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International Peace Building: The Norwegian Model

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Abstract

As a dedicated peacemaker, Norway has carved a niche for itself internationally. Its role as a mediator and peacebuilder has gained this small country unique legitimacy and recognition. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to contribute to this hitherto neglected area by describing and analyzing Norway's methods of peacebuilding with reference to the underlying principles, enabling factors and practices on the ground. This study examines the factors which facilitate and motivate Norway's involvement in conflicts far away from its own backyard. Key characteristics of the 'Norwegian model' of peacemaking are also analysed with reference to Sri Lanka and the Israel/Palestine Oslo Channel. Within these case studies, successes and failures are highlighted to illustrate practice from theory. Hence, the goal is to assess whether Norwegian methods can be successful in producing a positive peace in war-torn regions, and if so, under what conditions the 'Norwegian model' is most likely to be productive.

Introduction

Over recent years, Norway has cultivated its international role as the 'facilitator.' Both the Norwegian government and non-governmental organisations, working in tandem, have been heavily involved in the field of conflict resolution since the early 1990's. Spheres of activity range from grassroots peacebuilding to state level mediation, and notable contributions were made to the peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Israel, Guatemala, Burundi, Mozambique and Haiti, to name but a few. In terms of existing contributions to this field, a great deal has been produced on the role of third-party intermediaries, conflict resolution models and specific conflict zones within which Norwegian actors have operated. However, studies which take the 'Norwegian model' as the focal point are sparse.

A number of clarifications are essential at this stage. Firstly, when referring to 'Norway' or 'Norwegian' spheres of activity, no differentiation is made between state and non-governmental projects. Such distinction is irrelevant given the level of cooperation and reciprocity among Norwegian actors, as will be discussed in greater detail below. Secondly, when analysing the 'success' of Norwegian efforts, criteria will be drawn in accordance with those laid down by Norwegian actors themselves rather than from an external theoretical standpoint. In this manner, results can be assessed in direct relation to the practical and theoretical objectives of those actors involved, which I would argue is a more constructive approach. Correspondingly, the theoretical model that underpins this analysis is derived from those principles which guide Norwegian activities, with reference to Lutheranism and liberal institutionalism. Additionally, analysis of Norwegian efforts will focus on activities which fall within the realm of 'peacebuilding.' Doyle and Sambanis deconstruct this term into four distinct spheres of activity: monitoring or observer missions, traditional peacekeeping, multidimensional peacekeeping and peace enforcement. The first and third categories are more applicable to the model adopted by Norway, as discussed below. Finally, this paper will not attempt to analyse the successes and failures of each significant peacebuilding effort undertaken by Norway. Rather, case studies will be drawn selectively to illustrate the main features of the approach and to study specific peacebuilding efforts to shed light on the contributions that Norway is able or unable to make.[1]

The above enquiries will be introduced with a study of existing contributions to this field, with particular emphasis on NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) reports. As alluded to above, the ‘ Norwegian model’ is rarely given a central place in literature. However, there are a few notable exceptions in which the methods employed by Norwegian actors are described and assessed. Additionally, this paper will highlight studies that focus on the roles played by third-party actors and ‘small states’ in conflict zones. Subsequently, the driving principles behind Norwegian involvement in international peacebuilding will be analysed. As a guiding structure, the motivations described by Norway’s Minister of Foreign Affairs will be elaborated upon, with the addition of several factors which place Norway in a unique position to contribute. Within this context, political, economic and social specificities will be considered in an attempt to explain why Norway has frequently undertaken this role. A comparison with Sweden will be especially instructive in this regard when one considers similarities between the two states. Then it will provide an assessment of the ‘Norwegian model’ and discuss the extent to which it can be considered a ‘distinct’ approach.

A number of factors will be taken into consideration, such as spheres of involvement, guidelines, funding, combatant participation and measurement of success. This description presupposes a degree of correspondence between different peacebuilding efforts in separate conflict zones, although the assumption itself is also scrutinised in relation to the guiding principles applied by Norway. The next section of the research focuses on selected conflict zones in an attempt to illustrate some of the contributions Norway is able to make, whilst also highlighting areas in which progress has been elusive. The case studies chosen to this end are Palestine and Sri Lanka. To conclude, key findings of this research will be drawn together to clarify the conditions under which Norway has a greater likelihood of facilitating a lasting peace in its areas of involvement.

As regards hypotheses, several findings are anticipated. The most significant of these is that any success attributed to Norwegian peacebuilding efforts in largely context-dependant relies heavily on many variables such as combatant acceptance of the role undertaken by the facilitator. This latter point is contextualised with reference to Sri Lanka. Similarly, the ability to replicate this peacebuilding model across

numerous international or national conflicts is dubious, as a result of the role that Norway is able and prepared to adopt. Additionally, the level and nature of media attention given to a peacebuilding process largely determine the success of the Norwegian effort. This will be illustrated within the context of the Oslo Process leading to the Declaration of Principles. Preliminary research also suggests that the imposition of timescales and internationally-constructed models for peace are incompatible with the Norwegian approach.

Last but not least, A number of observations are central to this paper. The first is the fact that Norway does have a unique contribution to make in war-torn regions owing to its level of expertise, grassroots initiatives, governmental support and long-term commitment.[2] However, the Norwegian model does not guarantee success. Rather, a number of criteria must be met to ensure progress in the regions where it is applied, such as local acceptance of the role undertaken, 'ripe moments' and avoidance ack of media attention. Secondly, there are a number of factors which limit Norway's ability to bring about a positive peace in some cases, the most significant of which is its inability to employ more forceful methods of engagement. Finally, where external interests exist, power politics can often undermine Norwegian efforts.

Literature Review

Despite the heavy involvement of Norwegian organisations in peacebuilding and international development, little academic analysis has been produced on the country's contributions to these fields. However, several Norwegian organisations themselves have provided studies of government policies, and in many cases, these contributions are directly commissioned by the Norwegian state to provide feedback on existing state initiatives.[3] A study of such NGO reports indicates that support of government policy is a clear feature of the literature. This is to be expected, given the close relationship between Norwegian NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Many NGOs cite governmental support as one of their primary functions, as illustrated by the Chr. Michelsen Institute. CMI research "intends to assist policy formulation, improve the basis for decision-making and promote public debate on international development issues."[4] The fact that NGOs facilitate the implementa-

tion of government policy does not discredit the literature available, but independent analyses of peacebuilding efforts in which Norway has taken a leading role are sparse.

In a 2003 study for Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Tjonneland analyses the existing contributions made by Norway towards security sector reform in developing countries. One of the key observations of this paper is that Norwegian initiatives tend to shun the term 'security sector reform.' Rather, the strengthening of legal institutions and police forces are incorporated into the development process as a whole. The main recommendation put forward by Tjonneland in relation to this issue is that "Norway should develop a policy document and guidelines for its assistance to peacebuilding and the role of the security sector. This could also serve as a handbook and help facilitate an understanding of how the diverse security challenges can be addressed through an integration of development and security policies focusing on the security institutions themselves."[5]However, I would argue that Tjonneland overemphasises the importance of guidelines in his analysis of the shortcomings of Norwegian activities. As discussed further in this paper, a pragmatic approach has been adopted by Norway, which emphasises the importance of flexibility and case-specific methodologies.

The Norwegian Foreign Policy Institute produced an assessment of Nordic approaches to peacebuilding in Afghanistan in 2010, which measured the degree of consistency in the national strategies of Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. The report concluded that "Norway was the only state not having a clearly-articulated strategy towards the region. In addition, Norway was the only Nordic state which did not have "inter-ministerial standing crisis management architecture." [6] However, as mentioned in relation to Tjonneland's study, coordination at that level implies a certain level of institutionalisation and permanence of policy. The Norwegian approach prefers a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness, which can gauge the situation on the ground and adapt its activities accordingly.

In terms of academic studies of Norway as a peacemaker, a limited number of contributions have been made to the field. One notable exception is the work of Ann Kelleher, who has produced several articles on the specificities of the Norwegian

approach and the way in which it has been applied in Sudan. A significant contribution of this paper is the characterisation of Norwegian peacebuilding as ‘Track 1 ½ Diplomacy.’ This highlights ‘the inability to distinguish between state-level and NGO spheres of activity.’[7] The cooperation between these two channels is a feature of Norwegian peacebuilding, which has been argued, ‘accounts for the success of several processes in which they have been involved.’[8] Other scholars have highlighted the size and ‘carrot over stick’ methods utilised by Norway to explain the role that has been adopted and accepted by the international community. A 1995 study by Daniel Lieberfeld argues that the role of Norway is likely to be replicated by other small, industrialised states in the future.[9] This view is shared by Andrew Williams, who describes ‘how the involvement of small states in the mediation process is an area which has been neglected by the literature, in favour of focus on more powerful intermediaries.’[10] In terms of gaps in the literature, few studies have merged descriptions of the Norwegian approach to peacebuilding with detailed case studies. Hence, this article will draw upon these existing contributions in an attempt to provide a thorough description of the Norwegian model, in conjunction with its enabling and inhibitive aspects.

Why Norway?

A central question of this paper is why the Norwegian state places such emphasis on peacebuilding and international development. Correspondingly, what factors account for Norway’s ability to make a meaningful contribution where other states have been less successful? Analysis of official rhetoric is instructive in this regard. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Store, has provided a succinct explanation of the importance given to peace and reconciliation activities by the Norwegian government. He pointed to the national interest of Norway, which is “directly or indirectly affected by international conflict as a result of globalisation.” [11] This rhetoric mirrors the language used widely among other leaders and international organisations in recent years. In Kofi Annan’s 2000 report ‘We The Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century,’ he alludes to the fact that ‘globalisation has allowed the effects of state instability to spill over international borders with reference to global arms markets and international terrorism.’[12]

As such, while officials regularly mention the relationship between state interest and contribution to international organizations, they do not emphasise this as a primary justification for Norwegian involvement. Indeed, 'national interest,' either direct or indirect, is rarely evoked by Norwegian leaders as a means of garnering public support or to validate the use of state resources.

Moreover, the Norwegian political process is characterised by partnership and an emphasis on consensus over confrontation. Since 1981, the governing parties have either been minorities or coalitions, and the current 'Red-Green' coalition has had to reach compromise on a number of key issues. Indeed, the Economist's 2018 Democracy Index placed Norway in the first position worldwide, in relation to criteria including the electoral process, political participation and functioning government.[13] In addition, a comparison with Sweden is instructive given the similarities between the two states. Sweden also enjoys a high standard of living, at number seven on the Human Development Index.[14] It's GDP per capita places it at number 16 worldwide. In 2019, Sweden gained first place on the 'Full Democracy' list. It can also claim to have a strong foundation in peace research, hosting a number of high-profile organisations such as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SUPRI) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). However, in comparison with Norway, there are a number of factors which give Sweden less legitimacy as an impartial third-party. The first is the fact that Norway is not a member of the European Union, which allows it to chart an independent path politically. [15]

Importantly, this situation allows Norway to bring all related participants into the mediation and peacebuilding process, including those that would otherwise be excluded due to their branding as 'terrorist organisations.' Having a degree of political distance from such organisations allows Norway to act upon one of the fundamental principles of its facilitation. In addition to this lack of affiliation with the European Union is the fact that Norway does not have a modern colonial past, which allows it to escape the charge of pursuing neo-colonialist objectives overseas. Sweden, by contrast, has an imperial history with an empire that encompassed Denmark, Finland and other regions around the Baltic. It also had some overseas territories until 1878 in Africa and North America. The extent to which this is a matter of con-

cern for the participants of conflicts is debatable, given the length of time which has passed since Sweden handed over the last of its overseas territories. Sweden has not retained any ties to its former colonial possessions and is not generally considered as an expansionist power. However, the ability of Norway to completely refute any accusations of expansionism or neo-colonialism, with reference to its history, undoubtedly gives it additional legitimacy.

To conclude, it seems clear that there are many factors which permit and motivate Norway to dedicate itself to the task of resolving some of the world's most intractable conflicts. It can be argued that this represents self-interest to some extent, by increasing Norway's profile worldwide and gaining access to more powerful states with vested interests in the regions concerned. Having discussed how and why Norway has adopted its role internationally, the next chapter will describe the 'Contextualising Norwegian model' of peacebuilding.

Contextualising the Norwegian Model

A primary observation when analysing the Norwegian model is that a clearly identifiable method does not exist on paper. Those who contribute to peacebuilding operations frequently underline the need to develop policies in response to the specificities of the conflict zone concerned. Rather than adopting a comprehensive framework for successful facilitation, mediation and peacebuilding, the model applied can be considered 'reactionary' to some extent. In a 2010 address at a review of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Carsten Staur spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries and highlighted issues within the PBC which deserved special consideration. What he mentioned was that, "first, flexibility in approach and choice of policies is essential in order for the PBC to remain a relevant contributor on the ground recognizing and respecting the uniqueness of each post-conflict situation. A close link to in-country developments must be maintained, and the PBC's agenda informed by these events."[16]

This point was supported by the PBC's Chairman Peter Wittig who stated that"the analysis of a specific country situation by the PBC should lead to the identification of a clear and limited set of priorities as well as to channel the necessary

resources."[17] However, in contrast to Wittig, Norwegian statements rarely emphasise the need for limits and timetables for withdrawal, as discussed below.

Despite this insistence on flexibility and bespoke strategies, a number of commonalities can be observed in the Norwegian approach to peacebuilding. Refusal to identify a consistent model for engagement makes establishment of a theoretical framework problematic. Yet, it can generally be considered a liberal institutional agenda. As Ronald Paris discusses, peacebuilding is a process based on the spreading of democratic values and the establishment of strong market economies. In his words, "peacebuilding is in effect an enormous experiment in social engineering-an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political, and economic organization into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict."[18] There is some basis to assume that these underlying principles guide Norwegian efforts within the conflicts that they attempt to resolve. Various public statements indicate that Norwegian actors seek to replicate the stability enjoyed within Norway in war-torn regions through the establishment of strong institutions founded on liberal democratic values. As such, (The Well of Strength) mission in Afghanistan is a clear example of this, in which various members of the justice community, from lawyers to representatives of the prison service, were deployed "to support implementation of a democratic legal, judiciary and correctional system."[19]

However, in a speech to the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Støre, stated 'that the humanitarian principles which guide Norwegian and UN efforts should not be characterized as 'western values' but were in fact 'global values.'[20] He also asserted that "the missions undertaken by relief agencies and NGOs were motivated purely by a desire to relieve human suffering, and should not be viewed as an attempt to extend spheres of influence, to export Western models of governance or to undermine local authority."[21]

Despite having a liberal foundation and motivation, Norwegian peacemaking should not be viewed as 'liberal interventionism' as described by Michael Ignatieff.[22] In the majority of cases, Norway appears to be able to give the parties concerned breathing space to shape their own peace. This is not to suggest that Norway is unconcerned with the type of stability produced; it promotes liberal democracy

indirectly. By strengthening civil society and supporting the creation of strong governmental institutions, Norway facilitates a dual process of filtering up and filtering down. The emphasis on grassroots resolution initiatives takes civil society to the heart of the peacemaking process. [23] While in some Norwegian efforts there has been a degree of state-level mediation, the primary focus tends to be on those directly affected by conflict. Raymond Johansen makes an interesting comment about Norway's unique insight into the practice of conflict resolution. He states, "we are aware of the complexities; as a government partner in peace processes, we know from first-hand experience the painful trade-offs involved in policy-making in uncharted waters, including the dilemmas entailed in balancing ambitious human rights policies with the aspirations and demands of religious communities."[24]

Such understanding of local culture and expectations is a key feature of Norwegian engagement. Espen Barth Eide reiterates this point that "Norwegian peacebuilders are aware of local needs and expectations." [25] Consequently he mentioned "rejecting the notion that Afghan "hearts and minds" can be won over through rapid, short-term and often uncoordinated development efforts."[26] He also argued that "such assistance has had a very limited impact. Instead, in his opinion, such assistance often produces unintended results caused by a lack of understanding of local culture and social conditions."[27] In the majority of conflicts in which Norway has made a contribution to the peace process, efforts have been preceded by months or years of NGO activities on the ground. A Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) report identifies 'the fight against corruption, the consolidation of a democratic culture and rule of law, and strengthening of ties between activists and citizens as areas which should be given primacy.'[28]

To this end, Norwegian NGOs seek out existing civil society institutions which have the capacity to disseminate these objectives, and provide funding and expertise where appropriate. AMETRAMO, an association of traditional healers in Mozambique, is given as an example of a strong civil society organisation with the potential to provide a channel of communication between public health policies and local communities.[29]

Networking can also be considered a major contribution of the Norwegian

approach. Such networks are apparent in terms of country-specific knowledge and expertise that may be drawn upon by the state and NGOs during the peacebuilding process. Additionally, sets of contacts are established on the ground to increase access to civil society and to facilitate communication between the participants and third parties. The activities of Norwegian NGOs in the fields of humanitarian aid, civil society support and development are invaluable tools through which the government establishes networks of grassroots contacts. These contacts are then utilised to facilitate informal channels of communication and negotiation for the peace process. This is acknowledged by the Norwegian government in relation to its work in Sudan. It was mentioned "through humanitarian efforts Norway has engaged both parties to the conflict. Humanitarian support to the war-affected areas in the south brought Norway in particular close contacts with the leading Southern rebel group, the SPLM/A. This relationship proved to be of special value to the government during the crucial last round of talks. Contrary to what could be expected, Norway's close contact with one party has proved to be of added value to the other."[30] The same process can also be observed in the Oslo Channel prior to the signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993. Networks of officials were generated through personal contacts that had been established during research and development work.

A further aspect of the methods of engagement is an avoidance of media attention. As will be discussed in the context of the Oslo Channel, removal from the spotlight of the media creates a more conducive environment to tangible outcomes. Where parties are given a degree of freedom from public relations, the achievement of compromise and negotiation is more likely. This leads on to the next defining feature of Norwegian peacebuilding, which is the close cooperation and interdependence between non-governmental organisations and the Norwegian government. The Norwegian government relies heavily on the expertise and experience of a multitude of NGOs to implement peacebuilding strategies in war-torn regions. In correlation, NGOs view themselves as being facilitators of government policy, as discussed previously. Therefore, it can be said that the irrelevance of distinguishing between NGO and state spheres of activity is a feature of the Norwegian model which is particularly unique, and may be attributed to the unusually high level of political consensus which exists within Norway.

An additional key feature of the Norwegian model is the non-intrusive nature of their facilitative role. [31] While 'the responsibility to protect' has become common rhetoric within the international community, Norway insists upon having the consent of the state and parties involved. In no cases in which Norway has taken a leading role might the assistance be termed 'humanitarian intervention,'[32] not least because military presence is considered a peripheral rather than a core aspect of their peacebuilding model. Similarly, the notion of imposing externally-conceived peace processes is entirely at odds with the Norwegian model. As a facilitator, Norwegian actors emphasise the importance of aiding the parties involved in the implementation of peace agreements which have been developed internally. In the Sri Lankan peace process for example, Norwegian officials frequently stressed the need for a durable solution to come from the parties themselves. Finally, as opposed to states which set clear timetables for withdrawal, Norway emphasises the importance of long-term engagement in order to bring about a lasting peace. In the case of Afghanistan, Norwegian officials are quick to reject international exit strategies in favour of a more extensive development project.

Theory to Practice: Case Studies

This part will provide an overview of some peace processes within which Norway has played a significant role historically. These are: Sri Lanka and the Oslo Channel, two processes in which Norway was heavily involved. While describing the task undertaken by Norway, each case study highlights key features of the Norwegian approach and analyses the successful contributions to some peacebuilding processes, while also discussing the limitations of others. Central issues in relation to Norwegian involvement in these regions include acceptance of the role undertaken, the extent of media attention, the suitability of the carrot-over-stick approach, and the diplomatic space given to Norwegian actors in the field.

Sri Lanka

In 1976, The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were formed in response to what was perceived as domination and disenfranchisement by the Sinhalese majority. A number of factors justified this feeling: the establishment of Sinhala

as the sole official language in 1956, the primacy given to Buddhism as the state's main religion, and a number of anti-Tamil riots prior to 1983, which led to the First Eelam War.[33] The ultimate objective of the LTTE, led by Velupillai Prabhakaran until his recent death, was to establish an independent state in the north and east parts of Sri Lanka (Tamil Eelam).[34] To this end, suicide attacks, assassination of several high-profile officials from Sri Lanka and India including Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993, and the establishment of military control over large areas were employed to pursue their objectives.[35] The relationship between parties in the Sri Lankan conflict and the Norwegian government sheds light upon one of the key features of the Nordic model of peacebuilding; the need for participants to fully accept the role undertaken by the facilitator.

There is some basis for the position allocated to Norway in Sri Lanka. As reported officially, there had been 'close and long-standing relations' between the two states since 1967 when development programmes began.[36] In 1976 a bilateral agreement was signed relating to development cooperation and, to date, 4.2 billion NOK has been contributed to local programmes.[37] Additionally, a NORAD office was opened in Colombo in 1977 to strengthen these incentives. South Asian Media Net also points to the 'Golden Jubilee' of diplomatic relations in the year 2000, as an event which consolidated the alliance.[38] Moolakattu argues that the "grassroots peacebuilding projects by NGOs such as Norwegian Church Aid and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which was eventually admitted into Sri Lanka as a result of Norwegian pressure, had helped to establish lines of communication between the government, the LTTE and the outside world."[39] Norway was also an acceptable intermediary between the two parties due to its separation from the European Union, which had branded the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. This led to the subsequent Tamil demand that 37 EU members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) withdraw from the mission and allow Norway to take sole responsibility in June 2006. As a result of these considerations, Norway was directly invited by the Sri Lankan government to act as a mediator in the conflict by Ranil Wickremesinghe, the newly elected Prime Minister in 2001.[40] By February 2002, the ceasefire agreement had been formulated and made public by Norway, who was also responsible for establishing the SLMM . Its mandate was simple; to act as an

independent observer and to ensure both parties compliance with the ceasefire agreement.[41] The extent to which the SLMM was expected to intervene in the case of violations of the ceasefire was ambiguous. As in the SLIM report explained, 'It shall be the responsibility of the SLMM to take immediate action on any complaints made by either Party to the Agreement, and to enquire into and assist the Parties in the settlement of any dispute that might arise in connection with such complaints.'[42]

Hence, It can be assumed that misunderstanding of the mandate was primarily responsible for the series of disagreements which followed between Norway and the participants. The objective of Norway in Sri Lanka was to facilitate a peaceful and durable solution to the conflict, regularly referred to as a 'political' solution by Norwegian officials. In the early years of the peace process, Norway made some headway in this direction and was instrumental as the facilitator, consultant and monitor of the Cease Fire Agreement. It provided a channel through which key figures and parties could communicate, in addition to organising meetings and venues for peace talks. Norway also acted as an official spokesperson, informing interested third parties on developments as they occurred.[43]

It might be argued that the progress made by Norway in the early years following the Ceasefire Agreement can be attributed to a 'ripe moment' in the history of Sri Lanka at that time. Ranil Wickremesinghe had been reelected in December 2001 with a strongly pro-Western bias and liberal economic and foreign policies. It was in this climate that Norway was invited to undertake the role. As Walter Zartman discusses, 'ripeness refers to a perceptual event which makes the pursuit of peace more appealing than the continuation of war. He links this closely to the concept of a 'hurting stalemate' whereby neither party would benefit from prolonged hostilities.'[44] He stated that "ripeness is only a condition, necessary but not sufficient, for the initiation of negotiations. It is not self-fulfilling or self-implementing. It must be seized, either directly by the parties or, if not, through the persuasion of a mediator."[45] This characterization is quite fitting in the case of Sri Lanka, where both the political leaders of Sri Lanka and Norway 'seized' the moment to formulate a ceasefire agreement and initiate dialogue.

A change in the political status of minorities was an essential goal for the Nor-

wegian government in the establishment of peace, given the years of Tamil suppression and disenfranchisement which preceded the Ceasefire Agreement. The situation in Sri Lanka has been described as stable, with a strong government led by Mahinda Rajapaksa and the 25-year war officially terminated.[46]

However, the extent to which this can be attributed to Norwegian assistance is debatable as the SLMM was formally disbanded in 2008 as a reaction to the abrogation of the Ceaseire Agreement. Indeed, the events leading up to the government's declared victory seem to indicate that military means and complete defeat over Tamil separatists were the cause. By this assessment, it is apparent that the Norwegian government did not succeed in their goal of establishing a positive peace as envisaged.

Throughout the involvement in Sri Lanka, a number of articles in the Asian press used strong language to characterise the relationship between the government of Sri Lanka and the Norwegians. In an Asian Tribune article of April 2010, previous efforts to negotiate a settlement were branded as an 'utter failure,' and it was asserted that Erik Soldheim, the Former Norwegian Minister for International Development, was solely responsible for the difficulties faced previously.[47] In 2009, The Times of India stated that "Norway had been 'dumped' following an attack on the Sri Lankan embassy in Oslo by the LTTE."[48] While there were no fatalities following the attack, the Sri Lankan government was angered by what was viewed as 'sheer neglect' on the part of Norway.[49] This 'neglect' 'related to Norway's failure to provide adequate security for the embassy which was its obligation under international law.' [50] It might be argued that this incident marked the culmination of a series of disagreements between the two parties, particularly in relation to Norway's failure to deal with abuses of the ceasefire agreement in a manner which was acceptable to the Sri Lankan government.

As University Teachers for Human Rights in Sri Lanka reported in a 2003 bulletin, there appeared to be "an element of shifting responsibility, as the SLMM would send members of the opposition groups to the state police when attacks occurred, while the police expected a degree of support from the international monitors."[51] However, Norway did not undertake a role in which military or punitive measures were demanded when violations occurred. Rather, its role was viewed

internally as being an observer force which would utilise its network of contacts, NGO expertise and government funding to facilitate a peaceful political solution. By contrast, the combatants appear to have viewed Norway's role as that of a guarantor of the CFA.[52]

As discussed previously, the fact that Norway had established contacts with the LTTE prior to the ceasefire agreement made it especially suitable as a third-party facilitator. However, the Sri Lankan government soon began to view Norwegian initiatives as being preferential towards the Tamil side. Clearly, the government of Sri Lanka expected a non-critical impartial observer and was not prepared to accept criticism, especially where the minority LTTE were being given a platform within the peace process. Various statements released by the Sri Lankan government indicated mistrust of the Norwegian government and NGOs operating in the area. A 2008 press release from the Ministry of Defence stated that 'Norwegian People's Aid was being used to smuggle weapons to the LTTE and other separatist groups worldwide.'[53] Another article published in April 2009 stated that "Norway was helping to sponsor terrorism, and as a result had been left impotent in its task of tackling abuses of the ceasefire agreement."[54] I would argue that such suspicion on the Sri Lankan side undermined the peace process in a significant way, by failing to accept that the LTTE should be dealt with equally. By this analysis, the network of NGO actors and expertise, through which Norway gains much of its legitimacy as a facilitator, is insufficient as a means of tackling some of the worlds' most protracted conflicts.

To some extent, the failure of the Norwegian parties to bring about a sustainable political solution may be attributed to geopolitics and political developments. A Eurasia review report argued that 'China's attempt to carve a role for itself undermined Western attempts to build peace, and led eventually to the sidelining of Norway as the official facilitator in 2009.'[55] Such influence was projected 'through financial means ($1.2 billion was provided to Sri Lanka in 2009), military supplies and diplomatic support.'[56] Indeed it can be argued that all third-party involvement in Sri Lanka can be attributed to its strategic situation within the Indian Ocean, particularly in relation to India, China and the United States. The same article also pointed to the 2005 election of Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is described as 'stridently

anti-Western,' as a turning point in Norwegian-Sri Lankan relations.[57] This point appears to be supported by Store, who reiterated that 'recent political developments in Sri Lanka were not conducive to a continued role for Norway in the country.'[58] Sri Lanka is an interesting case of Norwegian peacebuilding as it highlights some issues inherent in the approach. Firstly, it underlines the importance of acceptance. Such acceptance relates to the parties actively welcoming, supporting and understanding the mission undertaken by the facilitator.

In the Sri Lankan case this can be observed initially. However, when the situation deteriorated, Norway was expected to take on a more active role to bring those responsible to justice. I would argue that the gap between the expectations of Norway and the participants was one of the primary causes of the subsequent failures. Secondly, the Sri Lankan case demonstrates the friction which can be caused as a result of negotiating with 'radical' groups. As mentioned previously, the existing network of contacts helped Norway to secure its position as mediator. However, its insistence that the Tamil Tigers be directly involved in the peace process and its refusal to condemn violations of the ceasefire antagonised the Sinhalese side.

Finally, a case can be made that the Sri Lankan civil war consolidates the realist view that carrot needs to be supported with stick. Norway's inability, and refusal, to act as an enforcer of the peace agreement ultimately pushed the government and the LTTE to more powerful international allies such as China and India, who could provide more than a soft approach. It can be stated that the initial phase of Norwegian involvement in Sri Lanka draws attention to some of the key qualities it can bring to the table, such as its network of contacts generated through NGOs on the ground and its internationally-accepted impartiality and humanitarian ethos. This case also supports the view that the Norwegian approach is ineffective in times of crisis. When peace talks failed and violence escalated, the SLMM was unable and unprepared to adopt a more active role as an enforcer or direct mediator. Nevertheless, it is also true that the facilitators never accepted such responsibilities, which highlights the importance of mandate acceptance by all concerned parties.

The Oslo Channel

"The contrast between the stagnant Washington talks, poised to enter their eleventh round, and the success facilitated by Norway, a minor power with little strategic interest in the Middle East, served to highlight America's failure to bring Israel and the Palestinians together."[59]

The establishment of the 'Oslo Channel' to facilitate secret negotiations between members of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Israeli government is the most widely known of Norway's efforts. However, it is noteworthy that the Norwegians themselves took little credit for the initial achievements of the process. As Jane Corbin describes in her journalistic account of the negotiations, 'the main intermediaries conducting the process, Jerje Larsen and Mona Juul, were barely acknowledged when Yasser Arafat and Yitzak Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn in 1993.'[60] This type of unassuming facilitation is characteristic of Norwegian involvement.

The Declaration of Principles (DOP) represented a historic moment within the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Three key milestones were achieved as a result of Norwegian facilitation. The first was mutual recognition, which marked a significant departure from previous policy. The second was the establishment of the Palestinian Authority for a five-year interim period until a long-term political solution could be implemented. Finally, the PLO was incorporated into the political process .[61] Some tangible progress was also made on the ground as Israeli forces withdrew from the Gaza strip in May 1994. Despite these initial successes, a number of developments undermined the peace process shortly after it had been concluded, leading to worsening hostilities. Kristiansen argues that "Arafat's complicity with the Israeli side led to a loss of support and credibility for the PLO."[62] Correspondingly, Ben-Moshe attributes 'the eventual assassination of Rabin to his apparent abandonment of the Zionist project with the signing of the DOP.'[63]

In general terms, the Declaration of Principles failed to address some of the fundamental issues necessary for a final solution, such as the status of refugees, Jerusalem and security of the borders. Perhaps the most significant of these was its

inability to place limits on Israeli expansion in the West Bank. Zartman argues that "the Oslo Process was only able to produce a 'settlement' rather than a 'resolution,' as it was based on a network of close contacts that could not implement their agreements on the ground."[64] This criticism of the Norwegian approach was similarly expressed by Sarvananthan, who stated that "networks established by Norwegian parties are often divorced from those people for whom they are designed."[65] In addition, the DOP was undermined by a failure to match rhetoric with substantial improvements in the standards of living for Palestinians who live in the territories. Indeed it can be argued that the economic situation deteriorated further in the years following the accord. As Sara Roy stated, "closure, the sealing off of the territories from Israel, from other external markets, and from each other, is the defining economic feature of the post-Oslo period." [66]

The ultimate failure of the DOP does not, however, discredit the substantial progress made by the Norwegian officials during the negotiation phase. Terje Larson's initiatives in the year prior to the signing of the DOP are characteristic of the activities associated with Norwegian peacemaking methods. As Watkins and Lundberg describe, "Larsen's assets included unofficial status, institutional backing, connections with all sides, and strong ideas about resolving the conflict." [67] Country-specific knowledge and expertise were apparent in the case of Larson, who had spent time conducting research into living conditions in Gaza and had established a solid network of contacts during the study. One such contact gained initially by his wife, Mona Juul, was Abu Ula, a member of Fatah's Central Committee. Accounts of the process which followed indicate that a personal friendship between Larsen and Ula led to the establishment of a secret channel for negotiations which eventually incorporated the heads of each state.[68] Interestingly, "Arafat himself had sought Norway's assistance as a facilitator several years previously," as Waage reports.[69] However, "while Norway passed this proposal on to Israel, even offering financial backing for the channel as well as technical and human support, Israel gave the offer as little consideration as it gave the earlier offers."[70]

The concepts of 'ripe moments' and 'hurting stalemates' are applicable to the Oslo Channel as they were in Sri Lanka.[71] On the Palestinian side, PLO was more open to the possibility of making concessions. However, it is debatable whether this

was a positive force in the Oslo Process compared with Sri Lanka. Once the outcome of negotiations was brought back into the media spotlight, it needed to be accepted by those it was designed to serve. Failure to fully gain this acceptance was one of the key downfalls of the process. Avi Shlaim quotes Edward Said who "reacted strongly to Arafat and Rabin's unilateralist concessions following the signing of the DOP."[72]

Linked to this issue is the secrecy in which the Oslo Process was conducted. In both the Israeli and Palestinian cases, immense public pressure and media interest surrounded the preceding Madrid Channel, which arguably made the negotiation and concession process more problematic. Anthony Wanis-St John argued that this secrecy merely antagonized the parties who were left out of the process and created further mistrust. In his words,, "back channels, if not managed carefully, generate and exacerbate the very conditions that led parties to use them, requiring further use of back channels".[73] However, with the Madrid Process running in public parallel to the secret channel, it seems clear that a back channel was the only innovative possibility on the table at the time. As such, Norway's unique contribution was that it could bring the most intractable issue in the region into the process and allow direct contact between the parties involved.

Conclusion

The case of Norway illuminates the contribution which can be made by a small state in the peacebuilding process. This paper has attempted to identify the factors which enable and motivate Norwegian participants to dedicate such time, money and expertise to international conflicts where direct state interest is not apparent. Furthermore, case studies have provided greater insight into the successes and limitations inherent in the 'Norwegian model.'

With official insistence on pragmatism, flexibility and the application of regional models for peace, I would argue that a Norwegian model does exist in practice. Country-specific variations inevitably produce discrepancies in the peace processes undertaken, however, a number of commonalities can be observed. The utilisation of Norwegian NGOs to initiate grassroots peacebuilding and to establish useful net-

works of contacts is the quintessential aspect of the Norwegian role. Additionally, insistence on invitation, acceptance and cooperation is a feature of the Norwegian approach which leads to greater trust by the parties involved.[74] Furthermore, Norwegian efforts tend to be conducted beyond the media spotlight, giving participants the time and diplomatic breathing space to negotiate and make concessions. Finally, while political rhetoric emphasises the need for combatants to develop and implement their own model for peace, in reality, Norwegian peace brokers have a clear image of what this should constitute. Indeed, this paper appears to undermine the realist portrayal of self-interested states attempting to promote their own sphere of influence.

However it would be impossible to argue that the Norwegian model is devoid of limitations. Where power politics and other external actors become involved, the contribution of Norway is often undermined, as it was in Sri Lanka. Norway does not have the capability to enforce its vision of peace and to bring violators of the ceasefire to justice. While this can be considered an advantage to some extent by increasing its credibility as a neutral and innocuous third party, it also means that a contingency plan does not exist when violence resurfaces. This can be observed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict where Norwegian efforts were overshadowed by the United States, which had a more direct interest in the region and the power to exert influence in the event of stalemate. Furthermore, the secrecy of negotiations may cause difficulties in addition to rewards. While initial progress can be made around the table, the cases of Sri Lanka and Israel-Palestine appear to demonstrate that problems can resurface when agreements are introduced to the citizens involved.

The limitations of the Norwegian model indicate that in order for a peace process to be successful, a number of criteria should be met. Combatant acceptance and cooperation with facilitators is essential, as highlighted in the Sri Lanka case. The importance of ‘ripe moments’ has also been illustrated as a means of producing tangible progress. However, the challenge facing Norway is to develop a contingency plan for changes of circumstance such as political shifting or the action of spoilers. The case studies above suggest that over-reliance on ripe moments is insufficient for prolonged negotiations. Finally, Norway appears to produce more fruitful outcomes where it is given diplomatic space and responsibility for its task.

Where other third parties overshadow the work of Norway, such as the United States with Israel or India in Sri Lanka, the participants may become disillusioned with slow progress and turn to more powerful international allies.

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