalism: Lessons for the Left” *Rethinking Marxism* 17, 2 (2005), 224.

which they shape the individual's view on society and his/her relationship with it. Althusser starts out with the traditional view of the state as a repressive apparatus consisting of police, courts, prisons, the army, the government and administration. This view is not incorrect, he states, but its "obviousness" is a signal that it is in need of improvement.²¹⁰

While there is a repressive apparatus which functions mainly through violence, or the threat of it, there are also Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) which function mainly through ideology. He lists the religious ISA, the educational, family, legal, political ("the political system, including different parties"), trade-union, communications ("press, radio and television etc."), and the cultural ISA ("literature, the arts, sports, etc.")²¹¹ These spheres are diverse and seemingly independent of the state, which Althusser comments on: "someone is bound to question ... by what right I regard as Ideological *State* Apparatuses, institutions which for the most part do not possess public status, but are quite simply *private* institutions."²¹² He points out that the distinction public/private is false: "the State ... is neither public nor private; on the contrary, it is the precondition for any distinction between public and private. The same thing can be said from the starting-point of our State Ideological Apparatuses. It is unimportant whether the institutions in which they are realized are 'public' or 'private'. What matters is how they function. Private institutions can perfectly well 'function' as Ideological State Apparatuses."²¹³

Ideology in Althusser's view is not "a pure dream", completely devoid of reality as Marx sees it, ideology has a material existence because it causes people to perform certain acts.²¹⁴ Ideology is something which imposes "obviousnesses as obviousnesses": "it is essential to realize that both he who is writing these lines and the reader who reads them are themselves subjects, and therefore ideological subjects (a tautological proposition), i.e. that the author and the reader of these lines both live 'spontaneously' and 'naturally' in ideology in the sense in which I have said that 'man is an ideological animal by nature.'"²¹⁵ Individuals are "always already" seeing the world through ideology, and recognizing themselves and their place in society through it. Ideology imposes particular subjectivities on individuals.²¹⁶

Richard Wolff points out that had Althusser written later, he might have used 'identity'

²¹⁰ Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," 90-1.

²¹¹ Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," 92.

²¹² Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," 93.

²¹³ Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," 93.

²¹⁴ Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," 99.

²¹⁵ Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," 104 .

²¹⁶ Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," 104.

instead of ‘subjectivities.’²¹⁷ This view of the state is echoed by Bourdieu who amended Weber’s ‘definition’ of the state:

...the state is an X (to be determined) which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical and symbolic violence over a definite territory and over the totality of the corresponding population. If the state is able to exert symbolic violence, it is because it incarnates itself simultaneously in objectivity, in the form of mental structures and categories of perception and thought. By realizing itself in social structures and in the mental structures adapted to them, [it] ... makes us forget that it issues out of a long series of acts of *institution* (in the active sense) and hence has all the appearances of the *natural*.²¹⁸

In sum, in line with Marxism, Althusser broadens the view of the state as not only comprising the traditional repressive and judicial apparatuses, but also what many would view as parts of society, economy or, even broader, culture. He sees these apparatuses as shaping individuals by giving them an identity. There is no master plan or central authority behind these workings of ideology, on the contrary power is conceptualized “as a force which operates in ways that are subtle, disguised, and accepted as everyday social practice.”²¹⁹

3.2.2. *Disciplines and governmentality*

This also links Althusser to Foucault, who allegedly saw building a theory of the state as similar to eating an indigestible meal.²²⁰ Foucault’s bottom-up perspective on power, the micro-physics of disciplines, is similar to Althusser’s concept of ISAs:

Disciplinary methods of power have two important consequences for our understanding of the modern state ... In the first place, we can move beyond the image of power as essentially a system of authoritative commands or policies backed by force. Disciplinary power ... works not from the outside but from within, not at the level of an entire society but at the level of detail, and not by constraining individuals and their actions but by producing them.²²¹

Timothy Mitchell exemplifies what discipline as a type of power means by pointing to a characterization of revolutionary transformation of France. For the writer, Theda Skocpol, the changes in the army and the bureaucracy are the results of an autonomous state which wanted to consolidate power. But to Mitchell the explanation lies in the methods of discipline. It was based on measures such as “the construction of barracks ... set apart from the social world, the introduction of daily inspection and drill, repetitive training in maneuvers broken down into precisely timed sequences and combinations, and the elaboration of complex hierarchies

²¹⁷ Wolff, “Ideological State Apparatuses,” 226.

²¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 40.

²¹⁹ Anne Allison, “Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus” *Anthropological Quarterly*, 64, 4 (1991), 196.

²²⁰ Bob Jessop, “Bringing the State Back in (Yet Again): Reviews, Revisions, Rejections and Redirections” *International Review of Sociology* 11, 2 (2001).

²²¹ Mitchell, “The Limits of the State,” 92-93.

of command, spatial arrangement, and surveillance.”²²² Through these practices the army could be made into “an artificial machine” – the illusion of a clearly distinct unit – in contrast to the other armies, which now looked like “collections of ‘idle and inactive men.’”²²³

Foucault’s concept of governmentality is also interesting when attempting to delineate state and society. Governmentality is something “which is at once internal and external to the state, since it is the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on”.²²⁴ Mitchell Dean notes that many meanings of government have been obscured by the focus on the liberal constitutional nation state where government is seen as interchangeable with *the* government.²²⁵ He uses the term governmentality about “the particular mentalities, arts and regimes of government and administration”, and the term government is much broader than in more common usage of the word; it is applied to “any calculated direction of human conduct.”²²⁶ Iver B. Neumann writes that a phenomenon which makes people do something they would not otherwise have done is a phenomenon of power. Governmentality “is a power that makes it possible to govern people indirectly and from afar, by impinging on their schemes of action by instituting a new practice ... As long as people act in accordance with established practices, they confirm a given discourse; seen from the governor’s point of view, they are well governed.”²²⁷ One of the advantages of applying the concept of governmentality along with the concept of ISAs is that it enables us to see the ISA not first and foremost as a ‘veil’ between the people and the truth. What is important is not to reveal state oppression, but in this case to ‘reveal’ how a certain part of Norwegian identity is interlinked with the Nobel system to such an extent that it is difficult to separate them. This view is also in line with more general changes in how states relate to parts of society, namely non-governmental organizations.

3.2.3. *A new way of governing*

According to Iver B. Neumann and Ole Jacob Sending states govern to a larger and larger extent from a distance, as opposed to threatening with, or using, physical force. The more people it has to govern, and the more detailed its prescriptions become, the more important it

²²² Mitchell, “Society, Economy and the State Effect,” 177.

²²³ Mitchell, “Society, Economy and the State Effect,” 177.

²²⁴ Michel Foucault, “Governmentality” in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, eds. Aradhana Sharma & Akhil Gupta (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 143.

²²⁵ Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality. Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 1999), 2.

²²⁶ Dean, *Governmentality*, 2.

²²⁷ Iver B. Neumann, *At Home with the Diplomats* (London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 61.

is that people internalize what is ‘normal’ and ‘accepted.’ The governmental conception of politics concerns the “productive power” which “operates through distant social relations to set up standards for what is appropriate, effective, and legitimate for groups or individuals to do. It is a power that works to ‘structure the possible field of action for others.’”²²⁸ By employing these power strategies the state can influence, and work through non-state actors in a way that is not about forcing, instructing or co-opting them. One example of this change can be found in an article by Hillary Clinton in *Foreign Affairs* in which she writes about “Leading Through Civilian Power”: “We can ... leverage civilian power by connecting businesses, philanthropists, and citizen’s groups with partner governments to perform tasks that governments alone cannot.”²²⁹ This is in line with what Neumann and Sending found when investigating how the Norwegian government worked with NGOs to establish a ban on landmines. It was to a larger extent a trade off than an employment of the state’s coercive power. The authors found that the relationship between the state and civil society was a form of government which involved a “technology of agency by which non-state actors are enrolled to perform governance functions by virtue of their technical expertise, advocacy, and capacity for political will-formation.”²³⁰ For instance the NGOs could provide enthusiasm, legitimacy and knowledge of the situation ‘in the field.’ They also adapted their behaviour in line with what the foreign ministry saw as desirable, and became more effective, adjusted their language, and “appeared streamlined and diplomatic in their approach.”²³¹

But they were, as mentioned, not becoming a part of the state; their independence from the state was an asset in this collaboration: “We have identified a governmental rationality whereby political power operates *through* rather than *on* civil society. Governing is performed *through* autonomous subjects, not *on* passive objects.”²³² One should in other words not view the state as linked to “parastatal or corporatist institutions, which buttress and extend its authority.”²³³ It is not fruitful to regard everything in society as an ISA. If everything in society is an ISA, there is no distinction between state and society in any area, and that would render this kind of analysis uninteresting.²³⁴ But the point is neither that state and society are

²²⁸ Neumann & Sending, “*Governing the Global Polity*,” 12.

²²⁹ Hillary Clinton, “Leading Through Civilian Power” *Foreign Affairs* 89, 6 (2010), 13-24, 17.

²³⁰ Neumann & Sending, *Governing the Global Polity*, 125.

²³¹ Neumann & Sending, *Governing the Global Polity*, 129.

²³² Neumann & Sending, *Governing the Global Polity*, 131.

²³³ Mitchell, “The Limits of the State,” 90.

²³⁴ “the State is nothing if it is not an organ distinct from the rest of society. If the State is everywhere, it is nowhere. The State comes into existence by a process of concentration that detaches a certain group of individuals from the collective mass.’ ‘State actors are differentiated from their societies, but internally related to them: no society, no state’. When the state is young, it has few ties to society: ‘it is above all the agent of

by definition distinct and easily delineated. Mitchell exemplifies his approach by pointing to how the US government handled Saudi Arabian demands for increased royalties from Aramco, the consortium of American oil companies which had rights to Saudi Arabian oil. Aramco was not willing to reduce its profits or to increase the price of oil, and was helped by the US government which guaranteed that the increased royalties in effect were paid by US taxpayers. By doing this they also secured a foreign policy objective, namely to remain friends with the pro-American Saudi leadership.²³⁵ From this Mitchell concludes that: “As the Aramco case shows, producing and maintaining the distinction between state and society is itself a mechanism that generates resources of power. The fact that Aramco can be said to lie outside the ‘formal political system,’ thereby disguising its role in international politics, is essential to its strength as part of a larger political order.”²³⁶ The boundary between state and society depends on the political situation, and more importantly, in areas where the boundary is forcefully drawn there is more reason to think that the boundary has political effects which in fact supersede it.

In what way can all this be applied to the analysis of the Nobel Committee? First of all, we can establish that neither the separation between state and society, nor ‘independence’ is given, but must be investigated within a social context. One of the assets of the Norwegian NGOs in the example above was that they were not a part of the government apparatus, although they got most of their funding from the state and functioned in many ways as an extension of the state apparatus. Aramco was not formally a part of the state structure either, but in that particular case, both the government and the oil companies saw it as beneficial that the state in effect financed the companies through regular taxpayers. This border is drawn on a case by case basis. Could we say that the Norwegian NGOs were *independent*? One thing is that they were financed by the state; another is that if we look at these relations in line with a governmentality perspective, is it possible to speak of *independence*? Neumann and Sending have shown how the NGOs adapted to the government’s implicit demands for how they should behave, and what were their possibilities for action. Similarly, one can say that the Nobel Committee is to such a large extent a part of a larger narrative about what Norway is, that its possibilities for action are greatly limited. To exemplify this we will look at how the committee is constructed through the practices and statements of ‘Norwegian officialdom.’

external relations, the agent for the acquisition of territory and the organ of diplomacy’. But the more it grows, the more democratic it becomes.” Iver B. Neumann, “Beware of organicism: the narrative self of the state,” *Review of International Studies* 30, 2 (2004), 263.

²³⁵ Mitchell, “Society, Economy and the State Effect,” 175.

²³⁶ Mitchell, “Society, Economy and the State Effect,” 175.

3.3. The Nobel Peace Prize and the ISA

After Liu Xiaobo was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 2010, political relations between China and Norway deteriorated greatly. Negotiations on trade agreements were put on hold and it has been difficult for Norwegians, both in politics and business, to operate in China.²³⁷ Chinese authorities refuse to see the Nobel Committee as independent, and as long as the Norwegian government in any case holds the same views as the committee, independence is not the most important issue: “By openly supporting the extremely erroneous decision by the Nobel Committee, the Norwegian Government has destroyed the political foundation and environment for cooperation in bilateral relations. I think it is difficult for China and Norway to continue their sound relationship as in the past.”²³⁸ In 2011, one year after the award, foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre, approached Chinese authorities with an op-ed in a Norwegian newspaper. Here he amplified the confusion which surrounds the relationship between government and committee: “I would like to repeat this fundamental fact: The Norwegian Nobel Committee is independent and has sole responsibility for awarding the Nobel Peace Prize. The Norwegian Government attaches importance to guaranteeing the Nobel Committee’s independence and its freedom to interpret Alfred Nobel’s will. Anything else would be irreconcilable with our tradition. *Every Norwegian government has supported the values that the Nobel Peace Prize is founded upon and the wider messages that the awarding of the prize sends to the world.*”²³⁹ By adding the last sentence Støre in effect repeats the Chinese criticism, and links the committee to the government.

The practices surrounding the awarding of the prize also express what the prize *is*. When the Nobel Prize is awarded, the laureate normally spends several days in Oslo. There is an award ceremony, a formal banquet, a concert to honor the winner, and numerous meetings and press conferences. It is common that the winner of the prize meets both with the Prime Minister and the Royal family on the day of the award ceremony. The Nobel banquet is a formal dinner to honor the laureate: “The Laureate's table is right in the middle of the hall. Seated with the Laureate are the Nobel Committee and its permanent secretary, the President of the Parliament, the Prime Minister, and – since 2006 – the King and Queen. Other guests include Ministers, members of the Parliament, and prominent representatives of public

²³⁷ See for instance *Aftenposten*, “Vil ha utlendinger i Nobelkomiteen.” Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.aftenposten.no/okonomi/innland/article4039751.ece#.TyE33W87r20>.

²³⁸ Embassy of the People’s republic of China in the Kingdom of Norway, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Jiang Yu's Remarks” (07.12.10) Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.chinese-embassy.no/eng/sgxw/t775632.htm>.

²³⁹ Jonas Gahr Støre, “Norway and China,” *Dagens Næringsliv* (11.10.11) Emphasis added.

institutions, idealistic organizations, and cultural and commercial life...²⁴⁰ In other words, the entire political elite is present along with parts of the cultural and economic elite. The symbolism in having a private audience with both the King and the Queen and the Prime minister increases the impression that the Nobel Prize is closely related to the Norwegian state.

The Nobel concert is an extravagant affair, which for the last years have included Hollywood celebrities as hosts. The Washington Post describes it as “the ultimate charity gig, one of those strange, Frankenstein events that courageously attempts to put incompatible acts on the same stage in the name of universal fellowship.”²⁴¹ After their performance at the concert, artists meet the King and Queen of Norway, who seemingly are involved in all aspects of the celebration of the winner. As an addition to this infrastructure, the Nobel Peace Center was opened in 2005, a center with exhibitions and lectures to inform about the prize, its winners, and the promotion of peace in general. It was officially opened by the Norwegian King “as part of the celebrations to mark Norway's centenary as an independent country.”²⁴² It is not strange that important events are marked by the presence of the Royal family or the Prime Minister, what becomes clear is that the distance between the Norwegian state and the Nobel Prize is highly ambiguous and that this is reflected in both discourse and practice. Seemingly, one is blind to the fact that linking the opening of a center informing about the peace prize to the independence of Norway communicates that there is a strong link between the two, involving more than questions of where the prize is awarded.

3.3.1. “Another aspect of the government of Norway”

Because the prize is used to construct and uphold Norwegian identity, Norway and the peace prize become inseparable. With Liu Xiaobo in prison, the traditional CNN-interview was in 2010 conducted with the chairman of the committee, Torbjørn Jagland, and Jonas Gahr Støre. The fact that the Minister of foreign affairs took part in this interview is another act that contributes to the linking of the committee with Norwegian politics. This link was also an important topic in the interview, where Jonathan Mann inquired into Støre’s repeated statements that the “Nobel committee is not an agency of the Norwegian government”

²⁴⁰ The Norwegian Nobel Institute, “The Nobel Banquet.” Retrieved 16.12.12.

http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en_GB/about_peaceprize/banquet/.

²⁴¹ *The Washington Post*, “At Nobel concert, too much peace” (12.12.10). Retrieved 16.12.12.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/12/AR2010121202899.html>.

²⁴² Nobel Peace Center, “History.” Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.nobelpeacecenter.org/en/about-us/organization/history/>.

There's a certain nuance here, and help me with it, because the Chinese simply don't believe it ... The chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee is the former prime minister in this country. Every member of the committee is either a former member of the Norwegian parliament or former cabinet member of the Norwegian parliament. They are chosen for their positions by the Norwegian parliament. So, if the committee is not an office of the Norwegian government, it is nonetheless an offspring of the Norwegian political class (...) It speaks for a certain way of thinking, it speaks for the way Norway's leaders think. You can understand why the Chinese might not care, really, where the punctuation is. It looks very much like another aspect of the government of Norway.²⁴³

To this pointed critique, Støre replied:

Alfred Nobel pointed to Norway to award the peace prize (...) So, since 1901, the Norwegian parliament has appointed that committee which has awarded the prize. We live in a pluralistic society, people in Norway know, and those who would like to do investigations in Norway know, that the committee is independent (...) my role is to defend that integrity, then the committee has to defend its choice.²⁴⁴

When he answers that Norway is a pluralistic society he interprets the criticism as allegations of state control; that Norway is like China in its control of civil society. Of course Norway is not an authoritarian state – Norway as a state has not one expression but many. But he did not address the main point in the question which was about something else, namely that it doesn't matter whether the Nobel committee is independent or not, as the values and interests of the Norwegian political elite is already ingrained in the committee. As such, it is “another aspect of the government of Norway.” Even if Norway is a pluralistic society, both the government and the majority of Norwegian opinion agreed with the peace prize. This view is in line with Geir Lundestad's more pragmatic observation that the Nobel committee's choices have reflected the general political orientation in Norway. It is also in line with a view of power and government which sees it as incomplete to base an analysis of these phenomena on institutional boundaries and hierarchies. This is how governmentality works – it sets the parameters for action and interpretation. Government to Foucault was about the “conduct of conduct”, which both implies leadership and to conduct oneself – “the form of self-direction appropriate to certain situations.”²⁴⁵

3.3.2. *Effects of the peace ISA*

The Nobel committee and peace prize can in this way be viewed as part of a ‘peace ISA’, which is an element in, and upholds, Norwegian identity and particular mission. Even though the committee is not officially a part of state bureaucracy, it *functions* as an apparatus which

²⁴³ CNN, “Norway official reacts to Nobel scandal” (11.12.10). Retrieved 16.12.12.

<http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2010/12/11/mann.nobel.reax.cnn?iref=allsearch>.

²⁴⁴ CNN, “Norway official reacts to Nobel scandal”.

²⁴⁵ Dean, *Governmentality*, 17.

upholds all that Norway is. In contemporary Norway, the peace tradition and identity as a nation for peace is confirmed and repeated in political statements and speeches, while the Norwegian people also adhere to this image of Norway.²⁴⁶ One adept example is from a speech by then Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik: “To me it is therefore a vision that Norway will appear as a peace nation. The annual awarding of the Nobel peace prize is a useful reminder of the importance of the work to promote peace. The Norwegian commitment to peace in several areas of conflict throughout the world demonstrates that we let practice follow theory. This commitment must be rooted in a culture of peace, and it is important to nourish it through active research on peace and teaching.”²⁴⁷ This mirrors Halvard Leira’s findings that Norway’s work to promote peace is tautologically linked to the Norwegian peace tradition, so that Norway works to promote peace because it is a peace nation, and Norway is a peace nation because it works to promote peace.²⁴⁸ In addition it points to a particular governmentality surrounding Norway’s relationship with the concept peace. Bondevik connects Norway’s work to promote peace with the need for a “culture of peace” which should be nourished through research on, and education in, peace. The speech this quote is a part of was given at the Center for Peace Studies at the University of Tromsø. Hence, institutions such as this one are connected with the overall image of Norway, and the country’s ‘mission’ in international politics. In Norway, peace as an overarching identity and concept can be seen as an ISA, involving education, culture, NGOs, politics and the Nobel system.²⁴⁹ What this ISA interpellates in individuals is simply the Norwegian identity which involves a tautological logic that binds the Nobel Peace Prize to the whole concept of what Norway is and should be.

Althusser turned to ideology and ISAs because they in his view “could operate so as to preclude a capitalist crisis from becoming a transition to communism.”²⁵⁰ What can be seen

²⁴⁶ See Soria Moria-erklæringen (2005) and *NTB*, “Vi ser oss som rik, humanitær fredsnasjon” (06.02.05) More about this in chapter 5.

²⁴⁷ Kjell Magne Bondevik, “Tale ved Senter for fredsstudier,” University of Tromsø 18.11.03. Retrieved 16.12.12. http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-II/smk/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2003/tale_ved_senter_for_fredsstudier.html?id=267684. See also Kjell Magne Bondevik, “New Year Speech” 01.01.2003. Retrieved 16.12.12.

http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-II/smk/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2003/new_year_message.html?id=266528

²⁴⁸ Halvard Leira, “Folket og freden: Utviklingstrekk i norsk fredsdiskurs 1890-2005,” *Internasjonal politikk*, 63, 2-3 (2005), 157.

²⁴⁹ Iver B. Neumann writes that the number of NGOs which was supported economically by the Norwegian state increased from 30 in 1981 to almost 150 in 1991. The amount of money contributed increased from NOK 200 million to 1.2 billion, while at the time of writing it was NOK 2 billion, “which is one sixth of the total budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” «Norsk sørpolitikk: den disaggregerte stats diplomati,» *Internasjonal politikk*, 57, 2 (1999): 188.

²⁵⁰ Wolf, “Ideological State Apparatuses,” 1.

as the most drastic consequence of the peace ISA is not that it prevents such a transition, but that it affects the political deliberation on concepts such as war and peace. One of its effects is that the Norwegian identity as a peace nation seems immune to empirical evidence, as Leira writes.²⁵¹ This particularly affects the discursive constructions of war in Norway. Leira has shown that defence and military organization was integrated in the peace discourse, which already had established what Norway's external relations were like.²⁵² Norway can wage war but remain a peace nation, because Norway only fights the 'good wars.' Almost all aspects of war are left out of public discourse.²⁵³ It can also be seen in the way government representatives present everything related to war and the use of the military to the Norwegian public. When NATO, and with it, Norway, started bombing Serbian targets in 1999, prime minister Kjell Magne Bondevik described what happened as follows: "It is the first time NATO makes use of weapons *to prevent war* and a humanitarian disaster in the midst of Europe."²⁵⁴ Bondevik did in other words not see Norway as partaking in a war against another country, but on the other hand as partaking in a mission to prevent war. While the largest Norwegian newspapers wrote that Norway was at war, Bondevik said "Norway is not at war with another country, but takes part in a NATO-led military operation."²⁵⁵ Similarly, foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre in an op-ed eight years later emphasised that NATO is engaged in peace missions, and first and foremost contributes to "build peace and democracy in some of the world's most unstable areas."²⁵⁶ In Norway, war and peace are not established empirically, but categorically. In this way Norway's identity legitimises waging war – because these wars are only military operations to create peace and democracy: "given that we are Norway, and that Norway does not wage war, it is impossible that what Norwegian soldiers are doing constitutes partaking in war."²⁵⁷

The concept of ISA can also explain why Norwegian politicians in reality confirm Chinese allegations when they state that Norwegian policy is consistent with the values of the Nobel committee and peace prize, seemingly without realizing it themselves. In addition, through practices such as the winner's meetings with the Royal family and the Prime Minister, the link between Norway and Nobel is amplified. Repeating another one of Foucault's statements on governmentality, that "it is the tactics of government which make

²⁵¹ Halvard Leira et al. "Norske selvbilder og norsk utenrikspolitikk" (Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt, 2007): 16

²⁵² Leira, "Folket og freden."

²⁵³ Iver B. Neumann, *Hva så, lille land?* (Oslo: Spartacus, 2003).

²⁵⁴ Parliament proceedings 1998-1999, 2542.

²⁵⁵ *Aftenposten*, «Sikkerhetsrådet møtes om Jugoslavia-angrep» (25.03.99).

²⁵⁶ Jonas Gahr Støre, "NATO trykker global sikkerhet" *VG* (25.04.07).

²⁵⁷ Leira, "Folket og freden," 157.

possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not”, one could also say that the Nobel Committee and the peace prize is simultaneously constructed as both independent from, and connected to, the state. The ‘state’ seems unable to decide whether they are “within the competencies of the state” or not. The reason, which is elaborated in the next chapter, is that these two institutions provide Norway and Norwegians with an identity with which they can recognize their own place in the world.²⁵⁸ If the prize was in fact to become independent, it would be a tragedy.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that applying the concept of ISA is a fruitful way of analysing the Nobel system. The discussion has suggested that state and society never can be delineated categorically, and that states increasingly govern *through* society, making such a distinction even more difficult to make. Chapter 2 focused on how the borders between the state and the Nobel Committee has been drawn, challenged and redrawn through 115 years of history. This chapter has outlined how one can situate the debate about the independence of the Nobel Committee in theories of the state, and it has shown that all the while an objective delineation of state and society is not possible, and while practices and discourse connect the peace prize to the state rather than distance it, it is most fruitful to view the Nobel system as part of a ‘peace ISA’. Chapter 4 will elaborate on this view, as it lays out how the prize sets Norway apart internationally, and by implication how the peace prize can be seen as a part of foreign policy.

²⁵⁸Foucault, “Governmentality,” 143.

4. IDENTITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND STATUS

“Norway, as the awardee of the Nobel Peace Prize, has a particular commitment, as well as a particular interest, to promote the cause of peace.”²⁵⁹

“In a globalised world, with increased international competition, a distinct national identity becomes ever more important. Not just to attract attention, but to differentiate oneself from other actors in the areas of politics, business and culture.”²⁶⁰

4.0. Introduction

Globalization can be seen as having two effects which are particularly relevant for this thesis. One is that the state to a larger and larger extent governs through other agents. Instead of governing directly, it governs indirectly.²⁶¹ This is why governmentality is increasingly useful as a concept to understand politics. It also implies that defining state and society is even more difficult in the contemporary era than it has been earlier, which also is evident in how foreign policy is shaped:

The boundary between state and society has been subject to repeated renegotiations, and over the last two decades it has seemed to be on the verge of crumbling. Increasingly, and in ever more ways, states are engaging civil societies, domestic and foreign, in discussions about foreign policy and the pursuit of foreign policy. States now interact with a host of different entities outside of their borders, such interaction take place across the state ministries and agencies, and the alleged conflation of domestic and foreign policies have become accepted even in general discourse...²⁶²

This also affects foreign policy in other ways, because states are *perceived* as their overall image from without. Foreign policy is thus not only that which is formulated in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and conveyed by diplomats and ministers, it is also what is perceived about a state through all its symbols, brands, popular culture, and the personality of its leader through global media coverage and increased travel. That is the second effect of globalization which is relevant here: the world has become smaller; more information reaches out to more people.²⁶³ Brands and branding have become more important within the foreign ministries as well as elsewhere.

In the previous chapters I have related the Nobel Committee and the Nobel Peace Prize to theories of the state, and investigated whether they can be seen as part of state or society. In light of the practices and discourses of Parliament and other central political representatives I have concluded that the committee and the prize is so closely connected to

²⁵⁹ King Haakon quoted in Reinar, “Lille land – hva da?” 102.

²⁶⁰ Report of ‘Omdømmeutvalget’, “Nyskapende i samspill med naturen” (2006), 4.

²⁶¹ Neumann & Sending, *Governing the Global Polity*.

²⁶² Halvard Leira, “The Emergence of Foreign Policy: Knowledge, Discourse, History,” (Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo), 2.

²⁶³ Iver B. Neumann, “Globalization and Diplomacy,” Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (Working Paper 724, 2007).

the state that it cannot be seen as independent. What I am going to delve into in this chapter is how the Nobel Peace Prize functions in the foreign policy construction of Norway, and how it can be seen as something which gives Norway status and ‘puts Norway on the map’. This chapter in this way gives a broader view of how the peace ISA functions in Norway, through identity, foreign policy and status seeking.

Fareed Zakaria has written that “foreign policy is a matter of costs and benefits, not theology.”²⁶⁴ While this is how foreign policy is often understood both by theorists and actors themselves, one cannot escape ‘theology’ in reality. Foreign policy is always formulated within a broader system of beliefs and values. Within the understanding of foreign policy employed here, the act of branding the state is always deeply connected to the state’s identity. Foreign policy is not a tool that is simply used outside the boundaries; it is involved in constructing identity as well as representing it.²⁶⁵ We have in previous chapters established that the Nobel Peace Prize has been a very important part of Norwegian identity since Parliament was requested to take responsibility for electing the Nobel Committee in 1897. When they accepted the task, it was largely seen as an honour for the nation, and a reward of the Parliament’s peace work. It happened at a crucial point in Norwegian history, which gave the peace prize even more symbolic value for Norway as an independent state. In addition, it has through more than 115 years of history become more generally related to what Norway is. Norway is a ‘peace nation’, it sets itself apart by being a ‘good power’, by donating large sums of money to development, and by facilitating peace and reconciliation processes around the world. The peace prize can be seen as the cherry on top of Norwegian foreign policy.²⁶⁶ In short, it is an invaluable ‘foreign policy tool’ (although it can cause problems in the foreign ministry as well as ease their work), a *diakritikon* which marks Norway as different, and something which confirms and upholds Norwegian identity.²⁶⁷ As such it is also something

²⁶⁴ Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, (London: Penguin, 2009), 224 (footnote). See also Hallvard Kvale Svenbalrud, “Foundation and Ornament: The United Nations as ‘Cornerstone of Norwegian Foreign Policy,’ 1970-2005” (University of Oslo, 2012), 9.

²⁶⁵ See Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (New York: Routledge, 2006); David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Leira et al., “Norske selvbilder”; and Maja Zehfuss, “Constructivism and identity: a dangerous liaison” in *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and his Critics*, eds. Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (London: Routledge, 2005). Hansen writes that “The conceptualization of foreign policy as a discursive practice implies that policy and identity are seen as ontologically interlinked: it is only through the discursive enactment of foreign policy (...) that identity comes into being, but this identity is at the same time constructed as the legitimization for the policy proposed.” 21.

²⁶⁶ And, in turn: «The Norwegian attitude toward world affairs is very much the Western European one, only more so ... Norway is the cherry on top of the European attitude.» U.S. Diplomat quoted in Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 39.

²⁶⁷ Neumann, *Mening, materialitet, makt*.

which gives Norway status. Mathias Brynildsen Reinart quotes the newspaper *Landsbladet*'s attitude to these questions in 1908:

There was a time when Norway made its rich contribution to world culture through the great poets' and artists' powerful works. That time has passed ... We must, then, look for another arena, if we are not going to completely become an insignificant outpost in the world. The peace cause is such an arena ... And Norway has through the Nobel Institute gained an opportunity and a duty like no other country. If the Institute continues to be led in the same good spirit as thus far, then it can be of gain not only to our country, but to the whole world.²⁶⁸

This chapter will argue that the Nobel Peace Prize effectively communicates Norway's place in the world. The prize also displays Norway as a *good power* in two senses: The prize emphasises Norway's moral authority and mission, and it displays Norway as a good partner in international politics.²⁶⁹ At its best it is every public relations professional's dream, and at its worst it creates diplomatic problems which no one can take responsibility for. Benjamin de Carvalho and Iver B. Neumann write about status that it "quite literally locates a state on the political map of the world. Status seeking is, therefore, a sub-category of state identity politics. As elaborated at length by scholars of nationalism and republicanism, state identity holds out narratives to members of political entities about who they are."²⁷⁰ The previous chapters have shown that both practices and discourse have often emphasized a connection between the prize and Norway instead of a distinction, despite attempts to convince the rest of the world, and particularly the Chinese authorities, that there is no connection. This can even be said about the prizes awarded in the last years. My explanation for this paradoxical behaviour is that the Norwegian government is trying to balance two seemingly contradictory goals: To separate Norwegian politics and foreign policy in particular, from the prize and the committee, while keeping the prize as Norwegian as possible.

I will first establish what it means to say that Norway is a peace nation. I will then look at how Norwegian foreign policy is deeply connected to the peace prize, and conclude by pointing to reasons why this is the case, namely identity and status. The following will thus give the broader framework for the peace ISA, the goal being to explain *why* it is so important for Norwegian political representatives to keep the prize close. The Norwegian identity as a nation promoting peace and development fits well with the task Alfred Nobel gave the Norwegian parliament. Even if it varies how the peace prize is received, and how it affects Norway's status internationally, it is a yearly possibility for Norway to display itself on the world stage. Not only that, it is a possibility to display Norway as a nation for peace.

²⁶⁸ Reinart, "Lille land – hva da?" iii.

²⁶⁹ Benjamin de Carvalho & Iver B. Neumann (forthcoming).

²⁷⁰ Benjamin de Carvalho & Iver B. Neumann (forthcoming).

4.1. Identity: a peace nation

Like all other states, Norway has different self-conceptions which mirror the Norwegian identity. One can identify three overarching self-conceptions: Norway as an outsider state, as an altruistic state, and as a loyal trans-Atlantic partner.²⁷¹ These self-images are neither clearly defined nor completely agreed upon; on the contrary their contents will be constituted through continual change and “internal battles of definition.”²⁷² The conception of Norway as an altruistic state is probably the oldest self-image.²⁷³ Halvard Leira dates the peace tradition back to the 1890s when one gradually began viewing the Norwegian people as particularly prone to be peaceful.²⁷⁴ The famous statement by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson that Norway should have a foreign ministry without foreign policy mirrors the thought that Norway should promote arbitration and negotiation as peaceful solutions to conflict as a main component of its foreign policy.²⁷⁵ Leira points out that the Norwegian involvement in the work for peace was a *doxa* when the new foreign ministry was established after Norway gained independence. A *doxa* is something which is taken for granted, it is so obvious that it is the very basis of politics. It is “therefore not up for debate but functions on a subconscious level.”²⁷⁶ Thus, when Parliament discussed what the new foreign ministry should do in 1906, one of the representatives said: “I think that the peace cause and business interests should be the first priorities, and after that political issues.”²⁷⁷ Leira notes that it is not that surprising that business interests were not seen as political in this age of free trade, but that peace work was not seen as political reveals how this *doxa* functioned.²⁷⁸

A whole range of ‘causal’ factors have been identified – both by actors and analysts – as to why the Norwegian people is particularly peace loving; from biology, history and culture, to more *realpolitik* based explanations such as the possibilities and needs of small states, especially a small state that borders on Russia. The very independence of Norway was linked to the peace cause, because working for peace was the best defence. Leira quotes former Foreign Minister Halvdan Koht, who said that “There was ... a close correlation between the cause of independence and the cause of peace, both in thought and in real life; for both had emerged out of the people’s claim for justice, and with both the intention was to

²⁷¹ Leira et al. “Norske selvbilder,” 37.

²⁷² Leira et al. “Norske selvbilder,” 9-10.

²⁷³ Leira et al. “Norske selvbilder,” 11.

²⁷⁴ Leira, “Folket og freden”.

²⁷⁵ Quoted in Leira, “Folket og freden,” 139.

²⁷⁶ Leira, “Folket og freden,” 140.

²⁷⁷ In Leira, “Folket og freden,” 140.

²⁷⁸ Leira, “Folket og freden,” 140.

safeguard Norway from all politics that did not promote peace.”²⁷⁹ Fridtjof Nansen has been one of the symbols of, and a way of anchoring, both the notion of a Norwegian peace tradition and concrete peace and development politics. He was referred to by the political elite especially in the 1990s.²⁸⁰ One of the top level diplomats of this period, Jan Egeland, saw Nansen as a guiding star for what Norwegian foreign policy should be. Former Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik said in a speech that “Fridtjof Nansen became a symbol of the Norwegian humanitarian tradition and work for peace [...] He is a source of inspiration to us all. Today we seek to live up to his example.”²⁸¹ The peace prize is another of these symbols.

Helge Pharo writes that it is problematic to identify a clear peace tradition in practice from 1904 to 1940, “if we by that mean official Norwegian politics which actively sought to promote a more just and peaceful world order.”²⁸² He points out that research shows that there were also elements of moralism and *realpolitik*, and that the Norwegian promotion of an international system based in international law and multilateralism was cost-free and did not demand sacrifices from the Norwegian side.²⁸³ But, as a rhetorical device, as a tradition which is claimed to exist and which is used to justify and legitimate Norwegian foreign policy, the peace tradition certainly exists.²⁸⁴

Identity is in continuous flux, and a subject for constant redefinition, “never given, received or attained.”²⁸⁵ One can therefore not simply define or delineate it. When we none the less can say that the Norwegian identity as a peace nation exists, it is because it is confirmed in political discourse and practice. In domestic and foreign policy discourse the peace tradition is very much alive, and it has been to varying degrees in more than hundred years. The claim that Norway is a ‘peace nation’ is systematically confirmed in statements by government representatives. The end of the Cold War made Norway less interesting internationally as the geopolitical situation gradually changed. The ‘activist’ peace and reconciliation efforts in this period can be seen as a way for Norway to become more interesting in international politics.²⁸⁶ The Norwegian people’s view on the peace nation was

²⁷⁹ Leira “Folket og freden,” 139.

²⁸⁰ Carl Emil “Fridtjof Nansen og fredstradisjonen” *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 84, 2 (2005): 276.

²⁸¹ Vogt, “Fridtjof Nansen og fredstradisjonen,” 276.

²⁸² Helge Pharo, “Den norske fredstradisjonen – et forskningsprosjekt,” *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 84, 2 (2005): 245.

²⁸³ Pharo, “Den norske fredstradisjonen,” 245.

²⁸⁴ Pharo, “Den norske fredstradisjonen,” 240.

²⁸⁵ Jaques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the other, or: the Prothesis of Origin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 28.

²⁸⁶ Torgeir Larsen, “Norsk utenrikspolitikk 100 år etter – tilbake til start?” *Internasjonal politikk*, 63, 2/3 (2005): 246.

documented in connection to the centennial celebration of Norwegian independence, when 92% agreed that Norway is “a rich nation which shares its resources with others through humanitarian efforts and peace work.”²⁸⁷ There are conflicting conclusions on how alive this tradition is seen from the outside, however. Pharo writes that: “Nationally, as internationally, the peace tradition is connected to elements such as the peaceful resolution of the union, the fact that the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in Norway, Nansen’s humanitarian efforts after the First World War, and to the Norwegian involvement in arbitration from the end of the 19th century.”²⁸⁸ Pharo writes that he has gained this knowledge through conversations at home and abroad in his capacity as advisor to the Norwegian Nobel Committee since 1978.²⁸⁹ While Leira points to a questionnaire used in eight European countries in 2004, when the statement about Norway as a rich nation which shares through involvement in peace work was the one least associated with Norway.²⁹⁰

As Pharo writes the Nobel Peace Prize is one of the symbols which bring life to the Norwegian identity as a peace nation. This is also clear in the way former Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik talks of the prize: “To me it is a vision that Norway will be a nation promoting peace. I see the awarding of the Nobel peace prize, which takes place each year here in Oslo, as a powerful reminder of the importance of international peace efforts. The peace prize demands commitment from the nation which hosts it.”²⁹¹ In this way, Norway and the peace prize become inseparable as it is used to construct and uphold Norwegian identity. Under the current administration one has toned down the notion of Norway as a humanitarian superpower, but the notion of the peace nation and the policy of engagement have not been abandoned. The Stoltenberg administration’s first platform for political cooperation in 2005 stated that “Norway shall be a distinct peace nation.”²⁹² In the White Paper on foreign policy 2008-2009 it is stated that “The policy of engagement is first and foremost motivated by altruism. It is based on core moral principles and values that underlie Norwegian society.”²⁹³ To uphold an international order, where right trumps might is still very much in Norway’s interest. And these policies have also been important for Norway’s international status. Leira

²⁸⁷ NTB, “Vi ser oss som rik, humanitær fredsnaasjon”.

²⁸⁸ Pharo, “Den norske fredstradisjonen,” 240.

²⁸⁹ Pharo, “Den norske fredstradisjonen,” footnote 4.

²⁹⁰ Leira, “Folket og freden,” footnote 2.

²⁹¹ Kjell Magne Bondevik, Speech at Bergenskongressen (25.01.04). Retrieved 16.12.12.

http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringen-Bondevik-II/smk/Taler-og-artikler-arkivert-individuelt/2004/bergenskongressen_2004.html?id=268003.

²⁹² Soria Moria-erklæringen (2005) Retrieved 16.12.12.

http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/SMK/Vedlegg/2005/regjeringsplattform_SoriaMoria.pdf.

²⁹³ Report No. 15 (2008-2009) to Parliament, “Interests, Responsibilities and Opportunities,” Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 112.

writes that “Norway has been altruistically attempting to make the world more peaceful, but status has not been solely a by-product of these processes. On the contrary, the status of being a do-gooder has been eagerly sought by Norwegian politicians, seeing this as an area where Norway could make its mark and stay continuously relevant.”²⁹⁴

4.2. Foreign policy

Foreign policy has commonly been understood as “The strategy or approach chosen by the national government to achieve its goals in its relations with external entities.”²⁹⁵ Trying to bridge understanding of the anarchical system and the chaotic inside of states, it has been a rather difficult task to systematize the analysis of foreign policy. As we have seen, a state is not one actor, but many. Even one of the “founders” of the study of foreign policy, James N. Rosenau, admits that “... insofar as its ... independent variables are concerned, the scope of the field is boundless.”²⁹⁶ Despite this acknowledgement of the boundless factors influencing foreign policy, the state will still, by many, be seen as one entity. In *Writing Security* David Campbell asked: “How was it that we (...) came to understand foreign policy as the external deployment of instrumental reason on behalf of an unproblematic internal identity situated in an anarchic realm of necessity?”²⁹⁷ His answer was the dominance of realism as a theory of International Relations. Although realism is not a theory for analysing foreign policy as it does not look inside the state, it had none the less provided the framework for foreign policy analysis. Even though the tenants of realism and its view of the state as a unitary, rational actor have been thoroughly criticised, the state is still referred to as a unit which “decides”, has emotions and opinions, talks and acts, as was established in chapter 3. One example is Jonas Gahr Støre’s statement that “When China says that the relationship between the two countries will not be the same, it is a serious situation.”²⁹⁸ Nations have famously been named ‘imagined communities.’ This also applies to how a state is conceived and constructed, internally as well as externally. This construction does not happen in an orderly fashion. One must look at discourse and practice to map how these processes happen, in this case how the Nobel Committee and the peace prize is talked about, and how the practice of important actors shape the understanding of ‘everything Nobel.’

²⁹⁴ Halvard Leira, forthcoming.

²⁹⁵ Valerie M. Hudson, “The history and evolution of foreign policy analysis” in *Foreign Policy: Theories, actors, cases*, eds. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.

²⁹⁶ In David Campbell, *Writing Security*, 39.

²⁹⁷ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 37.

²⁹⁸ *Klassekampen*, “Støre beklager Kinas reaksjon” (16.10.10).

My argument here is that the peace prize is interlinked with Norwegian identity and Norwegian foreign policy. The link with foreign policy consists both in that the peace prize is important for Norwegian status and image (next section) and because it functions in a specific way in politics. To legitimate this statement we can look at what Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg has said when he has met with some of the laureates during his two terms. In 2007, Stoltenberg met with Al Gore who won for his efforts to prevent global warming. In the meeting the two talked about capturing and storing CO₂, which has been an important topic for Stoltenberg both in domestic and international politics: “I am glad that Al Gore expressed his faith in storage of CO₂, and that he will be an ambassador for the technology which Norway contributes to develop.” He also presented to Al Gore Norway’s commitment to establish a fund in the fight against deforestation.²⁹⁹ The meeting with President Barack Obama in 2009 has already been touched upon in chapter 2. In advance of the meeting, Stoltenberg said “I think it is important to meet the President of the United States. It has been useful and pleasurable to meet him earlier during the NATO summit and in the UN General Assembly. It is striking to meet him in Oslo and be able to discuss important questions for Norway, the USA and the world.”³⁰⁰ At the press conference after the meeting, with around 85 journalists from Norway and abroad, Obama said that they had discussed climate change: “The Norwegian effort to stop deforestation in Brazil, which Stoltenberg is a champion of, is important. The Prime Minister and I also talked about how we will continue to work for better health care around the world.”³⁰¹ The number of journalists is also interesting because it is one of the Foreign Ministry’s stated goals to bring more journalists to Norway. In a report on the promotion of Norway’s reputation abroad in 2011 it was stated that “About 300 foreign journalists from 30 countries visited Norway as a consequence of contact with the embassies or special invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”³⁰²

Earlier this year Aung San Suu Kyi could finally deliver her Nobel lecture in Oslo. She also met with the Prime Minister, and in the report of the meeting on the administration’s web pages, the event was linked was to the fact that

Norway has supported the democracy movement in Myanmar since Aung San Suu Kyi won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. During the last few years there has been an ever closer dialog with the country’s authorities ... On request from Myanmar’s authorities, Norway now leads an international initiative

²⁹⁹ Office of the Prime Minister, “Statsministeren møtte fredsprisvinner Al Gore.” Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/smk/aktuelt/nyheter/2007/statsministeren-motte-fredsprisvinner-al.html?id=493797>.

³⁰⁰ Nettavisen.no, “Jens, this is spectacular!” Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/article2777714.ece>.

³⁰¹ Nettavisen.no, “Skjønner hvorfor nordmenn dro til Minnesota.” Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/article2777775.ece>.

³⁰² Proposition 1 S 2012-2013, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 59.

which supports efforts to build trust in those areas of the country where ceasefire agreements have recently been signed...³⁰³

Diplomacy can be seen as having three key functions: information gathering, negotiation and communication.³⁰⁴ The examples above show that the Nobel Peace Prize has as one of its effects that it brings important people to Norway, and while they are here, there is often a large international audience following their visit in the media and online. It would be silly of the Norwegian government not to take advantage of these opportunities to communicate Norway's stances and to advertise Norway's efforts in different areas. It is a yearly opportunity to communicate to a large audience what Norway stands for. This year's award ceremony has been spectacular in this respect. Almost all of the important political and institutional leaders in the EU came to Oslo. Stoltenberg hosted a lunch with the EU-representatives and state leaders, and also had some bilateral meetings. NRK could report that Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti was one of the leaders Stoltenberg met with, and that he afterwards said that: "It has been an honour and a pleasure to be here today. I am grateful that Norway has invited [us] to this unforgettable day."³⁰⁵ During Stoltenberg's meetings with Jose Manuell Barroso, president in the European Commission and Martin Schultz, president in the European Parliament he said that "We support the EU's efforts to further European solidarity and economic growth. Positive economic development for our most important trading partner is very important for Norway."³⁰⁶ This year's award in other words nicely illustrated how the prize is used politically when there is room for it. It also illustrated the potential the prize has for promoting Norway and Norwegian foreign policy. As the Norwegian daily *Adresseavisen* commented "For Norway the awarding of the prize in itself has the effect that we for the first time are arranging a summit with 20 EU leaders...Jens Stoltenberg's speech to the EU leaders yesterday could be interpreted as [signs of] a dangerously close connection between Parliament, cabinet and Nobel."³⁰⁷ Foreign policy

³⁰³ Office of the Prime Minister, "Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi in Norway." Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/smk/presesenter/pressemeldinger/2012/fredsprisvinner-aung-san-suu-kyi-i-norge.html?id=685927>.

³⁰⁴ Neumann, "Globalisation and Diplomacy," 12.

³⁰⁵ NRK, "20 EU-ledere i arbeidslunsj." Retrieved 12.12.12.

http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/nobels_fredspris/1.10475239

³⁰⁶ Office of the Prime Minister, "Stoltenberg met Barroso and Schultz." Retrieved 12.12.12.

<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/smk/aktuelt/nyheter/2012/stoltenberg-motte-barroso-og-schulz.html?id=709622>.

³⁰⁷ *Adresseavisen*, "Første EU-toppmøte i nei-landet" (11.12.12.)

involves the whole range of expressions of a country, and the ways of communicating them, and the Nobel Peace Prize is one such expression.³⁰⁸

4.3. Public diplomacy and status

The last years have clearly shown the importance of image and status in international relations. The two largest powers, USA and China, have both reacted to what is seemingly perceived as humiliation. The former has reacted to so-called cables from embassies all over the world published by Wikileaks, and the latter to the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize. Both have taken severe measures to stop and shut down what is hurting their image internationally. Freedom of speech and the freedom of the internet can be seen as central in both instances.³⁰⁹ Peter van Han has commented on “The postmodern politics of image and reputation.”³¹⁰ He sees an increased importance for state image and the effects this has on which states are offered membership in NATO and the EU. In national politics brands are used in campaigns, as for instance in Great Britain where “Rule Britannia” became “Cool Britannia” under Tony Blair. Van Han sees a “shift in political paradigms”, away from what realist scholars emphasize when analysing international politics:

Hard-nosed security analysts will argue that a state’s image is irrelevant ... They claim that reducing Europe’s security to a “beauty pageant” oversimplifies a complicated geostrategic process. But if things were as straightforward as these analysts claim, political life would be eerily transparent and predictable. Why would we assume that the public readily buys into the seductive meanings of consumer capitalism but remains rational and objective when making political decisions?³¹¹

Impressions of a state can in this way be seen as more than planned foreign policy and foreign policy as more than the rational maximizing of power. Globalisation has led to some changes in the way states communicate who they are. Public diplomacy is something which has received more academic attention over the last years, but that does not mean it is a new phenomenon. As Jonathan Cull writes public diplomacy is not a new practice in the history of foreign policy, but it has become more prominent “with the increased role of the public in the affairs of state and the proliferation of mechanisms for communication.”³¹² Instead many scholars thus speak of a ‘new public diplomacy’ emerging after the bipolar Cold War,

³⁰⁸ The Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter* initiated a survey of how frequently the six Nobel Prizes were mentioned on more than 180 000 online news sites and 250 million social media sources in 2011. The Nobel Peace Prize was by far the most mentioned. It appeared in 18 841 new articles online and was mentioned 26 549 times on social media. *Dagens Nyheter*, “Litteraturpriset bara tredje största Nobelpriset 2011” (26.10.11.) Retrieved 14.12.12. <http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/litteraturpriset-tredje-storsta-nobelpriset>.

³⁰⁹ *Dagens Näringsliv*, “Frihetens pris” (11.12.10)

³¹⁰ Peter van Han, “The Rise of the Brand State” in *Foreign Affairs* September/October 2001: 2-3.

³¹¹ van Han, “The rise of the brand state,” 4-5.

³¹² Nicholas J. Cull, “Public diplomacy: Seven lessons for its future from its past” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6 (2010): 12.

because of the growing number of non-state actors in international politics, the development of “global digital and real-time technologies, which has blurred the lines between the domestic and international news spheres; and the rise of theoretical models derived from marketing, such as ‘place branding.’”³¹³ The most important change, according to Cull, is that the new technologies have enabled people to communicate directly with each other, which means that foreign policy and public diplomacy is less centralized than it used to be. The agenda is to a larger extent set by others than those high up in the foreign ministry.³¹⁴ As Cull writes, “Government-sponsored messages are only one mechanism by which to communicate across frontiers today. Opinion is also built by the direct experience of individuals meeting in cyberspace or in the real world.”³¹⁵ Iver B. Neumann writes points to another group when he writes that journalists are the “principle composers of globalization.” Today it is the foreign ministries which must cater to the journalists, instead of the other way around.³¹⁶ State officials have to conduct image management both internally as well as externally. A telling case which exemplifies this is that the Norwegian ambassador to the US in 2003 had to prevent the State Department and President George W. Bush from praising Norway’s bombing efforts in Afghanistan.³¹⁷ Ambassador Knut Vollebæk explained that in the Norwegian political environment, such praise would not be welcome and it would probably have caused problems for the Norwegian government.

Public diplomacy is closely connected to status seeking, as it covers all kinds of efforts to attract favorable attention to one’s state. Cull quotes Confucius, who wrote more than 2500 years ago that Emperors could attract others by being virtuous: “it is for this reason that when distant subjects are unsubmissive one cultivates one’s moral quality in order to attract them.”³¹⁸ This way of thinking is also presented by Joseph Nye through his concept of soft power,³¹⁹ which

...rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. At the personal level, we all know the power of attraction and seduction. Political leaders have long understood the power that comes from setting the agenda and determining the framework of a debate ... The ability to establish preferences tends to be

³¹³ Cull, “Public diplomacy,” 15.

³¹⁴ Neumann, “Globalisation and diplomacy”; Cull, “Public diplomacy,” 15.

³¹⁵ Cull, “Public diplomacy,” 16.

³¹⁶ Neumann, “Globalisation and Diplomacy,” 9.

³¹⁷ TV2, “George bush ville skryte av bombing – ble stanset av norske myndigheter.” Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.tv2.no/nyheter/utenriks/afghanistan/george-bush-ville-skryte-av-norsk-bombing-ble-stanset-av-norske-myndigheter-3636567.html>.

³¹⁸ Cull, “Public diplomacy,” 13.

³¹⁹ Cull, “Public diplomacy,” 13. Joseph Nye points out that soft power “is an analytical term, not a political slogan” but in any case it has been adopted by the actors. In Ali Fisher, “Music for the Jilted Generation: Open-Source Public Diplomacy” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 3 (2008): 3.

associated with intangible assets such as an attractive personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or as having moral authority.³²⁰

For Norway, being a small state in terms of population and defense capabilities, but a middle power or even great power in terms of wealth and access to the Arctic (which becomes steadily more important in international politics), it is important to exert moral authority. From the very first discussions on Norwegian foreign policy in 1905 until today, there has been agreement that it is in Norway's interest to uphold an international society based on rules and regulations. As Nye writes the rationality of employing soft power is that "If I can get you to do what I want, then I don't have to force you to do what you do *not* want."³²¹ In Norway's case, which doesn't have the power to force anyone to do anything, it is important to radiate a status as a moral power both because it is in Norway's interest that 'morals' is appreciated in international relations, and because this is how Norway gets a 'seat at the table' and gets noticed by the greater powers.

Status has been an understudied topic in international relations, and has been overlooked by the dominant theoretical approaches.³²² Recently, however, the concept has been given more attention.³²³ Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko draw on social identity theory (SIT) to bring status into both global governance research and understandings of state action. They find that "Status-seeking actions can be largely symbolic and aimed at influencing others' perceptions, as distinguished from the search for raw material power."³²⁴ Traditional status goals and indicators are state visits or summits, but events such as hosting the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games are also important: "hosting the Olympic Games has traditionally been an indicator of rising power status, as illustrated by Russian President Vladimir Putin's remark that being awarded the 2014 Winter Olympics was a 'judgement of our country,' and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's tearful exclamation that Rio de Janeiro's selection meant that Brazil had gone from being a second-class to a first-class country and was now beginning to 'receive the respect we deserve.'³²⁵ In time for the Olympics in London this year, the British government established a new strategy for branding

³²⁰ Joseph Nye, "Soft Power and Public Diplomacy," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, 94 (2008): 95.

³²¹ Nye, "Soft Power and public Diplomacy," 95.

³²² Deborah Welch Larson & Alexei Shevchenko "Status Seekers. Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy" *International Security*, 34, 4 (2010): 66.

³²³ Deborah Larson, T. V. Paul & William Wohlforth, "Beyond American Hegemony: Rising Powers, Status, and the World Order" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association Annual Conference 2011; Reinhard Wolf, "Respect and disrespect in international politics: the significance of status recognition," *International Theory* 3, 1 (2011); David Malone, "Eye on the Prize: The Quest for Nonpermanent Seats on the UN Security Council," *Global Governance* 6, 1 (2000).

³²⁴ Larson & Shevchenko, "Status seekers," 69-70.

³²⁵ Larson & Shevchenko, "Status seekers," 69-70.

the nation: “We’re determined to make the most of the once-in-a-generation opportunity the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games give us to promote the UK abroad and help deliver long-term economic and tourism benefits at home.”³²⁶

Iver B. Neumann has written that “Every social practice has its aesthetics. Any diplomacy or politics needs an aesthetics, preferably a sublime one that can make sense of the unintelligible stranger and that can make the chaos of one’s relations with the stranger look like parts of one’s cosmos.”³²⁷ The sublime is something which is “of the most exalted kind, so distinguished by elevation or size or nobility or grandeur or other impressive quality as to inspire awe or wonder, aloof from and raised far above the ordinary.”³²⁸ Certainly this description fits the Nobel Peace Prize which is the most distinguished international prize with corresponding rituals – a Royal audience, an award ceremony, a formal banquet and a concert with international names. The Nobel Peace Prize can in this way be seen as sublime diplomacy, and can, as hosting the Olympics, be seen as an opportunity for Norway to display itself on the world scene.

4.3.1. Perceptions of Norway

Former minister of environment and of international development, Erik Solheim, has experienced that Norway’s image abroad comes in many shapes and forms. And at the same time, “not many Chinese or Indians associate anything with Norway.”³²⁹ The branding and public diplomacy writer Mark Leonard has written about Norway that its

international footprint is relatively small. It is a small country of under 5 million people. Although a member of NATO, it is not a member of the EU. This leaves it on the fringe of European decision-making on many issues which have a direct effect upon it. In addition to this initial unpromising position, it lacks many of the features that have helped other small countries have an impact on the world stage.³³⁰

Its language is only spoken by Norwegians, it is not a country which is central because of its geographical location, it lacks strong international brands or international companies, and it does not have a popular culture which exports well, lists Leonard. “Prima facie, therefore, Norway should have difficulty gaining an international profile.”³³¹ But Leonard finds that

³²⁶ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, “Prime Minister unveils GREAT campaign for UK growth.” Retrieved 08.12.12. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/news/2011/september/pm-great-launch-210911>.

³²⁷ Iver B. Neumann, “Sublime Diplomacy: Byzantine, Early Modern, Contemporary,” *Netherlands Institute of International Relations* (2005): 23.

³²⁸ Concise Oxford Dictionary quoted in Neumann, “Sublime Diplomacy,” 1.

³²⁹ *Aftenposten*, “-Vi skal ikke overdrive vårt omdømme som fredsnasjon” (29.11.12.) Retrieved 29.11.12. <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/--Vi-skal-ikke-overdrive-vart-omdomme-som-fredsnasjon-7057657.html>.

³³⁰ Mark Leonard, *Public Diplomacy* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002), 169.

³³¹ Leonard, *Public Diplomacy*, 169.

Norway has done remarkably well, considering the country's unpromising starting point: "Yet, Norway has a voice and presence on the international stage out of proportion to its modest position and unpromising assets. It has achieved this presence through aggressive pursuit of niche public diplomacy, and a ruthless prioritisation of its target audiences. Norway's concentration on a single message – Norway as a force for peace in the world..." has given Norway a clear identity.³³² Leonard sees Norway's prime goal in securing international visibility around the issue of peace and conflict prevention as twofold. Firstly, it allows Norway to gain a general profile it might not already have which is beneficial to the country in broad terms. More specifically though, Norway's reputation in conflict resolution ensures that it is regarded as "relevant in multilateral forums, and by other important international players, and this affords it influence on this issue."³³³

There has been a lot of focus from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on how Norway's image and reputation can be improved over the last years. Not surprisingly, one of the commissioned reports found that not many people knew much about Norway at all, or were able to separate it from the rest of Scandinavia. But among "opinion formers" it is generally known that Norway actively supports the UN and that it donates generously to promote development. In addition, "Norway's preparedness to engage in peace diplomacy and generally to promote peace is known among many opinion formers. The Nobel Peace Prize is the most visible single element of this, but other initiatives and contributions are mentioned by different respondents."³³⁴ Here the peace prize is explicitly mentioned as one of the impressions of Norway as engaged in peace efforts. The relative success of the "niche diplomacy" is also mirrored in what *The Washington Diplomat* writes under the heading "Norway, the International Citizen": "If the international community were to confer a good citizenship award each year, Norway would have more than its share of gold medals. Especially since the end of the Second World War, Norway has been widely regarded as one of a handful of countries that consistently acts with generosity and broad mindedness in international affairs."³³⁵ It further mentions Norway's work in and for the United Nations, contributions of forces to peacekeeping missions, generous development aid, adherence to international law and efforts to resolve conflicts around the world as reasons for this positive description of Norway.

³³² Leonard, *Public Diplomacy*, 169-70.

³³³ Leonard, *Public Diplomacy*, 169-70.

³³⁴ Synovate, "Improving Norway's reputation," (2009): 19.

³³⁵ John Shaw, "Norway, the International Citizen," *The Washington Diplomat* (August 2001).

This leads to the (rhetorical) question: how can the Nobel Peace Prize be seen as a tool in public diplomacy and status seeking? First of all we have seen that it is closely connected to the other ways Norway seeks to be visible and gain status on the world stage, namely to the promotion of peace. It is also one of the elements of this promotion which is most widely recognized outside Norway's borders. Second, it gives Norway a yearly event, not in the size of the Olympics but still of some magnitude, which brings a lot of state leaders and foreign journalists to Norway, and which makes Norway world news each October and December. The Nobel Concert is for instance broadcasted internationally, and can potentially be watched by 350 million households in between 80 and 120 countries.³³⁶ And not only that, the awarding of the prize is an event which is often very well suited to express Norway's stances and politics on a range of issues, while the Olympics is not an arena for this kind of direct communication. There are objections to this view, obviously. Seen from China, the 2010 prize certainly did not enhance Norway's status. It has also been negative in terms of dampening bilateral relations with a rising power and the world's largest market. This is also why, when the 2010 prize was announced, the twitter update from one advisor in the foreign ministry read: «Are we biting our nails here at the MFA? Not at all.»³³⁷ Seen from elsewhere, however, the 2010 prize enhanced Norway's status as a moral power. It was also in line with another part of foreign policy, the human rights dialogues with China.

One could also object that the peace prize has nothing to do with official Norwegian politics, but hopefully the previous chapters have shown that such a line is difficult to draw. And even though it is not handed out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Some of the most effective cases of public diplomacy are when the state steps back or empowers others to tell their story." Cull claims that "Britain's highly successful public diplomacy towards the neutral United States, before Pearl Harbour, rested in the first instance on assisting American journalists to cover the war from London."³³⁸ The way foreign policy has developed and with the distinction between state and society becoming increasingly blurred, the Nobel Peace Prize too can be seen as foreign policy.

4.4. Conclusion

Foreign policy is no longer the exclusive domain of diplomats and ministers. In a report on Norway's reputation from 2009 one reads the following: "The Norwegian Film industry is not

³³⁶ NRK, "Disse skal lede Nobelkonserten," (16.11.12.) Retrieved 16.12.12. <http://www.nrk.no/kultur-og-underholdning/1.8399077>.

³³⁷ Dagbladet, "Om vi svette i UD nå? Neida" (08.10.2010).

³³⁸ Cull, "Public diplomacy," 14.

seen to be particularly dynamic or interesting – which is concerning, as this particular arena more than most is considered very effective in conveying rich cultural impressions of a country – both of national history and today’s society.”³³⁹ Similarly, former Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre called books translators ambassadors in an op-ed which celebrated the impact of books.³⁴⁰ Taking into account how the Nobel Peace Prize gives political opportunities and gives Norway a place on the world stage it seems obvious that the peace prize is one of the most important status tools Norway possesses. While other public diplomacy and status efforts are strategically planned, the same cannot be said about the peace prize. Its effects will vary from year to year, depending on who wins the prize and how much attention it receives. It can also have negative effects on foreign policy, as we have seen throughout its history. But in these cases, the values underlying foreign policy in general have been in line with the prize. So, while the administration does not control the prize, it can put it to good use through meetings and press conferences with the winner. The prizes to Obama and the EU stand out in this respect, because they bring the world’s most important people to Norway. Obama had not been in Norway before he received the prize and has not been here since, the same is true for most of those state leaders and leaders of EU institutions who have visited Norway this December.

³³⁹ Synovate, “Improving Norway’s reputation,” 21.

³⁴⁰ Jonas Gahr Støre, “Å møtes i bøkene” *VG* (18.03.11)

5. CONCLUSION

5.0. Conclusion

The starting point for this thesis was that a lot has been written about the Nobel Peace Prize and the Nobel Committee, but there are very few theorizations of these ‘institutions.’ In the context of an ongoing debate about the independence of the committee, it was natural to use theories of the state in this analysis.

In chapter 2 I showed how the Nobel Committee’s relation with the Norwegian state has changed throughout its history. I explicated how the boundary between the committee and the state has been drawn, challenged and redrawn on several occasions, thereby displaying the culturally and historically contingent boundary between state and society. In chapter 3 I asked: What is a state? How can we separate it from society? I asked these questions because any judgement on what kind of relationship the Nobel Committee has with the state must be able to answer them. However, the answers to these questions are many and disputed and my conclusions in these two chapters were several. First, anyone who claims the general independence of the Nobel Committee seems to build on a notion of the state as a presocial being – a fictitious person – and its representatives similarly elevated above the social realm. To simply define someone as independent by virtue of their role is not possible, however, which is also what the history of the Nobel Committee shows. I then established that the Nobel Committee and the Nobel Peace Prize can be seen as part of a ‘peace ideological state apparatus.’ This grows out of the concept of ISAs which Althusser developed, but with the refinement that I do not see it as a tool in the oppression of the people, but as the combination of identity and its institutionalization in state and society. In Norway, the peace prize is constructed as part of the Norwegian state through practices and discourse despite the fact that politicization of the prize is harmful both for Norwegian foreign policy and the prize itself. The reason why central actors do not seem to realize this fact is that the peace ISA is such a central part of what Norway is, and gives Norway a place in the world. Further, it is supported by the idea that the Parliament *is* the Norwegian people, not the Norwegian state. Within a governmentality approach state and society is not seen as categorically distinct, and state power is seen as working through civil institutions. In other words: “Once we see that the boundary between the state and civil society is itself an effect of power, then we can begin to conceptualize ‘the state’ within (and not automatically distinct from) other institutional forms.”³⁴¹

³⁴¹ Sharma & Gupta, “Introduction,” 9.

Althusser turned to ideology and ISAs because they in his view “could operate so as to preclude a capitalist crisis from becoming a transition to communism.”³⁴² What can be seen as the most drastic consequence of the peace ISA is not that it prevents such a transition, but that it affects the political deliberation on concepts such as war and peace. What the peace ISA interpellates in individuals is simply the Norwegian identity which involves a tautological logic that binds the Nobel Peace Prize to the whole concept of what Norway is and should be.

Even if it were possible to draw a general and clear division between state and society, there is reason to think that the Norwegian state-society divide is especially difficult to delineate within the area of *peace*. First, it could be argued that state and society in general is more difficult to separate in Norway than in other states. Norway is a small state when it comes to population, to repeat Jay Nordlinger: “Norwegian officialdom is a pretty small pond.”³⁴³ Historically, Norway never had nobility and a distinct and powerful upper class. Instead, government has always been more ‘of the people’ than in many other countries. The Parliament is seen not as a government apparatus but as an extension of the people.³⁴⁴ Foreign policy has always been based on consensus - it is and has been an outspoken goal that there should be large agreement on the main features of foreign policy.³⁴⁵ Additionally, society, through non-governmental organizations, has to a large extent been involved in peace and reconciliation efforts. Peace is and has been fundamental in the Norwegian self-conception and identity. As such, it is an area within which more is at stake for Norway than other fields. A final reason why it is especially difficult to separate state from society when it comes to the issue of peace is that it gives Norway status internationally.

5.0.1. Agents versus structures

One could always argue that the statements and practices I have related in the preceding chapters are only the result of individuals and their motivations and goals. The person Thorbjørn Jagland has obviously made his mark on the Nobel Peace Prize and how it is conceived. While we don’t know how much power the chairman of the committee has in the decision making process relative to the other members, we can say that other chairmen would have affected the committee differently than Jagland. But the context indicates that this is not only a question of individuals. We have seen that the Norwegian Parliament has kept the

³⁴² Wolf, “Ideological State Apparatuses,” 1.

³⁴³ Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 48.

³⁴⁴ Neumann, *Norge – en kritikk*.

³⁴⁵ Olav Riste, *Norway’s foreign relations* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2005).

committee as close as possible while accepting that propriety demands a certain distance. We have also seen that although the formal relationship between the cabinet and the committee has changed, the current administration connects the prize to Norwegian politics both by confirming that it is in line with the underlying values of politics, and by taking advantage of the attention the prize creates, and the important people it brings to Norway. The Bondevik administration underlined Norway's status as a peace nation even more fiercely than the current one, and the peace prize was one of the important symbols of this tradition. I am in this way not denying that individuals make a difference, after all only individuals act, but that within the area of peace too much is at stake for the Norwegian state to simply let the peace prize become 'independent.'

Alternatively to the approach employed here, I could have analysed the Nobel Committee and the Nobel Peace Prize as types of symbolic capital. By using the "thinking tools" of habitus, field and capital I could have made an analysis on the individual level³⁴⁶, which is what Reinart has done in his analysis of the early years of the Nobel Committee, up to 1905 when Norway became independent.³⁴⁷ The capital of the Nobel Committee enabled it to exercise symbolic power within the foreign policy field. Bourdieu defines symbolic power as: "a property which, because it responds to socially constituted 'collective expectations' and beliefs, exercises a sort of action from a distance, without physical contact."³⁴⁸ Because the Nobel Institute had established itself as an important part of the foreign policy field in the crucial period before 1905, it could exercise this power. "The peace prize spoke to its own audience", as Brynildsen Reinart writes. He points to Michael Barnett and Emanuel Adler who also employ an understanding of power which is similar to the power the Nobel Institute exercised: "the ability to create the underlying rules of the game, to define what constitutes acceptable play, and to be able to get other actors to commit to these rules because they are now part of their self-understandings is perhaps the most subtle and effective form of power." He concludes that "Once every year, the Nobel Committee could point the foreign policy compass towards what was important in international politics."³⁴⁹ Also Lundestad writes in his review of *The History of Norwegian Foreign Policy* that "The fact that the Norwegian Nobel Committee awards the Nobel Peace Prize has probably ... contributed to heighten the

³⁴⁶ Anna Leander, "Thinking Tools" in *Qualitative Methods In International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, eds. Audie Clotz & Deepa Prakash (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). 11-27

³⁴⁷ Reinart, "Lille land – hva da?"

³⁴⁸ Quoted in Reinart, "Lille land – hva da?" 102.

³⁴⁹ Reinart, "Lille land – hva da?" 84.

Norwegian level of ambition” in foreign policy.³⁵⁰ I would, in that case, argue that the peace prize still has symbolic power, and that it is part of the reason why it is difficult to speak of the committee as independent. What is different today is that the foreign ministry has become more powerful than the Nobel system. Today it is difficult to speak of the committee as independent because it is a part of a larger foreign policy consensus – it is a part of “the way Norway’s leaders think.”

Hans Morgenthau has written that «Politics is an art and not a science, and what is required for its mastery is not the rationality of the engineer but the wisdom and the moral strength of the statesman ... The age has tried to make politics a science. By doing so, it has demonstrated its intellectual confusion, moral blindness, and political decay.»³⁵¹ This statement can be interpreted as in line with the insistence that social phenomena such as politics should not be studied as if they were effects of gravity. But it seems to replace the law of gravitation with a moral law which the politician supposedly is guided by. This thesis supports the first implication, but remains sceptical as to what guides political representatives in their work. With both the importance of individuals and the findings from the previous chapters in mind I would rather turn to Max Weber, who writes about what it means to have politics as a vocation. He writes that the qualities which are most important for a politician to possess are passion, a sense of responsibility and a sense of proportion. To want power is a part of the vocation of politics – power is the means with which the politician works. But “the sin against the holy spirit of his profession” begins when he strives for power detached from the task at hand and it “becomes a matter of purely personal self-intoxication instead of being placed entirely at the service of the ‘cause’.”³⁵² The last quality, a sense of proportion, consequently consists of the

ability to maintain one’s inner composure and calm while being receptive to realities, in other words distance from things and people. A ‘lack of distance’, in and of itself, is one of the deadly sins for any politician ... Every day and every hour, therefore, the politician has to overcome a quite trivial, all-too-human enemy which threatens him from within: common *vanity*, the mortal enemy of all dedication to a cause and of all distance – in this case, distance to oneself.³⁵³

In the case of Norway ‘the cause’ and vanity seem to unite in the name of peace. At least Jay Nordlinger finds such reflections to be well suited to ‘the Norwegians’ when he writes “Then there is the question of moral arrogance, vanity: Are Norwegian officials and intellectuals prone to it? Sure ...Norwegians sometimes lecture, preach, and scold, in addition to guide.

³⁵⁰ Lundestad, “Lange linjer i norsk utenrikspolitikk,” 290-1.

³⁵¹ Hans Morgenthau in Patrick T. Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry*, 4.

³⁵² Max Weber, “The Vocation of Politics,” in *The Essential Weber*, ed. Sam Whimster (London: Routledge 2004), 258.

³⁵³ Weber, “The Vocation of Politics,” 258.

They relish their role – usually self-appointed, and in one case Nobel-appointed – of arbiter:
of judge of the world.”³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴ Nordlinger, *Peace, they say*, 39.

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