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<b>Authors(s)</b>	Tonra, Ben
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## **Chapter 1**

### **Theories, concepts and sources**

John Doyle, Michael Kennedy and Ben Tonra

The study of Ireland's foreign policy draws on international literature and debates that have been developed for the study of foreign policy in many different periods and contexts. Some of these debates are universal and the issues for Ireland, such as the role of parliaments and domestic public opinion, or the significance of the personality of political leaders might draw easily on an approach developed for a different country. There are nevertheless specific challenges facing Ireland as a small state member of the European Union located on the western geographical periphery of Europe which would be quite different to the contexts facing international powers such Russia or China or indeed Tanzania or even Iceland. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the wider theoretical debates on international relations and foreign policy, assert the importance of historical context when studying foreign policy and show the conceptual issues that need to be clarified when writing on international relations. Finally, the chapter will discuss the growing range of Irish and Irish-related primary sources related to almost a century of independent Irish foreign policy which are available to researchers and introduce how they can be successfully utilised to advance our understanding of Irish foreign policy.

#### *Theories of international relations and foreign policy*

The earliest core text for the study of international relations is often said to be that of Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War – the fifth century BC conflict between Athens and Sparta. In an approach that was strikingly 'scientific' for the time, Thucydides sought to explain the causes of that war without reference to divine intervention. Significantly, he argued that the relations between the Greek city states of the era were governed by the pursuit of power, with war being the inevitable crucible of conflict resolution.

Over subsequent centuries a variety of historians, philosophers and diplomats have considered the ways in which states behave. That behaviour was usually linked to the success or failure of the 'sovereign' monarch. Published in the early sixteenth century, Niccolò

Machiavelli's *The Prince* offers an ambitious prince a roadmap to power, diplomatic success and greater sovereignty through the suggestion of methods for the acquisition and control of territory. Machiavelli wrote in the context of foreign conquests of the weak states of the divided Italian peninsula. The transmission of sovereignty from city states and principalities to larger and larger political units – or states – culminated in Europe with the ‘Peace of Westphalia’ at the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648. This established – or at least codified – a new reality in Europe where ultimate political authority rested within territorially-defined sovereign states. State sovereignty soon also came to be fused with ideas of nationality and nationhood such that by the mid-seventeenth century the ‘nation state’ became the basic building block of the global ‘international’ system.

The field of International Relations is the study of how the international political and economic system works. The challenge and the fascination of International Relations is that there is no universal agreement as to what precisely is to be studied or indeed how it is to be studied. In the absence of such agreement there exists an ever changing and developing series of debates about how the global system operates, not only at state level, but also at individual and non-state levels.

Thus one of the first questions concerning the field of International Relations is ‘what is to be studied’? As noted above, the traditional answer to that question is ‘the State’. States are still at the dominant unit and force in the international political hierarchy. Indeed, the process by which states are created and collapse is a central area of study within international relations and international relations history. States ultimately determine what is allowed and what is not allowed in the international system, they act singly, through multi-state alliances, and since the early twentieth century through international organisations such as the United Nations. Significantly too, states are the only *legitimate* international actors that are allowed to use force – both internally, through their domestic legal systems, and externally, through their military forces, to defend their territory and interests.

Others argue that the primary consideration in the study of international relations is not the state. They focus on the structure of international system itself and the distribution of power therein. Such views consider the shape and interplay of larger economic, political, military and social forces to which states are subject such as globalisation, environmental change, resource depletion or international movements such as that for civil rights.

For still others, that macro-perspective is too broad, and they insist that the primary focus of study has to be on the human person, their security and their emancipation. Of course, whichever *level of analysis* is chosen; the international system, the states, or the individual, all are interdependent and change as any one level impacts upon the others.

The ‘how’ of international relations is perhaps even more vigorously contested. At the most basic level, the first argument centres upon the degree to which, if at all, we can search for objective truth in international relations. For most scholars, the study of international relations is precisely that; to identify patterns of human behaviour over time, to study those patterns and then to develop theories by which we can describe, explain and even perhaps predict human behaviour at the global level. Whether that is an historian explaining the rise and fall of great empires, a political scientist seeking to identify the causes of war or an economist discovering the reasons behind international poverty, they are united in their search for explanations.

For others, however, such a perspective misses the point. For them, ‘truth’ is a malleable concept, one which is shaped by deep cultural assumptions, by the power of well-established elites and by basic inequalities within the international system. For these scholars, the ‘scientific method’ of objective, analytical research is itself a myth: scientists create their own science. Instead, these scholars aim to uncover hidden voices, to understand how key assumptions about the world are built up over time, how these assumptions are then disseminated and challenged and how they ultimately come to exercise such power over our understanding of the world. The historian unearthing the hidden stories of women in war, political studies of how the concept of security has evolved and economists challenging notions of prosperity and development are all challenging the accepted norms of international relations and in doing so expanding the discipline in a multi-disciplinary manner.

Attempting to answer the question posed on the nature of ‘truth’ in international relations opens a further vista of contrasting explanations and understandings as to how the world works. For those that see the pursuit of truth to be a valid and necessary exercise, in other words those adopt a *scientific/rationalist* approach, three distinctive ways to look at the world are usually offered. These approaches or *paradigms* argue over what the primary unit of study is, what characterises their relationship and how they see the state. While academic debate centres on which of these paradigms offers a more accurate explanation for international relations, it is

perhaps better for the student to see these as alternative lenses through which to view the world. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses and each 'sees' different things as being significant.

For *realists* the international system is defined by states seeking power in an essentially competitive world. While there is a range of variation on these themes within the broader realist family, the core focus of attention is on the state as a distinctive, unitary actor. In the absence of any higher temporal authority, the international system is then shaped by anarchy, where self-interested states strive ceaselessly to secure their own survival through the acquisition and exercise of power. Power, within this realist paradigm, is a function of the material resources at the state's disposal and the skill and determination of state leaders in wielding those resources on the world stage. For the most part, the best that can be hoped for within the international system is therefore a *balance of power* between the key state actors. When that balance is lost, conflict, and ultimately war, is the inevitable result. It therefore is in the best interest of states to strive for peace but plan for war.

Within *liberal* international relations theory, states remain important but they are joined by international organisations such as the United Nations and the European Union, and by transnational movements such as human rights organisations and women's movements on the stage of international relations. The liberal internationalist approach challenges the notion of a unitary state, insisting that what goes on within the state politically or economically is critical to an understanding of how the state then approaches and interacts with the rest of the world. This is the foundation of democratic peace theory which argues that democracies never or very rarely go to war with each other. Critically, liberalism does not assume that the international system is driven by competition and conflict. Instead, it argues that most international relations are defined by efforts between states to cooperate to solve shared problems such as global warming, insecurity, poverty, underdevelopment, migration and terrorism. Within some variants of this paradigm it is further argued that the development of international law and institutions create a path towards international 'governance'. Thus, the international system increasingly binds states into certain patterns of constructive behaviour and this ultimately has the potential to civilise the international system. Overall, within this paradigm, interdependence, rather than conflict, is the key condition of international order.

By contrast to liberal internationalism, *structuralist* or Marxist theories of international relations argue that states are simply the vehicles of self-interested elites (or classes) to defend

and extend existing privileges within the international system. Within this paradigm neither conflict nor cooperation defines the international system, rather it is the exploitation of the many by the few that best explains state behaviour at global level. This approach focuses on how resources are distributed within the international system and how colonialism and now neo-colonialism ensure that the less-developed world continues to supply raw materials and cheap labour to the advanced economies. A major focus of this school of analysis is globalisation. It offers a trenchant critique of how this phenomenon at one and the same time manages to exploit the developing world while depressing the living and working conditions of most people in the developed world through the threat of labour competition. The unregulated migration of capital and the use of corporate power are other significant centres of enquiry within this approach to international relations.

Of course, as has been noted earlier, not all scholars accept that ‘scientific’ approaches such as those outlined above will deliver an all-encompassing explanation of how the world works. For their part *post-positivist* or *reflectivist* approaches focus instead on interrogating certain perceived ‘truths’ of international relations. This approach examines how particular concepts have come to dominate International Relations thinking and insists that it is necessary and right to put values, beliefs and identities back into the study of how the world order works. While many of these approaches differ quite profoundly on what they see as the core issues to be addressed, they do tend to share an essentially critical perspective towards the traditional study of international relations. They also tend to argue that the ‘realities’ of international relations, concepts such as power, sovereignty, the state and security, are constructed by how they are conceived intellectually rather than as a set of given facts that simply have to be accepted.

There is therefore a wide range of approaches that can be accommodated in whole or in part under the headline of post-positivism. *Constructivism*, for example, looks at how ideas shape the range of the possible within international relations and how particular ideas can determine the ways in which the international system is understood. *Critical theory* interrogates our understanding of security and insists that human emancipation and a permanent, ongoing critique of social structures is an obligation of the study of international relations. *Feminist* international relations approaches look at the myriad ways in which the experience of women has been ignored or marginalised internationally and how concepts of gender have shaped the understanding and expectation of conflict and war.

Insert graphic here

Positivist approaches

Realism/Neo Realism

Liberalism/Neo-Liberalism

Pluralism/Interdependence

Post-positivist approaches

Feminism

Critical Theory

Post-Modernism

Constructivism



### *The road to Foreign Policy Analysis*

There are a variety of ways in which international relations can be studied, yet only some of these perspectives centre upon the actions of states. Overall, however, the larger portion of scholarship in international relations does focus on states: what they do and why they do it. Moreover, if there are questions as to how central states are to an understanding of how the world works, even the most ardent post-modernist would acknowledge that in popular *discourse* (i.e. how we talk about and represent the world to ourselves) states have a powerful hold over the public understanding of international relations. Indeed, the cover illustration of this text probably represents a fair image of how people conceive of international relations: an array of ‘national’ flags such as one might expect to see outside of any major international organisation or diplomatic conference.

*Foreign Policy Analysis* is a field of study which is dedicated to the study of how states pursue their relations with other states, with other international actors and how they define themselves within the international system. In broad terms, its focus is upon how state-level actors come together to create and execute a foreign policy on behalf of that state. An obvious starting point is a single case study leading, ideally, to cross-comparative studies between states that can address questions related to the foreign policies of different categories of states such as major powers, ‘small’ states, EU member states or of states in general. In a field of study where state power is a core interest it is most often analyses of powerful states that gain the greatest share of academic attention. Traditionally too there has been something of a bias within Foreign Policy Analysis towards identifying models of foreign policy action. The most famous example, which for many years served to define the very nature of Foreign Policy Analysis, was the study by Graham Allison (Allison, 1971 and Allison and Zelikow, 1999) of United States foreign policy making during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In that study he set about testing three models to see which offered the best explanation of American and Soviet decision making during the crisis: the rational actor model, the organisational behavioural model and the governmental politics model.

The *rational actor* model sees government as the key actor. Governments assess their goals and objectives and the means at their disposal. Then through a process of rational calculation and cost/benefit analysis they determine the best policies to maximise the payoff to

their state's interests in any particular situation. This is graphically illustrated even in the way that we write about such crises where 'Washington decided ...' or 'The Russians felt ...' or the 'Irish insisted ...'. The nouns may be plural but the idea is singular: the state is a unitary rational actor. The abiding strength of this model is that within it, decision making is a process that can be clearly mapped and analysed using well-established social scientific tools.

The *organisational behavioural model* places little faith in the rationality of 'government' pointing instead towards the logic of large organisations where well-established 'standing operating procedures' set powerfully constraining parameters around what is possible in any particular circumstance. This model underlines the self interest of bureaucratic units and their leaderships for status, resources and proximity to power. In such contexts, leaders tend to grasp at quick-fix solutions which tick boxes of essential and short-term interest with less regard for long-term goals or more strategic calculations.

The *governmental politics model* (or *bureaucratic politics model*) shifts the focus further towards the personalities of leaders and the advisors, formal and informal, that they gather around them. In this model foreign policy decision making becomes almost a game of palace intrigue, where the psychology of individual actors, their egos and self-interest, become critical drivers of debate and decision and where the aphorism of 'where you stand depends on where you sit' applies. In such a context, the dangers of 'group-think' (Janis 1972) become greatest in the absence of rigorous tests and individuals willing to contest an emerging or even pre-existing consensus.

Even though Allison set up his study arguably with the rational actor as a straw man, he succeeded in redefining and challenging understandings of foreign policy decision-making. The middle-range theories developed, which claimed no general applicability, have since been criticised as being derived from the single and arguably exceptional case of United States foreign policy making, but remain the gold standard of scholarship in the field.

In more recent years, there has been a defined shift towards the study of identity within foreign policy. Reflecting the rise of post-positivist approaches more broadly within International Relations, a number of studies have assessed the struggle over national identity and its influence over foreign policy in cases such as the United States (Campbell, 1998), Ukraine (Prizel, 1999), Israel (Barnett, 1999) China (Ripley, 2002), Germany (Lantis, 2002) and even Ireland (Tonra, 2006). This move also reflects the post-positivist ambition to look in greater

detail at the role of norms and identity in world politics. The study of identity and foreign policy has a particular resonance within a European context where the European Union appears to be transforming the state itself and creating a new polity which claims to possess a 'common' foreign, security and defence policy.

This focus on ideas, norms and identity is not restricted to the outer shores of post-positivist or constructivist scholarship. They now also have a sound footing in more traditional scholarship where they are treated as substantive variables in decision making models – offering conceptual road maps to policy makers or as hooks to their decision making (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993).

#### *The debates within Foreign Policy Analysis*

The particular debates within foreign policy analysis which are most relevant for a study of Ireland will to some degree depend on the issue being analysed. However some key debates are likely to be of wide interest. As a small country, with a relatively small population, the question of size and foreign policy is of obvious concern to Ireland. What dimensions of size matter, is it geography, population, military strength, GNP or something else and in what ways does it matter? What are the priorities and strategies of foreign policy and how are they determined? What is the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy? Is foreign policy a matter of state-craft, only of interest to elites and conducted with limited reference to citizens, or a product simply of a country's position in the international system, or is it also an expression of domestic factors? Apart from the state institutions, which other actors have an influence? Do business and NGOs, for example, influence foreign-policy making? As a member of the European Union, there is a particular context to foreign policy cooperation, discussed in detail in Hayard below but which draws on a wider literature about the EU and its influence on national foreign policies (Tonra, 2001; Diez et. al., 2005).

#### *The goals of foreign policy and the sources of influence (B head)*

The traditional goals of foreign policy, in a discipline dominated by realist conceptions of international relations, were assumed to be power and state security. Writers in the Marxist tradition or from within development studies, by contrast, argued that it was the pursuit of the economic interests of elites (as distinct from wider populations) that dominated international

affairs. Almost all modern writers recognise that foreign policy now includes a wider range of objectives. All states will seek to advance their economic interests in their foreign policy making, in bilateral deals, in multilateral negotiations in institutions such as the World Trade Organisation and by linking trade to other areas of policy, such as development aid, as discussed in Connolly below. This leaves open the question as to which goals are prioritised and who has most influence over those decisions.

The priority goals of foreign policy might seem to be the easiest question to research. An analysis of foreign policy actions or of major speeches by government should give us an insight into these questions in any particular case. However the reality can often be more complex. In answering the question as to why the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, for example, which sources do we give most credence to? United States President George Bush gave a number of reasons, ranging from the existence of weapons of mass destruction to repression by Sadaam Hussein of his own people. Strong critics of President Bush accused him of acting for the interests of the oil industry in seeking to control Iraq's vast resources. Other critics said the United States was seeking to establish a military presence in a geopolitically sensitive area. Otherwise, conservative commentators such as Henry Kissinger, said the war was a mistake as Iraq and Sadaam Hussein were contained and not a threat and any attempt to 'bring democracy' to Iraq by force would be a disaster and would fail. Which if any of these goals were the most important ones, and if we do not know, how do we analyse what the United States or other states might do in similar circumstances in the future?

The goals of foreign policy and the sources which influence them are therefore strongly contested. Language and actions are capable of different interpretations and good analysis requires an analysis of different situations, a close reading of foreign policy discourse and a comparison of discourse and actions; and it also requires the authors to be very clear about what precisely they are comparing and what precisely their evidence is. While trying to clarify the objectives of policy and how those objectives were decided upon it will be essential to look at a number of possible influences. What is the place of the states involved within the international system, what power and resources do they have? What other factors influence their decision making, in particular what is the domestic context? Finally, apart from the states we are examining what other actors need to be considered as having a direct role, such as international and regional organisations, major businesses and non governmental organisations.

### *The impact of size (B head)*

The importance of a country's size is not as clear cut in foreign policy as it might seem at first. Of course the most powerful states in the world tend to be large. It is difficult to image any situation in which Luxembourg would rival the United States in international politics. It is not clear however what aspects of size matter most. The United States, as the most powerful state in the world since the end of the Cold War, is relatively large in both geography and population, but it is 'biggest' when you measure military might and economic wealth and also very strong in its cultural reach. Which of these issues is most important to United States influence in the world? The answers are not obvious. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan are large states but their size has not given them influence. Until recently India was not considered a major global power despite its very large population. Japan is a wealthy state, but with only limited international power, while highly militarised North Korea is totally isolated.

The issues of size, wealth and military power are of course related. It is difficult to acquire military power without resources, but some countries have acquired considerable influence without achieving dominant power in any of these categories. The concept of 'middle powers' is the one that seems most relevant to Ireland (Hynek and Bosold, 2009). It does not simply describe medium-sized states (which Ireland is not) but rather a position of influence or sought after influence in the international system, which is below that of the major powers. There are a (changing) group of states in the international system that have sought such power. They have active foreign policies, often drawing on concepts of soft power, utilising development aid, willingness to act as peace mediators, or high profiles on individual issues such as land mines to build and secure their position. Canada, Sweden, Norway, post Apartheid South Africa and occasionally Indonesia have often been characterised as examples of states exhibiting such behaviour. India might have been included in the past, but today, with a fast growing economy, India has ambitions to be recognised as a major power, highlighting the fact that states' place in the global order can change.

Scholars in the realist tradition as discussed above, tend to be dismissive of the concept, focusing on more traditional measures of power such as military strength. Some authors from the Global South accept the concept but resent it to some extent, as they see it as an institutionalisation of power by comparatively wealthy states, as against poor states representing

large populations. Regardless of these debates middle powers tend to be recognised at least informally in the international system. They tend to be asked to chair or take part in commissions, to lead new initiatives, to act as potential mediators, peacekeepers or honest brokers and all of this activity gives them opportunities to play a greater role in world politics than their size alone would justify. The actual impact of this activity, in the absence of other forms of power remains an issue of debate.

#### The role of domestic factors (B head)

The relationship between domestic pressures and foreign policy is an ongoing debate where most scholars can agree that inter-connections exist, but it is the precise impact and the direction of causation that are disputed. James Rosenau (1969) is often seen as starting the modern debate on 'national-international linkages', while Nye and Keohane (1977) brought it to the centre of the study international relations. Robert Putnam's (1988: 427) conclusion still has resonance, when he said

It is fruitless to debate whether domestic politics really determine international relations or the reverse. The answer to that question is clearly 'Both, sometimes'. The more interesting questions are 'When?' and 'How?'

Two issues have dominated debates in this area. Firstly, to what extent do party competition and election campaigns influence foreign policy questions and secondly, how important are domestic non-state actors in policy-making. This literature has, to date, been dominated by American political science. In the United States, studies from the 1950s onwards tended to suggest that the United States public had quite low levels of knowledge of foreign policy (Almond, 1950; Rosenau, 1961). While there have been countervailing arguments, both the 'common sense' perception and the majority of academic analyses suggest that despite the United States's hegemonic status, the domestic public is not strongly motivated by foreign policy issues. Recently Joseph Nye argued that the American public paid little attention to international affairs and that foreign policy played a marginal role in the 2000 United States elections. In these circumstances according to Nye the 'battle fields of foreign policy are left to those with special interests' (2002: 233-34). This emphasis in the literature has been challenged from within the United States by authors such as Aldrich et. al. (1989) who argued that political elites can mobilise voters using foreign policy agendas and by Holsti (1996) who explores the influence of

public opinion on the shaping of foreign policy. In an example of direct interest to Ireland it could be argued that the Clinton campaign used the Northern Ireland issue as a successful mobilising device for Irish American voters in the United States presidential elections in 1992 and 1996 (O'Clery, 1996). However, whatever the specifics of United States elections and foreign policy, the question needs to be raised as to whether the dominance of United States-based research has given the international debate a bias which does not necessarily reflect wider global experiences.

Evidence from Switzerland suggests that when referenda on foreign policy issues are considered a different picture is presented. Marquis and Sciarini look at four foreign policy referenda at the federal level between 1981 and 1995 - on the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the European Economic Area and the creation of a Swiss United Nations peacekeeping corps - and compare them to the domestic policy votes. They found that voters were 'well informed about and active in foreign policy' in contrast to the findings in the dominant United States literature. Likewise Devine (2008: 4), drawing on studies by Eichenberg and Dalton (1993) Anderson (1998) and Sinnott (1995) argues that research in Europe suggests a 'growing influence of public opinion on national policymakers, EU institutions and the course of European integration' .. In short, [she says] the public and their opinions matter'. In Ireland's case, we have seen a very high level of activity by NGOs during the various EU referenda, surpassing that by political parties on some occasions. This involvement by the public in foreign policy making is seen to occur, not only at election time, but also in the activity of non-governmental organisations actively campaigning on issues.

### ***The impact of non-state actors (B head)***

Steven Hook (2002: 3) has argued that non-state actors both domestic and international are 'increasingly potent' in foreign policy adaptation and have 'elevated the importance of state-society relations' in the study of foreign policy. The role of other actors, apart from states, is certainly taken seriously now by all researchers (Smith et al.2008). The research agenda here is wide, ranging from the impact of the so called 'CNN effect', to the role of national and international NGOs, to the impact of business and bodies such as the World Economic Forum. There is no doubt that there is now a vast array of civil society organisations which are active on

foreign policy matters. The questions which remain to be answered are firstly the degree to which they have any influence and secondly their real independence from states.

Debates on the role of media in foreign policy decisions have used the short-hand 'CNN effect' to describe the assumed impact of TV coverage of human suffering in pressuring political leaders to intervene in international crises (Robinson, 2002). However, influence can also happen in the opposite direction. It can equally be argued that government influence over the agenda (if not the precise content) of news is a strong component of any relationship between media coverage and government policy. For every TV report on starving people in Somalia which led to government action, how many reports on other humanitarian crises did not? Or alternatively how many news reports on the United States intervention in Iraq were designed to build public support for the war, not reflect it?

The same problems exist in seeking to separate the role of non-governmental organisations in influencing government policy. How can we isolate the specific role of such organisations? Such influence can occur at two levels. It may be part of the domestic sources of foreign policy discussed above or it can occur directly, through campaigning by international civil society networks, as part of a changing system of global governance (O'Brien et. al. 2000). The most famous case study of this transnational civil society is that of the international 'ban' on landmines (Cameron and Lawson (1998). However despite its dominance in the academic literature as an example of an issue which was driven by NGOs, there are serious questions in regard to the weight which is placed upon this single case (O'Dwyer, 2006). Firstly, the level of real state involvement in the campaign tends to be minimised. Significant state resources, both financial and personal, were devoted to the campaign by middle powers such as Canada. Secondly, this case took place at a very particular moment in history, at the end of the Cold War and on an issue which then seemed to offer limited security threats even to powerful defence interests. The same individuals and groups for example made no progress in their efforts on small arms (O'Dwyer, 2006).

For all member states of the European Union the most significant non-state actor in their foreign policy making is, arguably, the European Union. This has generated a large literature, with very different views. Realist orientated authors have been relatively dismissive and see the EU as no more than one other place where states negotiate foreign policy and they point to the difficulties in agreeing common EU positions on issues such as Iraq. Others have pointed to the



EU's unique status as a international institution, as the most developed regional entity by far, and they explore the EU's role as an actor in its own right, for example through the Commission's programmes where member state control is at one remove. Research on the Europeanisation of foreign policy has focused on pressures to coordinate EU activity, driven by a desire for greater influence on the world stage. Others focused on internal processes look at the challenges of policy coordination between 27 states, and the Commission (on issues such as development aid) which sees member states bargain across policy areas, trading votes and support between the agriculture and foreign policy arenas for example in order to get the necessary support to proceed on any issue. Finally constructivist scholars in particular have analysed the degree to which notions of European identity have created a wider public support for a distinctive and focused EU policy and have also supported the Europeanisation of national level decisions.

When using case studies such as the land mines treaty or an individual EU policy we need to be mindful to explore the causal factors, other than those highlighted by groups seeking to claim credit and also look at whether the same factors which are claimed to be influential had a similar outcome in other similar cases, so we can see a trend, rather than a one-off event capable of multiple interpretations. Good analysis requires careful research of multiple possible explanations and it is to the primary sources which can be used for Irish foreign policy that this chapter now turns.

#### *Primary sources for the study of Irish foreign policy*

There are a variety of ways of viewing the world system and models for theorising about how it works for any type of state or actor. These concepts and perspectives can be applied to Ireland as a small state or, sometimes, as a middle power. When the question of providing evidence to back up theoretical assertions occurs or the need arises to examine cold evidence to see what, if any, theories fit specific episodes in Irish foreign relations the possibilities are, as Professor Keatinge has alluded to in his Foreword to this volume, increasingly rich. Original 'primary source' materials on the development and execution of Ireland's foreign relations, once hidden secretively in state archives and in closed collections of personal papers are easily available to the researcher. Many significant collections of documents and other media are available in original form, in printed hard copy and, increasingly, online. This section will focus on materials available in Ireland, in particular in the archives of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and it will

also draw attention to some significant sources in other Irish and non-Irish archives. Since 1991 the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has been releasing papers for public consultation from its archives under the terms of the National Archives Act (1986). In 1991 the first tranche of files, dating from 1919 to 1960, was made available at the National Archives of Ireland (NAI). Since then smaller tranches, generally covering one year, have been released on a yearly basis under a thirty-year rule.

Secretaries files series (A, P and S Series)	1920s to 1970s
Early Series files	1919 to early 1920s
D, GR, EA, LN, P, PP	1920s
Pre-100 series	early to mid-1930s
100-series	mid-1930s
200-series	late-1930s to mid-1940s
300-series	mid-1940s to 1980s
400-series	mid-1940s to 1980s
Embassies Series	1920s to 1980s

*Main Department of Foreign Affairs collections at the National Archives of Ireland*

For the Sinn Féin/Dáil Éireann period (1919 to 1922) the DFA Early Series (ES) along with the separate Dáil Éireann (DE) collection, the administrative and policy files of the Dáil administration, at the NAI are the main collections, but collections of private papers at the National Library and at University College Dublin Archives Department should also be consulted, as in some cases, should the files of the Bureau of Military History.

From 1922 the DFA archives divides into three main areas. The files of the Secretaries Series (A, P and S series) are the top-level top-secret files covering the most sensitive matters facing Irish diplomats. These files were only available to the most senior officials in the Department, including the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, Legal Advisor and the Private Secretary to the Secretary General. They should be any researcher's first port of call in the DFA archives.

The General Registry Series covers all other matters at Headquarters. 1920s files are split into a small collection named by the prefixes of its sub-sections: D (Dominions), GR

(General Registry), EA (External Affairs), LN (League of Nations), P (Publicity) and PP (Passports).

In the late 1920s a new numerical division of files was instituted, the 'number series'. This system has been inherited by the National Archives, which has in some cases augmented the system with its own accession details. In the 'number series', files were given a numeric prefix to denote the topic covered. For example the prefix 26 was given to League of Nations matters. In this series, for example, the file 26/95 covers Ireland's 1930 election to the League of Nations Council.

The initial series of files in the 'number series' system is the pre-100 series. They run to the mid-1930s. The system was then augmented on a regular basis with the addition of a prefix digit whereby 26 became 126 and later 226, the subsequent series being known as 100 Series (late 1930s) and 200 series (later 1930s to mid-1940s). The subsequent 300 and 400 file series were instituted immediately after the Second World War. The 300 Series (in particular the 305 series) deals with political and security matters and the 400 Series deals with economic and cultural matters, but the divide is not always so obvious. Subsequent 500 and 600 series files cover legal and European Union matters.

By the 1960s further sub-divisions were introduced and with EEC membership in 1973, and the resulting growth in the size and scope of DFA, the existing registry system came under some stress. The mid-twentieth century filing system was then sub-divided further with the opening of new divisions such as the Anglo-Irish Division in the early 1970s. The key piece of advice when working with these files is to understand what is in each thematic and numeric series or sub-series and to consult the list of file prefixes to work out in which numeric group or groups material being sought may be found.

The third area in the DFA archives is the Embassies Series, encompassing the archives of Ireland's overseas missions. This is a somewhat patchy collection due to the weeding (Washington, Holy See), destruction (Berlin) and loss of materials over time (London, Geneva). It mirrors the Headquarters registry and while registry filing sequences may differ from embassy to embassy, it is generally possible, where files survive, for the assiduous researcher to locate Headquarters and Embassy series files on a given topic, particularly so for the post-war years. Embassy Series files are often released in batches covering roughly five years, rather than on a year-by-year basis.

Hard copy finding aids for the NAI collection are available in the reading room at the National Archives and searchable versions of these volumes are available on the National Archives website. A number of the hard copy volumes appear to have been typed from a Dictaphone or other aural source and so there are on occasion mistakes in the naming of files due to the typist or typists picking up words incorrectly. Researchers working on these collections should, of course, remember that as with all such state collections, the material sought may be filed in more than one file or series and may appear under a title that does not necessarily reflect the subject under investigation. Researchers should think laterally, try to get into the mind of a civil servant and search accordingly. On a lighter note, new users of DFA files, and most other state paper collections, should soon realise that files are not like books and that one begins at the 'back' of the file where the oldest papers are.

Another NAI collection of special importance to those studying Irish foreign policy is the DT S series file of the Department of the Taoiseach. This collection covers not only files relating to Cabinet and Government decisions, but can be taken to cover all matters of importance concerning the state since 1922. Known as the 'S files', they begin at S1 and continue in roughly numerical and chronological order. There is the usual online search tool available on the NAI website and a subject and file title guide to this collection available in the NAI Reading Room. For research on twentieth century Irish government they are a vital source and are often a first step for researchers.

Cabinet and Government minutes, for the record, provide little more than a record of the decision taken on any topic and who was present at a cabinet meeting. They can, however, be useful as each minute gives the S Series file reference of the file relating to the matter under consideration.

Foreign policy was controlled and executed by the Department of External/Foreign Affairs, but foreign policy related matters crossed over the concerns of other departments of state. The files of the Department of Finance are often, strangely, ignored by researchers who forget the advice 'follow the money trail'. The Department of Agriculture as well as the Department of Industry and Commerce and its derivative departments are well worth a look, but remember that much material was lost as the original Department of Industry and Commerce was split up during many changes of function since the 1950s.

At Military Archives in Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, Dublin, are the files of the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces, in particular the fascinating collection of its G2 intelligence branch. Always of value to those working on a military or security related topic (particularly for the Second World War), potential readers should be sure to ring Military Archives in advance to make an appointment to visit and consult with the archivist before undertaking research.

There is no one set repository for collections of private papers relating to Irish foreign policy, but the default location for the personal papers of twentieth century Irish political figures has become University College Dublin Archives. Like Military Archives, it is necessary to make contact in advance and arrange an appointment. UCDA hold the private papers of the major political figures of twentieth century Irish foreign policy, for example Eamon de Valera, Frank Aiken, Patrick McGilligan, Desmond FitzGerald, Garret FitzGerald, and John A. Costello. Diplomats are well represented through the collections of Seán Lester, Josephine McNeill and Michael MacWhite. UCDA also hold the private papers of wartime director of intelligence Colonel Dan Bryan. Other individual sets of papers are however held in other locations. For example Dublin City University holds the papers of Charles Haughey and Seán Lester's personal diaries, Trinity College holds a small collection of the personal papers of Frederick H. Boland and Jack Lynch's personal papers are held at University College, Cork. The number of available collections is continually growing, as is the range of archival repositories with material relevant to the study of Irish foreign policy. A good starting point to get an overview of availability is the most recent edition of the *Directory of Irish Archives* edited by Seamus Helferty and Raymond Refaüssé.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland holds the papers of the government and civil service of Northern Ireland. The CAB4 cabinet minute files are the most obvious first stop to researchers interested in Irish foreign policy. More detailed than their southern counterpart, they include not only a full record of discussions undertaken, but also memoranda submitted for cabinet consideration and supporting correspondence. The Prime Minister's office correspondence series, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Home Affairs are all of relevance to students of Irish foreign policy as they contain material relating to cross-border relations. PRONI's collection of private papers should not be ignored, including the Cahir Healy papers and the Brookeborough Diaries.

British-Irish relations form a central component of twentieth century Irish foreign policy and The National Archives at Kew is accordingly a necessary destination for most research into the area. PREM (Prime Minister's Office), CO (Colonies Office), DO (Dominions Office), especially DO 35 (general files from 1930s to the 1950s) and DO 131 (Dublin Embassy), and FO (Foreign Office) (in particular FO 371) are central collections for Irish material. However the WO (War Office), DEFE (Ministry of Defence) and T (Treasury) series collections should also be assiduously consulted, as should KV series and other Security Service files.

As TNA files are selected via an online catalogue, researchers should bear in mind that files are indexed by a select number of key words and that simply entering 'Ireland', 'Eire' or 'Republic of Ireland' is generally not enough to locate the desired topic. As mentioned above, lateral thinking and repeated searches on differing lines towards the same end are often the best methods to locate material on a topic.

The National Archives and Records Authority in Maryland and Washington DC, as well as the many Presidential Libraries in the United States contain a wealth of Irish-related material. Collections of State Department files at NARA are accessed via a decimal number call system whereby a specific number code will retrieve files on a specific topic. Later files are catalogued by year within specific record groups. Researchers will quickly become aware of the need to look at formerly security segregated material as well as material on general release.

Online sources now form the basis of so much research, particularly by those undertaking BA or MA dissertations, that in closing, this section covers in passing some essential sources. The Royal Irish Academy's Documents on Irish Foreign Policy series is available online at [www.difp.ie](http://www.difp.ie). The site is free to access, as are the websites of most other foreign policy documents publishing projects (the major exception being the *Documents on British Policy Overseas* series). The Oireachtas website contains contemporary and historical Dáil and Seanad debates, providing a massive foreign relations-related collection. Related websites concerning the Acts of the Oireachtas and Statutory Instruments can be consulted in tandem with the Oireachtas website to get a full picture of the development of legislation.

The main Irish national newspapers are available online in their own right or through Irish Newspapers Online. Consulting the Dictionary of Irish Biography, online or in hard copy, will save much time trying to find out about a politician's or diplomat's life, and the Government Departments section of *Thom's Directory* will, for any given year, give an overview of staff by

section and name in all government departments, including DFA. Bear in mind that Thom's for any given year may reflect the staff list of the previous year. Thom's has since the 1960s divided its yearly directory into two separate publications: a Commercial Directory and a Dublin Street Directory. Published since 1966 the Institute of Public Administration's *Administration Yearbook and Diary* provides a parallel source for information on many aspects of Irish public life, including a useful catalogue of social and political organisations such as NGOs and internationally-minded campaign groups.

This section has primarily been concerned with historical source materials and it goes without saying that government, media, private organisations and NGOs all produce a wide variety of hard copy and electronic publications in their own right and make them available online.

Always, where access to archives is concerned, researchers should make prior contact with any institution they desire to visit, they should check access regulations to see if prior permissions are required, and should fully brief themselves in advance of their visit on the opening hours, rules and regulations of the facility concerned. Finally, for those making digital copies of documents, be sure to make adequate backups of any images captured and store them online or in a variety of locations.

### *Conclusion*

There are a range of theories and paradigms of international relations as well as ways to explain the specific conditions affecting states and their room for manoeuvre within the international order. Geography, culture, history, economy and human interaction all impact on a state's world view and international involvement and shape and reflect a state's international outlook. When it comes to Ireland the same theories and concepts can be applied with equal rigour to their application to larger and more powerful states. This chapter has sought to introduce the theoretical perspectives and positions as well as where one might find hard evidence of Irish actions and reactions to global affairs. The following chapters mould theory, practice and history to examine Ireland's place amongst the nations and role in international affairs.

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