

From Periphery to Podium

Analysis of Irish Foreign Policy in speeches made at the United Nations during the height of the Cold War (1957-1967) and during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2022)

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Abstract

This thesis examines the evolution and construction of Ireland's foreign policy narratives at the United Nations through the speeches of two prominent political figures: Frank Aiken (1957-1966) and Micheál Martin (2020-2022). Ireland's ascent to the United Nations in 1955 marked a significant shift from its previous isolating neutrality. This thesis aims to fill a gap in scholarship by providing a specific examination of the narratives employed by Ireland at the UN, analysing how these narratives reflect Ireland's foreign policy objectives at the UN. By focusing on the speeches delivered by Aiken and Martin, this research explores the thematic and rhetorical strategies used to project Ireland's diplomatic stance. The methodological framework of this thesis is rooted in narrative analysis, a tool that is particularly suited for examining the stories and justifications countries use to explain their actions. It finds that the use of narrative by Aiken and Martin reflected their respective global contexts, and underscored Ireland's commitment to peace, justice and international cooperation to show Ireland's dynamic role on the global stage.

KEYWORDS: *Ireland, United Nations, Foreign Policy, Cold War, Decolonisation, Multilateralism*

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Chapter 1 Introduction

In Ireland, you'd be commonly greeted with the Irish salutation, *Céad Míle Fáilte* (One hundred thousand welcomes). How, then, does such a country attempt to present itself on the global arena, specifically at the United Nations, a body which currently counts 193 states amongst its membership. How, especially, after a history where, prior to its ascent to the UN in 1965, Irish foreign policy was characterised by an isolating neutrality in World War Two, a tense relationship with its Dominion status inside the Commonwealth and a small, albeit underappreciated, role in the League of Nations, what stories did Ireland tell to the world, through its speeches at the UN General Assembly. While much scholarship has focused on the development of Irish foreign policy, what has been absent is a specific examination of the exact features at play in this development. This, then, is the aim of this thesis, two political figures stand as interesting touchstones for which a good examination of this topic. First, Frank Aiken, who fought in the Irish revolutionary wars, was Minister of Foreign (then External) Affairs from 1957-69 and as *Tánaiste* (Deputy Prime Minister) from 1965-69. His tenure covers what is described as the golden age of Irish diplomacy and is himself characterised by Noel Dorr, a long-serving Irish diplomat and civil servant, as the Minister to the UN. Another important figure is Micheál Martin, who served as *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) from 2020 to 2022 and is the current *Tánaiste* and Minister of Foreign Affairs since December 2022. He also oversaw an interesting period of Ireland's UN membership which covered the Covid-19 crisis as well as Ireland's fourth appointment to the UN Security Council from 2021-2022.

1.1 Research Question and sub-questions

This thesis is about the narratives present and how they construct Irish foreign policy, as a component of its national identity at the UN during the periods of 1956-1966 and 2020-2022 which were times of major global developments. To answer this, this thesis will analyse the speeches of two important Irish Foreign Ministers, Frank Aiken and Micheál Martin. The main research question of this thesis is, therefore.

"How did Frank Aiken (1957-1966) and Micheál Martin (2020-2022) construct Ireland's foreign policy narratives in their United Nations speeches, and what does this reveal about Ireland's role on the global stage?"

From this main research question, several sub-questions flow which will help to answer component elements of the main question, they are;

“What were the important events of Aiken’s and Martin’s tenure at the UN and of Ireland’s general foreign policy development and how did they impact Ireland’s role at the UN?” This question highlights the need to provide the relevant historical context that forms the background to these speeches and Irish foreign policy development more generally.

“What are the core themes and narratives in the speeches of Aiken and Martin?” Examining the core elements of the narratives present in both speeches will reveal how Ireland’s foreign policy identity is presented at the United Nations.

“How do the speeches utilise rhetorical strategies (e.g. metaphors, appeals to emotion) and historical analogies to construct a persuasive portrayal of Ireland’s foreign policy at the UN?” By analysing the specific word choices, phrasing, emotional appeals, and reference to history in the speeches there will be a better understanding of how exactly these men constructed Irish foreign policy at the UN.

“How do the narratives of speeches differ or remain consistent between Aiken and Martin in relation to the changing global context? Are new narratives presented to address more recent issues like climate change and pandemics? What, if any, is the difference between the Cold War and post-Cold War setting?” Analysing how narratives may have differed or remained consistent between the two men highlights how Irish foreign policy was adapted to meet contemporary issues. New narratives would indicate a broadening or evolving identity.

“How do the speeches from Ireland’s relationship with key global partners (e.g. EU, US, and the UK) and how do these partnerships influence the narratives present at the UN?”

“Examining how Ireland positions itself within its partnerships helps answer the main question by showing how its foreign policy identity is shaped by its relationship with other actors. The narratives used might emphasize alignment or differentiation from these partners. These sub-questions offer a range of angles to examine the narratives in the speeches and will help build a multifaceted answer to the main research question of how Ireland constructs its foreign policy identity on the global stage.

1.2 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Narrative in International Relations

Storytelling or narratives are a critical part of everyday life, not least within the political arena. It is, according to Margaret R. Somers, through narratives that a sense of understanding and

identity creation is made¹. In their systematic study on the importance of narrative to political science, Monroe and Patterson identify that narratives affect our observation of political reality and make us act differently. They argue that narratives ‘play a critical role in the construction of political behaviour’ and ‘we create and use narratives to interpret and understand the political realities around us’². Narratives do not just help make sense of things; they are, according to Subotić, woven into daily conversations, arguments, and debates. Importantly then, narratives do not just tell us about the past, they also shape how we see the ideal future³. For this thesis, it therefore means that government acts, specifically Irish speeches at the UN, can’t be fully understood unless consideration is made to the underlying stories that inform their decision (speeches).

Narrative analysis has played a central role in other disciplines such as psychology and history, its use in International Relations (IR) is a fairly recent occurrence, known as the narrative turn in IR⁴. Within this turn, two majors, and overlapping, trends can be observed. The first focuses on how political elites use strategic narratives. This concept of strategic narratives was made prominent in IR by Alister Miskimmon, Ben O’Loughline, and Laura Roselle where the aim is to study narratives as a form of soft power that centers on the use of narratives by actors in an intentional manner.⁵

The second perspective, one which is much more relevant to this thesis, is more concerned with what narratives do in politics. As Oppermann and Spencer argue, intentionality is less of a concern and more focus is on what narratives do in politics which therefore ‘zooms in on discursive dynamics as well as the acceptance and hegemony of certain narratives’⁶. This approach is much more relevant for the focus of this thesis, as unlike strategic narratives, this perspective feels more comfortable in the discipline of history. This includes studies on the

¹ Margaret R. Somers, “The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach,” *Theory and Society* 23, no. 5 (October 1994): 606, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00992905>, accessed 1 May 2024.

² Molly Patterson and Kristen Renwick Monroe, “NARRATIVE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (June 1998): 321, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.1.1.315>, accessed May 1, 2024.

³ Jelena Subotić, “Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change,” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, January 2015, 612, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fpa.12089>, accessed 1 May 2024.

⁴ Kai Oppermann and Alexander Spencer, “Narrative Analysis,” in *Routledge Handbook of Foreign Policy Analysis Methods*, by Patrick A Mello and Falk Ostermann, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2022), 118, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003139850-11>, accessed 1 May 2024.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.118

⁶ *Ibid*, p.118

structure of narratives, the connection between past and present narratives, and expectations of how stories should be told.

Narrative analysis is a strong fit for understanding how Ireland constructs its foreign policy at the UN. As has been discussed, a focus on narratives can reveal the stories and justifications countries use to explain their actions. By examining the speeches of Aiken and Martin, this thesis can uncover the underlying narratives about Ireland's role in the world and its approach to international issues. Speeches at the UN serve as a platform for countries to project their national identity to the world. A narrative analysis will aid in identifying the values, principles, and historical experiences that shape how Ireland portrays itself in the international arena. Speeches are a tool for countries to legitimize their foreign policy actions and persuade the international community of their validity, at the level of the United Nations, these are narratives that are intended to shape the ideal future, and a narrative analysis will allow this thesis to see how Ireland uses storytelling to garner support for its position on issues like peacebuilding or human rights. Overall, narrative analysis allows this thesis to move beyond a purely factual understanding of Irish foreign policy and provides a focus to delve into the deeper stories and justifications that shape its actions at the UN. This provides a richer and more nuanced understanding of Ireland's place in the world.

1.3 Historiography

Early studies from the 1990s of Irish Foreign Policy tended to focus on Anglo-Irish, US-Irish, and to a lesser extent relations with Europe. Authors like Patrick Keatinge, Dermot Keogh, and T. Desmond Williams have these as the dominant themes of analysis.⁷ In 1993 Michael Holmes, Nicholas Rees, and Bernadette Whelan produced *The Poor Relation: Irish Foreign Policy and the Third World*, the first in-depth study of Ireland's relationship with the developing world. They identify United Nations places as an important forum through which Ireland could establish relations with a number of "less developed countries" (LDCs), although this was not the only focus of Irish policy at the UN. Ireland's ascension to the UN came during the waves of decolonization in Asia and Africa which saw a huge increase in the number of independent Third World states. The forum of the UN being one where much of the General Assembly is taken up with declarations of support and not always necessitating

⁷ See Patrick Keatinge, *A Place Among the Nations: issues of Irish Foreign Policy* (Dublin, 1973); T. Desmond Williams, 'Irish Foreign Policy, 1949-69', in J. J. Lee (ed.), *Ireland 1945-70* (Dublin, 1979); Dermot Keogh, 'Ireland: The Department of Foreign Affairs', in Sara Steiner, *The Times survey of foreign ministries of the world* (London, 1982).

firm policy position, Whelan et al., argue that this ‘allowed Ireland to exhibit its concern and commitment without requiring very much in the way of practical support’.⁸ Further highlighting how the UN helped construct the Irish national identity, the authors cite involvement in peacekeeping activities beginning with the operation in Lebanon in 1958. It was particularly useful as a means of illustrating the nation’s neutrality.⁹ Overall, they consider Ireland’s UN membership as an initially crucial place where Ireland, with limited bilateral relations, could forge extensive contacts with the Third World.

The work of Joseph Morrison Skelly, *Irish Diplomacy at the United Nations 1945-1965: National Interests and the International Order* (Dublin, 1997) builds on these proceeding studies of Ireland’s contribution to the UN particularly because it is one of the first works to benefit from access to the then-recently released records by the Department of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰ Skelly recounts this history with a particular focus on the years 1955-62 and the main figures who played prominent roles in forging Ireland’s membership at the UN, including Frank Aiken. This falls into three phases over this time, first with the doctrinal pro-Western position of Taoiseach (Prime Minister) John A. Costello, following this was the adherence of Eamon De Valera’s government (with Frank Aiken as Minister of External Affairs) to an independent stance aiming to reduce Cold War tensions between 1957-59. Third, with Aiken remaining in his position, came the phase driven by Taoiseach Sean Lemass, reverting to a more pro-Western Attitude, where a pragmatic stance was taken particularly because Ireland became an applicant for full membership of the European Economic Community (now European Union) in 1961. Skelly’s work provides a mine of information to understand the relationship between domestic politics and the making of foreign policy, a crucial area which is relevant to this thesis.

Possessing a similar aim at understanding the relationship between domestic politics and the making of foreign policy, Ben Tonra’s *Global Citizen and European Republic: Irish Foreign Policy in Transition* (Manchester, 2006) examines the development of Irish foreign policy since the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 until 2006. He argues that alongside

⁸ Bernadette Whelan, Michael Holmes, and Nicholas Rees, “Ireland and the Third World: A Historical Perspective,” *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 5 (1994), 115, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30001825>, accessed 12 December 2023

⁹ Ibid, 115

¹⁰ At the time of writing (January 2024), nine volumes are available at www.dfip.ie

other factors like the country's history and its membership in the EU, its role at the UN is one which shaped Irish foreign policy. Tonra considers that previous literature on this area can be divided into three areas. Firstly, those studies who argue that Ireland's evolving place in the world has been a function of individual choices, Skelly's narrative of Frank Aiken's stewardship of the golden age of Irish diplomacy at the UN is an example. Secondly, others have sought their understanding of Ireland's geo-strategic position such as the focus on Ireland's geography sparing itself from tough Cold War choices as present in the work by Patrick Keatinge. Finally, Tonra categorises this approach as looking for domestic factors, whereby foreign policy is a function of competing domestic claims that are adjudicated through the government. Here is where one would place the work of Whelan et.al. Tonra concludes his historiographical discussion with a general critique, that these approaches lack a particular interest in linking changes in Ireland's international position with an evolution of its national identity.¹¹ Tonra's central thesis is that Irish foreign policy consists of two core elements; first, what he terms the "global citizen" conscious of its responsibilities towards the UN, and the "European republic" eager to live up to its roles as a modern European state.¹²

Kevin O'Sullivan's study of Ireland's relationship with Africa during the Cold War focuses on the period from 1955 to 1975. O'Sullivan argues that Ireland's experience as a former colony gave it a unique perspective on the decolonisation process and that this shaped its approach to issues such as anti-colonialism, apartheid, and peacekeeping. It also marks the only other work proceeding the first by Whelan et al. which is a specific study on Ireland's relationship with the Third World. In regard to the UN and similar to Tonra, this study is critical of what it calls the long-dominant and overly simplistic narrative 'of a flame that burned brightly in the first five years that followed Ireland's arrival at the UN, faded in the decade that followed, and has flickered intermittently ever since'.¹³ O'Sullivan's approach relies on the application of a constructivist lens which is evident in his emphasis on the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping Irish foreign policy.¹⁴ This is a similar approach taken by Tonra too, where he draws on this approach to examine the ways in which language

¹¹ Ben Tonra, *Global Citizen and European Republic: Irish Foreign Policy in Transition* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2006), 2.

¹² This is a summation of Tonra made by Kevin O'Sullivan in *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire: small state identity in the Cold War, 1955-75* (Manchester University Press; Manchester, 2012)

¹³ Kevin O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the End of Empire: Small State Identity in the Cold War, 1955-75*, Paperback edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012),3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 9

and other communicative systems are used to construct and represent Irish national identity.

Coming from the comprehensive edited volume by Michael Kennedy and Deirdre MacMahon, the chapter produced by Eileen Connolly and John Doyle provides one of the most focused pieces of analysis the role of the UN in Irish foreign policy from the time range of 1955 until 2005. Again, like that of Tonra and O’Sullivan, they argue that the UN has retained a central role in Irish foreign policy. Forming the central pillar of examination, the authors consider the first White Paper on foreign policy in the history of the state, published in 1996. From this government document, they draw out four areas which indicate tension between different policy objectives and identify four priority areas of foreign policy – peacekeeping; disarmament; human rights; and development. The examination of Ireland’s record on the security council during the 2001-2002 term provides the opportunity to analyse how Irish foreign policy works out in practice. Taking the framework of the two central pillars of Irish foreign policy, the “Global Citizen” and the “European Republic” and applying it to the conclusions drawn by Connolly and Doyle show that these authors would be in large agreement with the assessments of Tonra and O’Sullivan with a slight difference namely in that the second pillar may be modified to also include the desire to continue good relations with America. This point is especially clear in their summation of Ireland’s Security Council term, they found that Ireland was strongly supportive of the US in the post-11 September period. Yet still, there was on many occasions an opposition to US policy on important issues such as ‘on Palestine, on sanctions against Iraq, and whether a second resolution was required to attack Iraq’.¹⁵

The work of Cornelia-Adriana Baciu provides an account of the issues of Irish foreign policy from a more international relations and security field as opposed to the most historical accounts which have been discussed thus far. Through an analysis of debates in Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament) from 1998 to 2018 she identifies three key themes – the changing nature of neutrality, the importance of multilateralism and the future of Irish defence and foreign policy. In relation to the United Nations, Baciu explains the intricate connection between the organisation and Ireland. At a very observable level, the importance of the UN for Irish foreign policy can be seen by the fact that the UN Security Council needs to approve whether

¹⁵ Eileen Connolly and John Doyle, “The Place of the United Nations in Contemporary Irish Foreign Policy,” in Michael Kennedy and Deirdre MacMahon (eds) *Obligations and Responsibilities Ireland and the United Nations: 1955-2005* (IPA & Department of Foreign Affairs, 2005) 17.

Ireland can take part in overseas missions. Additionally, the UN plays a role in shaping Irish foreign policy as can be seen in the commitment to peacekeeping which is often seen as a reflection of its values as a UN member state. However, Baciu also highlights the tension at play between neutrality and UN engagement while stating that there has been the ability to reconcile these two commitments by focusing on UN peacekeeping and other forms of non-military cooperation. Baciu's work wouldn't serve as a specific examination of Ireland and the United Nations but there is considerable attention paid to the relationship. Moreover, the study of Dáil Éireann debates provides a potential framework for how this thesis will examine the UN speeches of Frank Aiken and Micheál Martin.¹⁶

Similar to this work by Baciu, Niall Burgess, Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, offers another perspective on both the history of Irish foreign policy as well as looking forward to the challenges and opportunities facing Ireland in the future. Sharing the consensus among scholars, Burgess considered Ireland's ascension to the UN in December 1955 as a key pillar of its foreign policy. He further expresses Ireland's belief that the UN is an important institution for resolving global challenges and that Ireland would continue to be a strong advocate for the UN. As a contemporary governmental figure to Micheál Martin, the views of Burgess are an interesting avenue to help understand the modern position of the United Nations in Irish foreign policy. Concluding his piece, Burgess states that within the ever-evolving global context, Ireland will continue to advance the values of the international rules-based order, the European project, cooperation and reaching out.¹⁷ It would thus appear that in more recent years, the official Irish position can be understood as reconciling the pillars of "global citizen" and "European republic".

Government officials serve as an interesting addition to the field of Irish Foreign Policy and the United Nations. Noell Dorr stands as perhaps the most prominent example of this.¹⁸ Through his multiple works published, he recounts his own time as a diplomat as well as his

¹⁶ Cornelia-Adriana Baciu, "Security Transformation and Multilateralism: The Future of Irish Defence and Foreign Policy *," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 29 (2018): 97–117, <https://doi.org/10.3318/ISIA.2018.29.05>, accessed 10 January 2024.

¹⁷ Niall Burgess, "One Hundred Years of Irish Foreign Policy: Looking Back, Looking Forwards," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 30 (2019): 11, <https://doi.org/10.3318/ISIA.2019.30.16>, accessed 10 January 2024.

¹⁸ Dorr joined the Department of Foreign (then External) Affairs in 1960, served as Permanent Representative of Ireland at the United Nations from 1980-1983 and from 1983-1987 he served as Irish Ambassador to the United Kingdom

assessment of the early years of Irish membership. His views are of particular use as a contemporary of Frank Aiken where he shows Aiken's positions were often born from his experiences as an Irish revolutionary leader and were coloured by his opinion that the priorities of the Irish state should remain self-determination, independence, and sovereignty.¹⁹ As a decorated veteran of the Irish diplomatic service, Dorr's well-expressed assessment of the UN provides an interesting element of tempered praise for the organisation, accepting it as at best an imperfect organisation but stressing that it 'is a world organisation, the only universal organisation of states that we have, or are likely to have, in a world that will remain a world of states we have ahead as we can see.'²⁰ A similar view is shared by another former Irish diplomat, Richard Ryan, who served as Irish permanent representative to the United Nations from 1998 until 2005. His assessment of Ireland's role in the United Nations is one which argues for the significance of this role identifying areas such as disarmament, peacekeeping and human rights as prominent in Ireland's activity in the organisation. Ryan's overall argument stresses the importance of the UN, which is contingent on the actions of its members, it is a 'clear mirror of international determination to confront problems.'²¹

On the specific issue of peacekeeping, having been shown to be a core component of Irish membership at the United Nations, the work of Ray Murphy is invaluable. As both a now well-respected scholar of international law and having previously served in the Irish defence forces, he provides valuable insights into Ireland's role in peacekeeping. More recently, Murphy has considered the opportunities and challenges for Ireland's future involvement in UN peacekeeping especially in the context of developments since the turn of the century. On the one hand, he sees opportunities for Ireland to play a more leading role in peacekeeping efforts, given its long experience and positive reputation. While, on the other hand, he also identifies challenges such as the changing nature of UN peacekeeping operations, budget constraints, and the need for clear national policies and strategies.²² In one of the most recent publications in this field, Neil Dee explores how three different aspects of Irish history;

¹⁹ Noel Dorr, "Ireland at the United Nations: 40 Years On," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 7 (1996): 41–62; See also Noel Dorr, *Ireland at the United Nations: Memories of the Early Years* (IPA: Dublin, 2010).

²⁰ Dorr, "Ireland at the UN", 58

²¹ Richard Ryan, "Ireland on the World Stage: At the United Nations and on the Security Council," *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 7, no. 4 (2003): 23.

²² Ray Murphy, "Europe's Return to UN Peacekeeping? Opportunities, Challenges and Ways Ahead – Ireland," *International Peacekeeping* 23, no. 5 (October 19, 2016): 721–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2016.1235093>.

decolonisation, independence and conflict have informed Ireland's approach to peacekeeping. Dee considers that while previous studies of Ireland's contribution to the UN have often cited its history as a key element underpinning its participation and acceptability as a peacekeeper there is often a gap in a comprehensive exploration of this history, with most studies simply taking it at face value.²³ Dee's offering involves the application of strategic culture and the theoretical work of Jack Snyder and Colin Gray to provide context for understanding, rather than explanatory causality for behaviour. Dee argues that by applying strategic culture, the three aspects of Irish history can be conceived as giving meaning to Irish peacekeeping and provides justification for Irish participation. Moreover, weaving these and other elements together is Ireland's more recent peacekeeping tradition, practised by the Defence forces on the ground.²⁴

To summarise, within the field of studies of Irish Diplomatic History and even more specifically studies of Irish membership at the United Nations, there are broad areas of agreement amongst scholars, chiefly that Ireland's own history provides an important factor for its participation at the UN and that the UN is considered a cornerstone of Irish foreign policy since our ascension in December 1955. It has been shown that the early works tended to create the traditional narrative, Ireland burst on the UN stage in its early golden age and since has had its flame falter and engagement has fallen to intermittent levels. However, more recent research, particularly the works of Tonra, O'Sullivan and Dee seek to apply new frameworks to augment, develop and reinterpret the existing narratives. This thesis identifies these scholars as being critically important, especially Tonra and O'Sullivan because of the similar theory of constructivism they apply in their work. While their work considers a broader scope of Irish Foreign Policy, they consistently identify Ireland's engagement with the UN as being a central pillar in building Ireland's national identity on the international stage.

²³ Neil Dee, "Decolonisation, Conflict, and Independence: The Impact of History on Ireland's Approach to Peacekeeping," in *the EU, Irish Defence Forces and Contemporary Security*, ed. Jonathan Carroll, Matthew G. O'Neill, and Mark Williams (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 195–210, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-07812-5_10.

²⁴ Dee, 'Decolonisation, Conflict and Independence', 204

1.4 Source and Source Criticism

The primary dataset to be examined in this thesis will be speeches made by Frank Aiken and Micheál Martin at the United Nations General Assembly. In total, there are 11 speeches; 8 from Aiken and 3 from Martin. This corpus of sources is available at the United Nations Digital Archive which provides the text and video of the speech; however, video is the case for speeches by Martin. The preservation of such work is done with the intent to make such diplomatic materials freely available to the public in a direct manner.

As Subotic argues, state “autobiographies” are stories countries tell to and about themselves and ‘provide such powerful explanations of why states do what they do’²⁵. Speeches are one such form of state “autobiographies”. Therefore, the speeches from two different Foreign Ministers will provide valuable insights into narratives employed by Irish officials at the UN and how these stories construct its foreign policy identity in the international arena. Their strengths include a direct analysis of the voice and statements made by Foreign Ministers which reflect the official stance of the Irish Government and can be examined in-depth for their authentic perspective on Ireland’s position and intentions at the UN. Additionally, they will offer a blend of information, arguments and political language which will provide the thesis with a wealth of material to delve into in order to analyse how these policymakers constructed Irish foreign policy as well as identifying key themes, narratives and ideological frameworks. Moreover, the speeches will provide key historical context from the Irish perspective during crucial periods of the Cold War, decolonization and in the more modern times, the post 9/11 era and during the Covid-19 crisis.

Like any source, there are not without weaknesses which should be considered. Firstly, the speeches may only offer a strategic representation of Ireland, Foreign Ministers may wish to present a particular version of Ireland’s position and will do so using diplomatic language. There will need to be a mindfulness of potential spin, omissions, and attempts to manage international perceptions. Secondly, speeches are crafter for persuasive impact and will employ specific language choices and emotional appeals as well the influence of political considerations. There will be a need to critically assess the rhetorical construction and be aware of the potential biases or manipulation present. Finally, speeches may be focused on specific occasions often dealing with one or two key issues or may provide a broad overview of more general issues. Both call on the need to have full knowledge of the historical context

²⁵ Subotić, “Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change,” 611.

and surrounding events in order to offer a more comprehensive overview of Ireland's entire foreign policy at the given time or what Carmel calls for which is 'an intimacy with the language and social, political and economic environment ... being studied.'²⁶

To address these limitations, this thesis intends to supplement its analysis with additional sources such as speeches made to other organs of the UN and parliament debates as well as secondary scholarly literature to ensure further contextualisation of the speeches. For example, Ireland served at the Security Council during both the periods to be studied (1960-61 and 2020-2021). Given the discrepancy in the number of speeches between the two figures, analysis of speeches made at the Security Council, of which Martin has one on the environment from September 23, 2021. Additionally, the national parliamentary (Dáil Éireann) debates will be a good source to consider contrasting views on Irish national identity at the UN. Records are digitised and freely available online.

1.5 Methodology

This thesis will apply the method of narrative analysis in a comparative case study. As a form of discourse analysis in International Relations (IR) and foreign policy analysis (FPA), its aim is to identify and reconstruct narratives in foreign policy discourse. With that in mind, in line with the approach proposed by Opperman and Spencer, this thesis will adopt a fairly minimal structural definition of narratives as a particular form of political discourse that consists of three interrelated features: setting, characters, and emplotment²⁷. These features are essential elements of any narratives and can be understood as follows; the setting is like the background in a play, providing the scene where the story happens. The characters are the ones who make things happen and move the story along. And finally, the plot is what gives the story structure and guides it towards some kind of ending. Additionally, attention must be paid to the speakers in the foreign policy discourse who tell particular stories, i.e. the narrators. This is because, according to Opperman and Spencer, 'the identity of the narrators will often be relevant for understanding the intended meaning'²⁸.

The first task of the analysis involves the coding of instances of the three features done through a close reading of the source material, i.e. the speeches of Aiken and Martin. For the purposes

²⁶ Emma Carmel, "Concepts, Context and Discourse in a Comparative Case Study," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 2, no. 2 (January 1999): 148, <https://doi.org/10.1080/136455799295104>, accessed February 3, 2024.

²⁷ Oppermann and Spencer, "Narrative Analysis," 120.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 121

of this thesis, identification of setting will be regarding how is the international context depicted (e.g. Cold War, post-Cold War)? Characters will be identified as who are the key actors portrayed in the speeches (e.g., Ireland, UN and other countries) and also noting how they are described. Emplotment elements will be identified as what are the main events or issues address? And what is the sequence of events and how is causality presented? Causality, as mentioned here, refers to the causal relationship between the settings, character, events, and actions. This notion ‘illustrates how events hang together’²⁹. The coding will be supported through the use of the qualitative data analysis software, Atlas.ti which will help process the coded material and organise the data. Through this chosen software, codes of each element will be assigned to specific phrases in every speech which represent each element. Once the coding schema has been applied to all speeches, the next task will be to re-assemble the coded sources into the various foreign policy narratives that are discernible. The re-assembly will allow for a rich understanding of the narratives present in each of the sets of speeches and will also allow for comparison and contrast in how Aiken and Martin frame the three elements in their speeches. This will help to identify continuities and changes in Irish policy narratives at the UN over time. It is important to remember that narrative analysis is an iterative process, so refinement may be necessary in the approach.

Overall, narrative analysis will be a valuable method for this research for several reasons. First, it can go beyond just material factors like power and economics and provide for deeper examination of the stories countries tell about themselves, their role in the world, and the motivations behind their actions. By examining Aiken and Martin’s speeches, this thesis will be able to uncover the underlying narratives about Ireland’s role in the world and its approach to international issues. Secondly, speeches at the UN are a platform for countries to project their national identity. Narrative analysis will aid in identifying the values, principle, and historical experiences that shape how Ireland portrays itself on the international stage. Moreover, by comparing speeches from different eras (Aiken’s covering the late 50s into the 1960s and Martin’s years of 2020-2022), this thesis can identify continuities in Irish foreign policy narratives (e.g., neutrality) and how they might have adapted to changing global contexts. Essentially, narrative analysis will allow this thesis to engage in a richer and more nuanced examination of the stories and justifications used to construct Irish foreign policy identity at the United Nations.

²⁹ Ibid, p.120

Chapter 2 Charting Irish Foreign Policy from the League of Nations to the UN (1922 to 2022)

2.1 Introduction

The tenure of Frank Aiken (1957 – 1966) and Micheál Martin (2020-2022) as representatives of Ireland at the United Nations marks two distinct yet pivotal periods in the development of Irish Foreign Policy. This chapter aims to answer the sub-question “What were the important events of Aiken’s and Martin’s tenure at the UN and of Ireland’s general foreign policy development and how did they impact Ireland’s identity?” with a discussion of the significant events and policies which shaped Irish foreign policy from 1922 until 2022. It first begins with an examination of the main factors which characterise Irish Foreign development from 1922 until Irish ascension to the UN in 1955. Next, it takes a look at Aiken’s tenure as head of the Irish UN delegation during the Cold War. After that, it charts the major developments in Irish history on its UN membership, most notably its pursuit of membership to the European Union and the 1996 White Paper on Foreign Policy. Following that, it will discuss the contemporary era of global affairs that marked the tenure of Martin at the UN, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit. Through tracing the evolution of Ireland’s approach to global engagement, this chapter aims to provide the historical contexts which will serve as a foundation in understanding the dominant narratives of the speeches of Aiken and Martin, it will show this evolution as a journey from a newly independent state to a proactive global actor committed to multilateralism, peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts.

2.2 1922-1945: Independence, The League of Nations and Neutrality.

Micheál Martin, speaking in his capacity as Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) to the United Nations General Assembly on the occasion of the 77th Annual Session to mark the centenary of Irish independence, described Ireland’s path as a nation as a journey where ‘from the start ... we were a nation that looked outwards’. From this perspective offered by the head of the Irish State, Ireland's national identity has always been concerned with actively participating in global affairs. Indeed, it would become a member of the League of Nations within its first year of independence, joining the organisation on the 10th of September 1923. A stark and persuasive example of the rationale for joining can be found in a statement by Bolton Waller, a researcher tasked with drawing the border of the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, writing before the end of the Civil War in March 1923 and arguing that League ‘membership being in fact at the present day one of the tests of attainment of full self-government and complete nationhood’. Waller’s work with the North-Eastern Boundary Bureau took him to

work at Geneva and highlights an important element of the Irish state's thinking; that involving itself in such an international organisation was a necessary step in attaining full status as an independent, sovereign nation.

Following its ascension to the League of Nations, as Whelan et al. argue, while it is the case that Irish membership in the organisation was never well-structured, there was some degree of a thought-out position, for example, from the first government of Ireland, which lasted from 1922 until 1932 and operated a policy of 'critical support' for efforts to maintain peace, disarmament and the international rule of law'. Such themes would revive themselves once Ireland ascended to the United Nations in 1955. Eamon de Valera, who became Taoiseach of the next government, was appointed to President of the Council of the League in 1933. In this capacity, de Valera's speech stands as, according to long-time Irish diplomat Noel Dorr, 'one of the more memorable and prescient warnings of the dangers to come if member states did not act together in support of the League'. The failure to prevent aggression from the Great Powers, as he had spoken about, did spell the end of the League and furthermore provided the determining factor in de Valera's own declaration in early 1939 that Ireland would not be participating in the upcoming war in Europe.

De Valera's position was codified in Article 49 of the 1937 version of the Irish Free State Constitution which stated that 'save in the case of actual invasion, the Irish Free State (Saorstát Eireann) shall not be committed to active participation in any war without the assent of the Oireachtas [Irish Parliament]'. This position of neutrality was not uncommon at this time amongst other nations such as the United States. However, unlike that of the US, Ireland would escape direct attack during the Second World War and maintain this status, largely due to its geographical location. This period during WWII also marks the traditional starting point of the international recognition of Irish neutrality. Ireland's neutral status can be said to mark, alongside its membership with the League during the 1920s and 1930s, as an important aspect of Ireland's national identity in foreign relations and provides immediately relevant contextual information to its decision to attempt to join the United Nations.

However, one other key side of its foreign relations must also be considered, namely its status as a member of the British Commonwealth. This was provided for in the Anglo-Irish Treaty signed at the end of the Irish War of Independence in 1922 and made the Irish Free State a dominion on the same status as Canada. Additionally, it solidified partition on the island of Ireland granting the recently created Northern Ireland the right to opt out of the Free State,

which the Northern Ireland Parliament exercised. Other aspects of the Treaty can be viewed as limiting the sovereignty of the new Irish nation concerning the oath of allegiance to the crown for all elected officials, retention of designated naval ports, and provisions mandating contributions to repay the British national debt, as argued by Martin Mansergh . The Treaty stands as a crucial piece of context at the beginning of the development of Irish Foreign Policy and provides greater clarity for why the new state would be so keen to join an organisation like the League which, paraphrasing Bolton Waller, can grant the status of a full free nation amongst the established family of nations.

From the outset, the Irish Free States' attitude towards Commonwealth status was complicated. The first iteration of the Irish Free State's constitution in 1922 began in Article 1 with reference to Ireland as 'a co-equal member of the Community of Nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations' however the very next article in rather stark contradiction stated 'all powers of government and all authority ... are derived from the people' . This begins, what Martin Mansergh describes as a constant thread amongst successive governments who would attempt to develop Irish constitutional frameworks in the spirit of the Irish revolution, progressively distancing itself from any reference to the Commonwealth, but 'it took the best part of 30 years to free itself from that constraint' . The final break with the Commonwealth came between 1948-49 in a rather embarrassing set of events. The then-Taoiseach, John A., Costello, speaking at a Commonwealth meeting in Canada, claimed the act of External Relations was repealed by unanimous agreement in Cabinet therefore removing the nation from the Commonwealth. This unanimous agreement is not true however there was broad government support behind Costello's move, according to the then-Minister for Health, Noel Browne, whose testimony has now become the official version of events. The clumsy nature of this final break did little to affect the nature of the bilateral Anglo-Irish relation, there was no disruption to trade or movement of people particularly given the post-war reconstruction effort on the part of Britain. Less practically and more politically though, the severance from the Commonwealth brought about two particularly damaging results for the Irish Free State. First, Britain's response included the establishment of the Act of Ireland guarantee to unionists in Northern Ireland that 'in no event will Northern Ireland ... cease to be part of ... the United Kingdom, without the consent of Northern Ireland' .

Secondly, and more damaging for its wider foreign policy development, its break with the Commonwealth came with a price that Mansergh describes as creating distance and foregoing

new networking opportunities other Commonwealth countries . While this was a channel often ignored by the Irish government, it did further isolate itself from the wider world and when considered alongside the end of the League, it left Ireland without a vital channel of communication with foreign countries. Additionally, its policy of neutrality during the Second World War garnered little credit during the war despite its hidden friendly neutrality and covert assistance to the Allies. This left Ireland in a situation of almost complete isolation with limited bilateral connections mostly within what Whelan et al. call the ‘Western Capitalist Club’ , it had established diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom and the United States in 1923 and 1924, followed up by relations with France, and Germany in 1929. This prompted the stated justification from the Soviet Union, who had no direct links with Ireland, for its veto on Irish membership at the United Nations, from when Ireland first attempted to join the organisation in 1946 until 1955, although Ray Murphy cast doubt on such justification for a policy more obviously ‘primarily based on Cold War rivalry’ . Thus far the journey of the sovereign Irish state into the family of nations was stalling.

2.3 1945-1945: Pursuit for UN Membership, facing Soviet Vetoes

In the aftermath of World War II, fifty-one states came together to participate in the San Francisco Conference, in April 1945, becoming the original members of the United Nations, these states were effectively all members of the Allied forces at war with the Axis powers in mid-1945. Ireland’s policy of neutrality, according to Dorr, was the reason it was not invited to San Francisco and therefore not a founding member of the organization. The United Nations Charter was the founding document drafted in San Francisco and established the main bodies of the organization, these are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat. Focusing on the first two bodies, the purpose of the General Assembly is to act as the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the UN. In the present day, all 193 Member States of the UN are represented at the General Assembly which meets each year in New York for the annual General Assembly, which includes general debate where the speeches that will be analyzed in this thesis take place as this debate includes many heads of state addresses. The Security Council is the body of the organization whose main task, set out in the Charter, is the maintenance of international peace and security. Comprising of a total of fifteen members, ten of which are temporary non-permanent members elected on two-year terms by the General Assembly as well as five permanent members. In 1945 these five permanent members were the United States, the

United Kingdom, France (represented by the Provisional Government of the French Republic), the Soviet Union (now Russia), and China (then represented by the Republic of China government but replaced by the People's Republic of China since 1971). One crucial power granted to the five permanent members is the right to veto the vote of any resolution presented to the Security Council. Soon after the UN was established, the initial ideal of potential collective enforcement and security was made 'redundant and obsolete' with the start of the Cold War, as argued by Murphy . It was during the Cold War that the veto power was used most liberally to prevent a shift in the balance of the organization in favour of one side or the border between the United States and the Soviet Union as the example of the Soviet Union vetoing Irish membership highlights.

The premise of collective security which forms the basis of the United Nations is set out in the first lines of the UN Charter which states its purpose is;

'To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace'.

It may at first appear strange then, given the immediate events Ireland had experienced, the failure of the League of Nations, its tense relationship with Commonwealth statutes, and its policy of neutrality during the Second World War, that the Dáil (Irish Parliament) would approve the motion to apply for membership on 26 July 1946. However, as Dorr argues, for the government at the time, still led by Eamonn de Valera, this move would have seemed quite logical and consistent given previous governments' approaches to the League of Nations alongside its difficult history to independence in the century, meaning Ireland 'had a sense of the importance [...] and of the need [...] for an effective international organization' .

A simple decision from Ireland to apply to the UN follows the spirit of openness of the organization to 'all other peace-loving states' but it is not enough in itself. The Charter goes on to state that admission of any state is 'to be effected by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council'. In its capacity as a permanent member of the Security Council the Soviet Union vetoed Irish membership consistently for the next nine years. It would only be at the end of the General Assembly session in 1955 that a "package deal" would be agreed between the United States and the Soviet Union which saw Ireland's membership accepted. Cold War politics was again at play in this event as the deal was a 'carefully' and 'delicately balanced' arrangement with the object of increasing the size

of the General Assembly but with no resulting shift to either side of the Cold War forces as argued by Murphy who notes the ‘doubt almost up to the last moment’ regarding Ireland’s membership . This presents a good opportunity to briefly mention the makeup of the General Assembly just before Ireland took up its place in the UN. The two factors already mentioned the influence of the Cold War and the veto powers of the P5 Security Council members meant that the General Assembly and its votes held vastly more influence than can be considered today. The tension of the Cold War meant that the Assembly was organized broadly into two rival blocs. Soon after Ireland’s arrival, waves of decolonization in Asia and Africa would create new nations that would create an organized bloc of “non-aligned” members. However, before this, countries outside of any alliance such as Sweden or those states which were inside an alliance, but which could engage in some degree of independence viewed themselves under the simple moniker of ‘good UN members’, and this is where Ireland would first identify itself once at the organization.

2.4 1955-1967: Aiken’s UN Activism during the Cold War

Ireland became a member state of the United Nations on 14 December 1955. The Government thus established a permanent mission for the organization which consisted of Frederick Boland as a permanent representative, Eamonn Kennedy as counselor, and Paul Keating as second secretary. In preparation for the eleventh annual session of the General Assembly, the permanent mission was joined by Ireland’s first delegation to the UN, consisting of ‘seasoned and talented diplomats’, according to Ann Marie O’Brien, including Conor Cruise O’Brien and led by the then Minister for External Affairs, Liam Cosgrave. Having now left its somewhat self-imposed exile of the last 15 years from international affairs and with new UN membership demanding it, Ireland needed to create a focused and salient definition of its foreign policy. It would be Cosgrave who would formulate three broad principles for his approach to participation at the UN: loyalty to the UN Charter; the pursuit of an independent foreign policy; and a commitment to preserve and protect Christian civilization from the spread of communism . At the delegation’s first outing in the Eleventh session of the General Assembly, Cosgrave’s principles took effect, Ireland voting along the lines of the United States and its policy was overall described by Murphy as ‘unequivocally pro-Western and unremittingly anti-Soviet’. In addition to these three principles of Charter fealty, independence, and anti-communism, Cosgrave did express a position of Irish sympathy towards de-colonization and a support of the right to self-determination however this was tempered by his commitment to his third principle as he told the Dáil in 1956 that

Irish anti-colonialism should be considered alongside support for the ‘just and reasonable interests of European powers’. With the performance of Ireland at its first General Assembly session, under Cosgrave, it would seem this meant Irish anti-colonialism would always be subservient to its pro-Western approach.

Two key factors can be seen to affect the initial development of Ireland’s membership to the UN. Firstly, there was a domestic factor that cut short the role of Liam Cosgrave. The summer of 1957 saw his government lose out in a general election and be replaced by a Fianna Fáil-led government, under the leadership again of Eamonn de Valera, installing Frank Aiken as the new Minister for External Affairs. Aiken came to this role as a revolutionary turned seasoned politician, described by Dorr as ‘taciturn, a man of great integrity, conviction, and stubbornness, somewhat puritan in outlook, and at heart an engineer with an inventive cast of mind’. Regarding his approach to the issue of Ireland’s UN identity, what he may have shared with Cosgrave as support for the first and second principles, he added what O’Sullivan argues was a ‘strong sense of diplomatic pragmatism’ which included a healthy amount of criticism towards the third principle which Aiken considered to be incompatible with the first two. Under the new Aiken-led delegation, Ireland continued to rely on the diplomatic efforts of Frederick Boland, Eamonn Kennedy, and Conor Cruise O’Brien.

Aiken’s long tenure as head of the Department of Foreign Relations undoubtedly plays a major role in making him one of the most associated figures with this period of Ireland’s UN Membership. Moreover, his commitment to the organization furthered this association, Aiken would spend many months at a time at the General Assembly, taking Ireland’s seat at committee meetings and plenary sessions of the Assembly, this time commitment was unique to Aiken, as Dorr notes, ‘for longer than any foreign minister could afford today’. Nevertheless, this highlights Aiken's personal commitment to supporting the UN. Aiken spent these long periods striking a number of key relationships at the organization in pursuit of an independent Irish policy for foreign relations. These networks ranged amongst newly independent Afro-Asian states – acknowledging his revolutionary background – to Ireland’s more moderate partners in the West such as the United Kingdom and the United States and even to key UN officials such as Ralph Bunche, who would become Under (Deputy) Secretary General of the UN by the time of Aiken’s departure in 1969. Writing to Aiken then, Bunche typifies the well-rounded personal respect felt towards Aiken by the organization and its member states representatives as a whole;

‘... to an old-timer like myself, it seems strange that you are not here. I simply felt compelled to write this note to let you know how much I miss your towering (literally and figuratively) presence here’.

Aiken’s period in office oversaw a number of important international developments that helped form and test the independent nature of Irish foreign policy espoused by the government. At the eleventh General Assembly in 1957, the first for Ireland under Aiken, the matter of the draft convention on the nationality of married women, which would recognize a woman’s nationality regardless of her marital status, arose for Ireland to stake its position on. Reflecting what Ann Marie O’Brien argues as an Aiken-led progressive policy on foreign affairs, Ireland voted in favour of the convention, which was passed by the Assembly on February 20, 1957. Another initial display of independence and progressivism came with, despite what Murphy argues was strong opposition from the US and the Catholic Church, Ireland’s vote in favour of calling for a discussion on the representation of the People’s Republic of China at the UN. Moreover, Aiken would again risk US opposition with plans for military disarmament, again displaying a level of independence that also highlights a generalized effort from Ireland under Aiken at the UN to relieve Cold War tensions. Highlighting the strong support for anti-colonialism that Aiken injected into Irish UN membership, in 1960 the delegation supported a draft Resolution 1514, the “Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples”, which considered that ‘all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom’ with a proclamation of ‘the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations’. Dorr argues that there were claims of propaganda as opposition from many Western countries against this draft, yet Ireland still voted in favour of it, again showing a strong degree of independence this time in the area of anti-colonial support. Throughout this period, from 1957 until the mid-1960s, a series of booklets of Aiken’s speeches were published, through which these major issues for the Irish delegation can be traced, other topics addressed included the financing of UN peacekeeping; the situation in Congo; the Middle East; the situation in Tibet; and the need for support for the independence of the secretary-general. These publications themselves are of significance since, as Dorr argues, they serve as a clear indication of the level of importance the UN was to Ireland as a forum to present its foreign policy

These are just some of the events which characterize Ireland’s membership under Aiken, where it occupied, as has been shown, a position in the Assembly with a willingness to pursue

an independent and progressive agenda often against prevailing opposition from the “Western Capitalist Club”. Specific attention the nature of Ireland’s membership during the tenure of Aiken shall be left until later on this thesis when the focus is turned to the discussion of the narrative themes present in his speeches. What follows now in this chapter is, a brief section touching on some of the important events in Irish Foreign Policy which bridge the time between the eras of Aiken and Michael Martin.

2.5 1966 – 2020: Important developments for Ireland and the UN from Aiken to Martin Ireland, the EEC and the UN

Most notably, Ireland joined the European Economic Community (EEC), now known as the European Union (EU), in 1972. Ireland’s journey towards EEC membership involved significant shifts in economic policy and international positioning. By the late 1950s, the country faced persistent economic and financial challenges, including a declining population and a heavy dependence on the British market. Under then Taoiseach Seán Lemass, a significant policy shift occurred in the early 1960s. Lemass steered Ireland towards economic liberalization, moving away from protectionism and encouraging trade and inward investment. As argued by Mansergh, this can be seen as part of a broader strategy to secure the economic and social foundations necessary for sustained political independence and development³⁰. Final say on EEC membership was decided by way of a referendum in 1972. During the referendum, Taoiseach Jack Lynch, argued ‘the biggest single gain we make is a new kind of freedom – the freedom to shape our own future as a people’³¹. This highlights a position from the Irish State that joining the EEC would allow Ireland to move beyond its dependency on the UK and gain the freedom to shape its own future.

One way this new feature of Irish Foreign policy helped shape its own future came in how it affects Ireland’s position at the UN. As has already been discussed, at the same time Lemass his broader strategy, Ireland’s involvement at the United Nations was highlighting the state’s commitment to peace and cooperation. The country’s participation in UN peacekeeping was seen as a continuation of its commitment to an independent foreign policy, while also aligning with its non-aligned states in military alliances. Dorr argues that Ireland’s pursuit of EEC membership required careful navigation of its international stances at the UN³².

³⁰ Mansergh, “Sovereign Independence, but ‘A Family of Nations’ to Belong To,” 38.

³¹ Quoted in Mansergh “Sovereign Independence, but ‘A Family of Nations’ to Belong To,” 38.

³² Dorr, “Ireland at the United Nations,” 53.

The interplay between Ireland's EEC aspirations and its UN commitment underscored a complex balancing act. On one hand, the drive for EEC membership required Ireland to integrate economically and politically with Europe, promising growth and greater political sovereignty in shaping its future. On the other hand, its active role in the UN reflected a continued commitment to global peace. Dorr concludes that this dual focus allowed Ireland to leverage its UN membership to build a reputation as a peacekeeper and moral authority while pursuing economic integration with Europe. Specifically, he argues that this 'enhanced' Irish foreign policy, adding a new dimension of 'seriousness' to its UN membership³³

1996 White Paper on Foreign Policy

In 1996, the Government of Ireland published a White Paper on Foreign Policy which remains the state's primary foreign policy document. Upon publication of the White Paper, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dick Spring, speaking on the matter in the Dáil, highlighted to continuing Irish commitment to the aims and principles of the United Nations Charter as 'a cornerstone of our foreign policy'³⁴. The White Paper connects these aims and principles to specifically to the interests of Ireland as a small state in that they amount to the best basis for an international system which can work to the benefit of small states. This is reflected in the assertion;

'It is precisely because Ireland is small and hugely dependent on external trade for its well-being that we need an active foreign policy. Ireland does not have the luxury of deciding whether or not to pursue a policy of external engagement. We do not have a sufficiently large domestic market or adequate natural resources to enable our economy to thrive in isolation. We depend for our survival on a regulated international environment in which the rights and interests of even the smallest are guaranteed and protected'³⁵.

The White Paper establishes four priority areas of foreign policy, these are – peacekeeping; disarmament; human rights; and development.

2.6 2020-2022: Martin's Contemporary Era of Global Challenges

³³ Ibid, 54

³⁴ Dáil Éireann debate Vol. 463 No. 5 (March 1996) available at <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1996-03-28/6/>, accessed 16 March 2024

³⁵ Quoted in Eileen Connolly and John Doyle, "The Place of the United Nations in Contemporary Irish Foreign Policy," in Michael Kennedy and Deirdre MacMahon (eds.) *Obligations and Responsibilities: Ireland and the United Nations: 1955-2005* (Dublin: IPA & Department of Foreign Affairs, 2005) 2.

Following a successful result in the 2020 General Election, Fianna Fáil saw itself as the biggest party in Ireland, going on to form a coalition agreement with the centre-right (and historical rivals of Fianna Fáil) Fine Gael party as well as the Green Party. Micheál Martin, as leader of Fianna Fáil, was elected as Taoiseach in June 2020. Previously, Martin had served as Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2009 until 2011, marked by his visit to Cuba, the first official visit by any Irish minister. Owing to this previous position, as Taoiseach, Martin assumed many of the representative roles in Irish Foreign Policy including speaking on behalf of the Irish Delegation at the United Nations General Assembly and at the Security Council following Ireland's election to a fourth term in 2020.

This came at a pivotal time globally. The Covid-19 pandemic was reshaping international diplomacy, presenting unprecedented challenges and necessitating new modes of cooperation. In early 2020, Ireland had implemented significant lockdown measures, which continued into 2021, causing economic and social strain. As the pandemic continued, Ireland faced challenges with vaccine rollouts and economic recovery. In its successful bid for a Security Council seat, Ireland was underscoring its commitment to multilateralism and peacekeeping. Especially in regard to peacekeeping, this was something Ireland had, by this time, had a long-standing commitment to charting back to the time of Aiken. At the Security Council, Ireland aimed to extend its influence and uphold its values on the international stage. Key objectives included building peace, strengthening prevention, and ensuring accountability, as articulated by Micheál Martin in a 2020 General Assembly speech preceding Ireland's ascent to the Security Council³⁶.

At the UN, Ireland played a pivotal role in humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts. Within the Security Council, the penholder role refers to the 'member of the Council that leads the negotiation and drafting of resolutions on a particular Council agenda item'³⁷. As co-penholder with Norway, Ireland facilitated the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2585, ensuring a humanitarian corridor in Syria. Additionally, Ireland's drafting of UNSC Resolution 2594 emphasised the importance of strategic planning for the time after conflicts, reflecting its

³⁶ "General Assembly Official Records, 75th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Saturday, 26 September 2020, New York" ([New York]: UN, 2020), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3903860/files/A_75_PV.12-AR.pdf, accessed 2 February 2023.

³⁷ 'Penholders and Chairs' *Security Council Report*, (February 2024), available at <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/pen-holders-and-chairs.php>, accessed 16 March 2024

peacekeeping experience³⁸. The United Nations considered the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace-making, conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts as a key priority³⁹. UNSC Resolution 1325 adopted in 2000 placed specific important on the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution as well as their equal and full participation in peace and security measures. This was the first instance of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) taken up at the level of the UN Security Council. Ireland demonstrated considerable commitment to the WPS agenda during its fourth time at the UNSC, ensuring it remains a focus during its UNSC presidency by inviting key civil society speakers to address the council.

In relation to its key domestic partners – the EU, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, Martin’s tenure as Taoiseach necessitated careful navigation of many complex challenges. On the turmoil caused by UK leaving the EU in 2016 (Brexit), Ireland was faced with key issues with Brexit’s impact on Ireland’s relationship with the UK and the EU. One issues of particular note was the Northern Ireland Protocol. The Protocol had been as part of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU, ratified by Westminster on 23 January 2020 which contained assurances that there would be no hard border in the Irish Sea or on the island of Ireland. The Protocol also contained a number of measures including custom checks at Northern Irish ports and data sharing between the UK and the EU. However, because of a divergence of interpretation on these checks between the Boris Johnson government in Britain and the President of the European Commission, Ireland was placed into a tense position in trying to maintain the integrity of the EU’s single market and no hard Irish border. Kenneth McDonagh concludes that Brexit has undoubtedly meant relations with the UK have suffered as ‘Anglo-Irish relations are arguably at their lowest ebb since the early 1990s’⁴⁰. Relations with the USA were especially influence as a result of the 2020 US election and the transition from the administration of Donald Trump to that over Joseph Biden. Biden’s election was positively received in Ireland, given his supportive stance on the Good Friday

³⁸ Kenneth McDonagh, “Ireland’s Foreign Relations in 2021,” *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 33, no. 1 (2022): 235, available at <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2792104298/abstract/440CCBF50D054CC4PQ/4>, accessed 21 December 2023.

³⁹ ‘Gender, Women, Peace and Security’, *UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs*, accessed 16 March 2024, available at <https://dppa.un.org/en/women-peace-and-security>

⁴⁰ Kenneth McDonagh, “Ireland’s Foreign Relations in 2020,” *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 32, no. 1 (2021): 329, <https://doi.org/10.3318/ISIA.2021.32.15>, accessed 21 December 2023.

Agreement⁴¹. This was the pair of agreements signed on 10 April 1998 that ended most of the violence of “The Troubles”, the conflict in Northern Ireland which began in the late 1960s.

2.7 Conclusion

In examining the key events and foreign policy developing before and during the tenures of Frank Aiken and Micheál Martin at the UN, this chapter has sought to answer the sub-question “What were the important events of Aiken’s and Martin’s tenure at the UN and of Ireland’s general foreign policy development and what do they reveal about Ireland’s role on the global stage?”. It is evident that the answer to this is one that has shown Ireland’s role has been profoundly shaped by these events and developments. Aiken’s era was shown to be characterised by a commitment to neutrality, anti-colonialism, and an independent foreign policy amidst the Cold War’s tensions. Through Aiken’s tenure, Ireland established itself, even at an early stage of its membership, established Ireland as a principled and independent voice in international affairs. The interceding years saw how Ireland, through its integration into the EEC meant an ability to enhance its role at the UN. Additionally, the 1996 White Paper on Foreign Policy highlighted the continual evolution of its foreign policy. For Martin, his tenure was similar marked by global challenges and this chapter highlighted these modern geopolitical complexities as the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, US relations and its time at the UN Security Council which highlighted its continued belief in multilateral commitments, reinforcing Ireland role as a dedicated promoter of peace, stability, and human rights. The period covered in this chapter illustrates how Ireland’s consistent emphasis on sovereignty, international cooperation, and principles stances have defined its foreign policy and its global presence, reflecting a small state that is deeply engage with its role on the world stage.

⁴¹ McDonagh, 323.

Chapter 3 The Narrative Elements in Frank Aiken's United Nations Speeches (1957-1966)

3.1 Introduction

Frank Aiken, as Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1957 to 1969, played a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of Ireland's foreign policy at the United Nations General Assembly. This chapter explores the narrative elements of setting, characterization, and emplotment in Aiken's speeches during his tenure at the UN, analyzing how these elements contribute to the construction of Ireland's foreign policy and its portrayal on the global stage. The discussion will address two primary sub-questions: "What *are the core themes and narratives in the speeches of Aiken?*", and the "*How do the speeches utilise rhetorical strategies (e.g. metaphors, appeals to emotion) and historical analogies to construct a persuasive portrayal of Ireland's foreign policy identity?*".

3.2 Setting

In Aiken's speeches, the setting is multifaceted, encompassing the geopolitical context of the Cold War, the emerging post-colonial world order, what Aiken refers to, in 1960, as the 'governing currents of our time' as well as the evolving role of the United Nations as a platform for international diplomacy.⁴²

The Cold War era provided a stark backdrop for Aiken's speeches, with the threat of nuclear war looming large and his description of this setting remained remarkably consistent throughout his speeches. In 1957, Aiken described the Cold war in very precarious terms. It is fueled by the existence of 'two tremendous concentrations of power' – the United States and the Soviet Union – whose immense power creates a new and dangerous dynamic in world history. He states that 'it is not enough that neither [...] is so mad as to deliberately seek a general war' referring to the doctrine of mutually assured destruction yet Aiken the inherent danger posed by these two forces existing without a balancing power.⁴³ In his 1960 speech, Aiken adds 'the intense competition ... between Great Powers ... for the support of independent nations and peoples' as an important aspect in his description of the Cold War. Aiken emphasis its role as a 'substitute for war'⁴⁴. Clearly, he is referencing Article 1 of the

⁴² "General Assembly, 15th Session: 890th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 6 October 1960, New York," 1960, 478, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/740848>, accessed 2 February 2024.

⁴³ "General Assembly, 12th session :682nd plenary meeting, Friday, 20 September 1957, New York," 1957, 46, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/730315/files/A_PV-682-EN.pdf, accessed 2 February 2024.

⁴⁴ "General Assembly, 15th session :890th plenary meeting, Thursday, 6 October 1960, New York" 478.

UN charter which calls for the ‘suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace’. Here Aiken is portraying the Cold War as a situation where the sheer power of the two opposing sides creates a constant threat of war, even if neither actively seeks it. Aiken also describes the Cold War as a ‘natural and healthy’ competition for support from “independent nations and peoples”, suggesting a concern for the right of these nations to choose their own path. Aiken caveat this description of the Cold War setting of this competition as only beneficial insofar it will respect the independent nations. This introduces an element of opposition towards the US and USSR and their focus on winning allies, highlighting that Aiken desires a world where smaller nations aren’t pressured to choose sides. He doesn’t condone the Cold War itself, but he is acknowledging the realpolitik of the situation.

This context of the Cold War is further evident in his repeated calls for nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons. For instance, in his 1966 address, Aiken emphasized the urgent need to "stop the further dissemination of nuclear weapons" and prevent "the endless multiplication of stockpiles in the nuclear states". The ideological confrontation between the East and the West influenced Aiken’s appeals for a balanced approach to international security, avoiding the escalation of power blocs while promoting regional peace initiatives.

Aiken’s tenure coincided with a remarkable era of decolonisation. From Africa to Asia, many countries gained independence and joined the United Nations. This setting is Aiken warmly welcomed these new members, viewing their inclusion as a sign of ‘the steady widening of the frontiers of human freedom throughout the world’.⁴⁵ This shift was not merely a numerical change in the number of members in the Assembly but a profound rearrangement in the composition and priorities of the international community. Newly independent states brought fresh perspectives to global discussions, emphasizing the importance of sovereignty, self-determination, and economic development. Ireland’s own historical experience with colonialism and its status as a relatively small, neutral state helped Aiken to position Ireland as a sympathetic and credible advocate for newly independent countries. Aiken used various rhetorical strategies and historical analogies to strengthen this positioning. He drew parallels between Ireland’s own struggle for independence and the aspirations of newly independent states, clearly seeking to foster a sense of shared identity and purpose. An example of this can

⁴⁵ “General Assembly, 17th session :1142nd plenary meeting, Thursday, 4 October 1962, New York,” 1962, 321, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/732918/files/A_PV-1142-EN.pdf.

be seen in Aiken's 1957 speech where he invokes Ireland 'long experience of tragic frustration' in order to claim that the right to self-determination 'ought' to be the Assembly's guide 'for a just and peaceful world order'.⁴⁶

The UN setting allowed Aiken to address global issues from a multilateral perspective, positioning Ireland as a moral voice in international affairs. The thematic elements of peace, justice, and cooperation are recurrent in Aiken's speeches. He frequently referenced the UN Charter and the principles of international law as the foundation for resolving conflicts and promoting global stability. For example, Aiken's advocacy for regional neutrality areas and his proposals for United Nations peacekeeping operations were grounded in the principles of collective security and international cooperation.

3.3 Characterisation

Ireland, as represented by Aiken, is characterized as a principled and proactive member of the international community. Aiken positions Ireland as a staunch advocate for disarmament, human rights, the rule of law and peacekeeping. In 1964, Aiken strongly position Ireland as an advocate for peacekeeping operations, 'since becoming a member Ireland has supplied [...] more soldiers in proportion to population than any other member states' and attaches a sense of pride to this as serving a 'noble cause'.⁴⁷ Ireland is also portrayed as a champion of smaller nations, advocating for their rights. With specific mention of its own history, Aiken depicts Ireland has having a kinship with the emerging nations of the day which he in strong terms as making it 'impossible for any representative of Ireland to withhold support for racial, religious, national or economic rights in any part of the world.

Aiken's speeches often highlight the role and responsibilities of the major global powers in the international arena. He frequently addresses the global powers usually in the context of a discussion of nuclear weapons like in his 1958 speech were Aiken names 'the members of the so-called nuclear club – the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France'.⁴⁸ Aiken characterizes them as both potential threats and guardians to global peace. In a 1966 speech, Aiken underscores the dual nature of nuclear technology, acknowledging its importance as 'the most marvelous scientific discovery of all time' but questioning whether it will be 'a blessing or a curse' for humanity.⁴⁹ This dichotomy characterises nuclear powers as holding immense potential for both constructive and destructive outcomes, placing a moral imperative on their actions. Indeed, it is an ever-present aspect linking a sense of existential

⁴⁶ "General Assembly, 12th session :682nd plenary meeting, Friday, 20 September 1957, New York," 48.

⁴⁷ "General Assembly, 19th Session :1295th Plenary Meeting, Tuesday, 8 December 1964, New York" (New York : UN, 1964), 2, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/749159/files/A_PV-1295-EN.pdf.

⁴⁸ "General Assembly, 13th session :751st plenary meeting, Friday, 19 September 1958, New York," 1958, 40, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/731480/files/A_PV-751-EN.pdf, accessed 2 February 2024.

⁴⁹ "General Assembly, 21st Session :1434th Plenary Meeting, Monday, 10 October 1966, New York" (New York: UN, 1966), 1, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/734818/files/A_PV-1434-EN.pdf, accessed 2 February 2024.

threat to this role the nuclear powers have, according to Aiken. In 1959, his focus is on just how devastating the potential of nuclear war would be and therefore he comes to terms with the fact that the ‘best’ hope is to rely on the precarious balance of ‘terror’ between the nuclear powers.⁵⁰ Aiken’s portrayal of these powers is not monolithic; he acknowledges their internal conflicts and the pressure they face. For instance, in his 1957 speech, concluding his remarks he focuses on conflict in Algeria between France and the Algerian National Liberation Front, which would eventually lead to Algeria’s independence in 1962. In his remarks, he makes to appeal that while France is urged to cede control of its colony, what is more important is ‘that France should liberate herself from Algeria’ in doing so France can take its place ‘as the great exemplar and defender of human freedom and of the rights of man’.⁵¹

Aiken also uses the characterisation of non-nuclear states in reference to smaller nations and depicts them as vulnerable yet critical in the quest for global peace. Aiken often championed the cause of smaller nations, urging them to avoid the perilous path of nuclear armament. He warns that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by these states could lead to their own destruction rather than provide security; ‘The attempt by a non-nuclear state to produce or otherwise acquire a few atomic bombs might well bring about the very attack their governments fear’.⁵² Another way these states are referred to by Aiken is as newly independent nations. Aiken underscores their potential contributions to global peace and stability. He praised these countries for their struggle for independence and their alignment with the principles of the UN Charter. He viewed their inclusion in the UN as a positive development that reinforced the legitimacy and diversity of the international community. For example, Aiken begins his 1962 speech by welcoming new members such as Rwanda, Burundi, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, Aiken highlighted the expanding frontiers of freedom and the importance of supporting these nations in their development.⁵³

The United Nations itself is a central character in Aiken’s speeches, often depicted as the ultimate arbiter and hope for world peace. More specifically, in the context of his characterisation of smaller states, Aiken depicts the UN as an essential feature for their position in global politics, stating in 1960 that it is a body in which ‘the small nations have influence such that they have never possessed in their history’.⁵⁴ Aiken also characterises the UN as this essential institution which is facing existential threats due to financial instability and the reluctance of major powers to fully support its peacekeeping efforts. In his 1962 speech, Aiken laments the financial crisis confronting the UN, describing it as ‘the most grave of all problems’ and comparing the organisation’s financial health to a ‘super sophisticated satellite bereft of a source of energy’.⁵⁵ This metaphor characterises the UN as a powerful but vulnerable entity, dependent on the collective support of its member states. Aiken also characterises the UN as a democratic institution, warning against the danger of financial and political vetoes by major powers. He argues that allowing such vetoes would

⁵⁰ “General Assembly, 13th session :751st plenary meeting, Friday, 19 September 1958, New York,” 40.

⁵¹ “General Assembly, 12th session :682nd plenary meeting, Friday, 20 September 1957, New York,” 48.

⁵² “General Assembly, 21st Session :1434th Plenary Meeting, Monday, 10 October 1966, New York,” 1.

⁵³ “General Assembly, 17th session :1142nd plenary meeting, Thursday, 4 October 1962, New York,” 321.

⁵⁴ “General Assembly, 15th session :890th plenary meeting, Thursday, 6 October 1960, New York” 480.

⁵⁵ “General Assembly, 17th session :1142nd plenary meeting, Thursday, 4 October 1962, New York” 321.

reduce the UN to a mere ‘debating society’ and erode its effectiveness as a tool for international cooperation and peace.⁵⁶

3.4 Emplotment

The narrative elements of emplotment featured in Aiken speeches can be identified in the logical progression of Aiken’s points, moving from problem identification to proposed solutions, interwoven with calls to action and appeals to shared values. Aiken begins his speeches by addressing the pressing global issues, primarily this is the threat of nuclear war and the financial crisis facing the UN but it’s also the issues of the representation of China at the UN as well as the previously mentioned danger of financial and political vetoes. For example, in his 1960 speech, Aiken articulate the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the necessity for an international agreement to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.⁵⁷ He then moves on to propose concrete solutions such as establishing nuclear-free zones, areas which would ‘limit armaments to police level’ and strengthening UN capabilities.⁵⁸ Aiken’s suggestion for regional neutrality areas exemplifies his practical approach to incremental disarmament and conflict resolution, he depicts this in his 1963 speech as ‘groupings based on mutual cooperation, restricted armaments and the rule of law [which] would constitute major contributions to World Peace and stability’.⁵⁹ Throughout his speeches, Aiken calls for collective action and moral responsibility. His rhetoric often includes appeals to the shared humanity of UN members and the moral imperative to act for the common good. For example, in 1965, he urges the assembly to support a reliable funding mechanism for UN peacekeeping operations to uphold international peace and security, ‘I submit to the other 112 members that it is vital for their safety and welfare that the Assembly should be placed in a position to finance [...] peace-keeping activities’.⁶⁰

3.5 Rhetorical Strategies

While the preceding discussion have made mention of some specific elements of the rhetorical strategies employed by Aiken, what will now follow is a specific examination of how these strategies and historical analogies enhanced the persuasiveness of his speeches.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 322

⁵⁷ “ General Assembly, 15th session :890th plenary meeting, Thursday, 6 October 1960, New York.”

⁵⁸ “ General Assembly, 19th session :1295th plenary meeting, Tuesday, 8 December 1964, New York” 3.

⁵⁹ “General Assembly, 18th session :1226th plenary meeting, Thursday, 3 October 1963, New York” ([New York]: UN, 1963), 4, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/731797/files/A_PV-1226-EN.pdf, accessed 2 February 2024.

⁶⁰ “General Assembly, 20th session :1343rd plenary meeting, Thursday, 30 September 1965, New York” (New York: UN, 1965), 18, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/745656/files/A_PV-1343-EN.pdf, accessed 2 February 2024.

Aiken, in 1962, when discussing the importance of resolving the financial crisis facing the UN, he likens the organisation to that of an army, ‘as an army is said to march on its stomach, the onward march of an organisation such as ours depends on its purse’.⁶¹ Aiken speeches also frequently appeal to emotions of hope and fear. By highlighting the catastrophic potential of nuclear weapons and contrasting it with the hopeful vision of world peace, Aiken seeks to motivate the other members of the General Assembly to support disarmament and peacekeeping initiatives. Aiken establishes his credibility by aligning Ireland’s foreign policy with universally recognised values, most often in the form of explicit support for the principles of the UN Charter. Additionally, Aiken referencing authoritative figures, like Pope Paul VI, in 1966 Aiken quotes the Pope’s assessment of the UN as ‘this Organisation [which] represents the obligatory road of modern civilization and of world peace’⁶² and former Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld when describing how the United Nations is above all ‘our organisation’ speaking in relation to smaller nations.⁶³ This enhances the moral weight of Aiken’s arguments and is his attempt to reinforce the position of Ireland’s principled stance at the United Nations.

3.6 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter highlighted how Aiken constructed Irish foreign policy in his speeches at the UN by what of examining the specific narrative elements present in them. Through a careful depiction of setting Aiken grounds his story within the ‘governing forces’ of the Cold War and decolonisation as well as the physical setting of the UN. Through his articulate and principled rhetoric, Aiken characterises the major global powers, non-nuclear states, the United Nations, and Ireland itself in way that highlight their roles, responsibilities, and potential contributions to global speech. Along with a well-structured and logical progression to the arguments put forth by Aiken, the chapter has highlighted how he clearly attempted to communicate that Ireland was committed to peace, justice and international cooperation characterise more specifically with staunch advocacy for nuclear disarmament, strengthening peace-keeping and peace-building operation and the proper financing of the UN for these efforts. His use of rhetorical strategies and historical analogies further strengthened these appeals, positioning Ireland as a moral leader and champion of smaller nations on the global stage.

⁶¹ “ General Assembly, 17th session :1142nd plenary meeting, Thursday, 4 October 1962, New York”, 321.

⁶² “ General Assembly, 21st session :1434th plenary meeting, Monday, 10 October 1966, New York” 1.

⁶³ “General Assembly, 17th session :1142nd plenary meeting, Thursday, 4 October 1962, New York.” 1.

Chapter 4 The Narrative Elements in Micheál Martin’s United Nations Speeches (2020-2022)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the key findings from the narrative analysis performed on the speeches of Micheál Martin from 2020 to 2022. It will be the section of the answer to sub-question “*what are the core themes and narratives (e.g. peacebuilding and human rights) in the speeches of Martin?*” as well as weaving into the discussion consideration to the sub-question “*How do the speeches utilise rhetorical strategies (e.g. metaphors, appeals to emotion) and historical analogies to construct a persuasive portrayal of Ireland’s foreign policy at the UN?*”. Through a discussion that identifies the various ways Martin deployed narrative elements of setting, characterisation and emplotment, the aim of this chapter is to highlight how Martin, in his speeches, constructed the dominant narratives of Irish foreign policy at the United Nations

4.2 Setting

The Covid-19 Pandemic provides the backdrop to much of Martin’s speeches and is referred in the early stages of each speech showing it sets the stage for the proceeding contents of each speech as well as setting the scene in a general sense for the challenges that are discussed throughout. In 2020, Martin highlights how the Pandemic not only has forced the countries of the world to respond in terms of policy but has altered the very way that speeches are usually made at the United Nations General Assembly;

‘The United Nations General Assembly meets this year in a virtual format in the shadow of Covid-19’⁶⁴.

In 2021, the setting of the pandemic as a global crisis is present from the outset but is mentioned in addition to the issue of climate change, interestingly here, Martin uses a metaphor linking these issues to the that of alarm bells, helping to signify the level of existential threat they pose to the world, ‘This week [...] a series of alarms [...] have sounded’⁶⁵. Meanwhile in 2022, there is a more pronounced move to link the aftermath of the Pandemic to the other points of crisis. Here it is explicitly linked to a failure to achieve the

⁶⁴ “General Assembly Official Records, 75th Session, 85.

⁶⁵ “General Assembly Official Records, 76th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Friday, 24 September 2021, New York” ([New York]: UN, 2021), 1, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3955235/files/A_76_PV.13-AR.pdf, accessed 2 February 2024.

aims of the Sustainable Development goals, which ‘has stalled or gone into reverse, as we grapple with the continued effects of the Covid-19 pandemic’⁶⁶ but is also mentioned in relation to widespread global hunger, climate change impacts and ‘blatant disregard for international law’⁶⁷.

The setting element of multilateral efforts appears commonly in the speeches of Martin. In 2020, it is deployed in a way which provides an emphasis on the interconnected nature of global modern challenges as well as the nature of response needed to solve them.

Interestingly it is done so in a simple and direct as;

‘We are interconnected and interdependent. Even the strongest of us cannot succeed alone.’⁶⁸

The result of this kind of language is a clear, concise, and persuasive message which emphasises the message of global cooperation in a way that is easy for a broad audience to understand and accept. This kind of language is repeated often when Martin deploys the setting of multilateral efforts as seen in 2021 when the remedy to ‘those global challenge’ is the ‘simple fact’ of a ‘strong, effective and fair multilateral system’⁶⁹. Historical references is also used in relation to how this narrative element is used by Martin as can be seen in his 2022 speech. It must also be stated that this speech marked a specifically unique setting as it marked 100 years of Irish independence. Martin draws on Irish history by referring to past leaders who spoke at the League of Nations, drawing parallel to the current global challenges and the need for effective multilateralism with ‘the belief that all countries have an equal right to live in peace’⁷⁰.

4.3 Characterisation

Ireland as a character element deployed by Martin is depicted as nation which is committed to upholding the principles of the UN Charter. In 2020, Martin portrays Ireland as a committed and principled nation ready to contribute to international peace and security, speaking in relation to its upcoming term at the UN Security Council Martin says ‘Ireland

⁶⁶ “General Assembly Official Records, 77th Session :9th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 22 September 2022, New York” ([New York]: UN, 2022) 2, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3999356/files/A_77_PV.9-AR.pdf, accessed 2 February 2024.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 2

⁶⁸ “General Assembly Official Records, 75th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Saturday, 26 September 2020, New York,” 85.

⁶⁹ “General Assembly Official Records, 76th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Friday, 24 September 2021, New York,” 2.

⁷⁰ “General Assembly Official Records, 77th Session :9th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 22 September 2022, New York,” 1.

joins the council with firm principles and clear priorities'⁷¹. In a similar fashion, in 2021, he depicts Ireland as a committed and active member of the international community, advocating for peace, human rights, and multilateralism, 'For Ireland, our membership in the European Union has shown us that pooling our sovereignty enhances rather than diminishes it'⁷². Not only that, but this description certainly harkens to the type of narratives surround Ireland's initial pursuit of EU membership and is a good example of how exactly EU membership can be seen to "enhance" Ireland's role at the UN. In 2022, Ireland is portrayed as a committed nation with a long-standing tradition of peacekeeping and support for international law and multilateralism, 'Ireland has seen firsthand that political will and a commitment to the principles of the UN Charter can deliver results'⁷³. Historical references are used in Martin deployment of this Character element , as in 2021, with reference to Ireland own history of conflict on its land which has taught 'that peace building is painstaking, long and often frustrating'. This is used in relation to Ireland's readiness to assume its role at the Security Council and it is interesting to remark on this strategic rhetorical use. It highlights how, by invoking Ireland's firsthand experience with conflict and peacebuilding, Martin underscore the country's deep understanding of the complexities and challenges inherent in such efforts. This positions Ireland as a credible and knowledgeable actor in the discussion of the Security Council on matters of international peace and security. Moreover, by linking this characterisation element of Irish history to its responsibilities on the global stage, Martin reinforces the idea that Ireland's role at the UN is intrinsically tied to principles of multilateralism, international law, and peace.

There is a variety of ways in which Martin deploys the United Nations as a specific narrative element. Firstly, he does so by specifically describing it as a crucial body for multilateral responses to global challenges, in 2022, Martin the organisation, through all the different bodies, institutions and agencies that make it up as 'the spaces to discuss, to negotiate, to share experiences, to craft solutions'⁷⁴. He also characteries the United Nations in a more general sense, as a beacon of hope as well as this crucial body for peace ('a symbol of hope'), security ('Blue Helmets, guardians to the most vulnerable), and humanitarian aid (United

⁷¹ "General Assembly Official Records, 75th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Saturday, 26 September 2020, New York." 85

⁷² "General Assembly Official Records, 76th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Friday, 24 September 2021, New York." 3

⁷³ "General Assembly Official Records, 77th Session :9th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 22 September 2022, New York," 3.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 2.

Nations convoys, a lifeline to millions’). This characterisation, through its usage of symbolism adds to how Martin wishes the UN to be viewed, as something which represents more than its constituent bodies and functions, it is more than, it embodies the collective aspiration for peace, security, and humanitarian support. The UN is not seen by Martin as a body above reproach however and finds that ‘there is much that needs reform’⁷⁵. He goes on, in this 2022 speech, to specifically call out what he perceives as the biggest hindrance to the functioning of the UN namely that ‘lack of political will’ amongst member states to uphold the structures of the UN.⁷⁶

4.4 Emplotment

In Martin’s speeches several elements of emplotment are used to construct a compelling story of Ireland’s role and responsibilities on the global stage.

Martin consistently frames the Covid-19 pandemic as a defining global challenge that exposes vulnerabilities and underscores the necessity of multilateral responses. In his 2020 speech, he notes the immense toll of the pandemic on countries, particularly those with weak healthcare systems, and highlights the heroism of frontline workers. He emphasizes that the pandemic has revealed the interconnectedness of nations, reinforcing the importance of the United Nations and multilateralism. Ireland’s commitment to supporting global health initiatives, such as the Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative, which was the World Health Organisation’s worldwide attempt to provide equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines, exemplifies this narrative of solidarity and moral responsibility. In his 2021 speech, Martin addresses vaccine inequality as a moral test for the global community, urging the continued support for COVAX to achieve a fully vaccinated world by mid-2022. He details Ireland’s donations of vaccine doses and increased funding to the World Health Organisation, portraying these actions as integral to Ireland’s commitment to global health equity. This narrative element highlights the urgency and moral imperative of ensuring that no one is left behind in the fight against the pandemic.

Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution are also present as emplotment elements. Martin emphasises Ireland’s longstanding commitment to peacekeeping, dating back over six decades. In his 2020 speech, he discusses Ireland’s role in shaping the UN peacekeeping

⁷⁵ “General Assembly Official Records, 77th Session :9th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 22 September 2022, New York,” 2.

⁷⁶ “General Assembly Official Records, 77th Session :9th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 22 September 2022, New York,” 2.

mandates and linking peacekeeping to peacebuilding efforts. He underscores the importance of human rights and gender equality in these missions. By reflecting on Ireland's own experience with conflict resolution, Martin conveys a deep understanding of the complexities involved and a steadfast commitment to promoting sustainable peace. Throughout his speeches, Martin highlights the importance of including women and civil society in peace processes. For instance, in 2021, he speaks of Ireland's efforts to ensure that women's voices are central to peacebuilding initiatives. This narrative underscores the belief that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without full participation of women and marginalised groups aligning with the broader UN agenda of Women, Peace and Security.

As previously stated, Martin draws a connection between climate change and global security, framing it as the single greatest challenge facing our generation. In 2021, he discusses the adverse effects of climate change exacerbating conflict and insecurity, calling for the Security Council to address these issues seriously. This narrative emphasizes the urgent need for coordination international action to combat climate change and its impact on global stability. Linking conflict with hunger, Martin highlights the role of food security in achieving global peace. In his 2022 speech, he focuses on the urgent need to address hunger exacerbated by climate change and conflict. What is thus constructed is a narrative that Ireland is committed to food security, and this is reflected in Martin's invocation of its role in international cooperation efforts, underscoring the importance of tackling the root causes of hunger as a part of comprehensive approach to peace and development.

Martin's speeches consistently call for adherence to international law and support for international institutions like the International Criminal Court. In 2020, he stresses the need for the Security Council to fulfil its responsibilities and the importance of holding perpetrators of international crimes accountable. This narrative element reinforces Ireland's commitment to upholding the principles of international law and ensuring justice. Martin addresses various ongoing conflicts, such as those in Syria, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan, emphasising Ireland's role in advocating for humanitarian aid and political solutions. For example, in 2021, he discusses Ireland's efforts to ensure humanitarian access in Syria and support for a ceasefire in Tigray. These actions are highlighted by Martin in order to demonstrate that Ireland has a dedication to protecting human rights and promoting peace in conflict zones.

4.5 Conclusion

In examining Micheál Martin's United Nations speeches from 2020 to 2022, it becomes clear that his narrative construction consistently reflects a depiction of Ireland as having a deep-seated commitment to multilateralism, peacebuilding and human rights. Martin conducts his speeches in such a way to project Ireland as a principled nation, committed to the collective well-being and security of the global community. The core themes of Martin's speeches are shaped around the urgent and interconnected crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, and global security. The pandemic, serving as a central backdrop, is used by Martin to highlight global vulnerabilities and the essential nature of multilateral cooperation. His consistent emphasis on Ireland's support for initiatives like the Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative exemplifies a narrative of solidarity and moral responsibility portraying Ireland as an active participant in global health equity. Another prominent theme is Ireland's longstanding dedication to peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Martin's references to Ireland's historical experiences with conflict and peacebuilding underscore the nation's credibility and depth of understanding in international peace efforts. His advocacy for inclusive peace processes, particularly emphasising the role of women and marginalised groups, aligns Ireland's foreign policy with broader United Nations agendas like that of Women, Peace and Security. Martin's speeches also reveal a robust commitment to upholding international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. By addressing ongoing conflicts and emphasising Ireland's role in advocating for humanitarian aid and political solutions, Martin constructs a narrative that Ireland is dedicated to protecting human rights and promoting justice on the global stage. In conclusion, the core themes and narrative of Martin's speeches construct an image of Ireland as a principled, proactive, and collaborative nation.

Chapter 5 From Aiken to Martin: Analysis the continuities, differences and relationships with key global partners.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a comparative analysis of Ireland's foreign policy narratives at the United Nations as articulated by Frank Aiken and Micheál Martin. This aim of this chapter is to answer the sub-question *“How do the narratives of speeches differ or remain consistent between Aiken and Martin about the changing global context? Are new narratives presented to address more recent issues like climate change and pandemics?”*. Specifically, it examines and contrasts the diplomatic priorities during the Cold War and post-Cold War settings. As has been established in the literature on Irish foreign policy and its relations with the European Union (EU), The United States (US), and the United Kingdom (UK) are of crucial importance. This chapter will also answer the sub-question *“What can the speeches highlight about Ireland's relationship with key global partners (e.g. EU, US, and the UK) and how do these partnerships influence the narratives about its foreign policy?”* The construction of foreign policy narratives by Aiken and Martin at the UN offers a critical lens through which to understand Ireland's relationship with these key global partners and the influence these partnerships on its foreign policy.

Cold War vs. Post-Cold War Setting

The global context of Aiken's years was dominated by the Cold War, characterised by the ideological and military rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Aiken's speeches reflect this context with a primary focus on nuclear disarmament and peacekeeping. He frequently highlighted the dangers of nuclear proliferation, emphasising the need for international agreements to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.⁷⁷ In contrast, Martin is making his speeches in a time of a multipolar world and specifically at a time when global pandemic and the threat of climate disaster have become central to international relations. Unsurprisingly, Martin's speeches reflect this shift, addressing contemporary challenges that were not part of the Cold War discourses. For instance, Martin emphasised the importance of a coordinated global response to the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting its impact on

⁷⁷ “General Assembly, 21st Session :1434th Plenary Meeting, Monday, 10 October 1966, New York” (New York: UN, 1966), 1,

vulnerable populations and the necessity of multilateral cooperation.⁷⁸ Quite obviously there is a big difference between, what this thesis has analysed as, the narrative element of setting between the two men what provides for a more interesting discussion is to consider the ways in which, within this difference context, how the narratives relate to each other.

5.2 Nuclear Disarmament and Peacekeeping

Both Aiken and Martin stressed the importance of peacekeeping, albeit within different frameworks. Aiken's focus was on preventing nuclear proliferation and ensuring the UN's capability to manage international peacekeeping operations. He consistently argued for reliable financing and robust international mechanisms to support peacekeeping mission, reflecting the Cold War's emphasis on what he noted as the maintenance of a strategic balance and preventing escalation.⁷⁹ Martin continued to support peacekeeping and did so by integrating it into a broader narrative that included a more specific reference to human rights, in the form the WPS agenda, and climate change. He underscored the need for peacekeeping operations to be adequately resourced and sensitive local needs, advocating for a holistic approach that links peacekeeping with peacebuilding and development. Nonetheless, present in Aiken's speeches was the consideration of a more general set of proposals for a sustainable peace, namely in the form of Aiken call for the establishment of "areas of law". First introducing this idea in 1959, Aiken called on General Assembly to 'cooperate in securing the firm application of Charter principles in certain restricted areas where the interest of the two great power groups are entangled and where there is the greatest danger of stumbling into war'.⁸⁰ He would continue with this proposal throughout the speeches covered by this thesis, as late as 1966 he was still drawing on this concept describing such areas as; '[...] affected by great power rivalry and tension, to come together as neutral States and agreed not to attack one another, to settle their differences peacefully and to limit their armaments to police level, on the condition that the United Nations, backed by the nuclear powers, would guarantee them against aggression from outside or inside the area.'⁸¹

⁷⁸ "General Assembly Official Records, 75th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Saturday, 26 September 2020, New York" ([New York]: UN, 2020), 85,

⁷⁹ "General Assembly, 20th session :1343rd plenary meeting, Thursday, 30 September 1965, New York" (New York: UN, 1965), 16.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Norman Macqueen, "Frank Aiken and Irish Activism at the United Nations, 1957-61," *The International History Review* 6, no. 2 (1984): 225.

⁸¹ "General Assembly, 21st Session :1434th Plenary Meeting, Monday, 10 October 1966, New York," 2.

This is a concept that never comes up in consideration again in the literature on Irish membership at the UN and while International Relations Scholar Norman MacQueen concludes this was while this concept was ‘extremely ambitious [...] requiring no less than a return to the pure ideas of 1920s-style collective security’, it displayed an understanding from Aiken that collective security could embody more than the then current arrangement of peacekeeping missions.⁸² Additionally, there must also be consideration paid to the nature of peacekeeping as a function of the United Nations. There is no specific mention of peacekeeping in the Charter of the United Nations, it has evolved out of how Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter has been interpreted. This Chapter gives United Nations Security Council power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security.⁸³ As a result, peacekeeping as an international practice has evolved over significantly over time, becoming more comprehensive and adapting to the changing global landscape. Thus, the evolution of peacekeeping from Aiken to Martin underscores how the concept has grown beyond its original scope. This thesis would argue that Aiken laid the groundwork in constructing the narrative of Irish commitment to peacekeeping as a critical tool for international stability, while Martin’s comprehensive approach highlights an expansion of this commitment to great responsibilities and capabilities.

5.3 Human Rights and Accountability

Both Aiken and Martin emphasised human rights, but the context and application of this emphasis differ. Aiken’s focus on human rights was often tied to decolonisation and the rights of newly independent states to self-determination, reflecting the era’s context of the waves of decolonisation especially amongst African and Asian states. In 1964, by way of introductory remark he welcomes the newly independent nations of Malawi, Malta and Zambia seeing their admission to the United Nations as a crowning moment in their histories.⁸⁴ Martin, on the other hand, linked human rights to contemporary global challenge, advocating for the protection of vulnerable populations and supporting the International Criminal Court to

⁸² MacQueen, “Frank Aiken and Irish Activism at the United Nations, 1957-61,” 225.

⁸³ Specifically see Article 43.1 of the Charter which says, ‘All Members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rites of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security.’

⁸⁴ “General Assembly, 19th Session :1295th Plenary Meeting, Tuesday, 8 December 1964, New York,” 1.

ensure accountability for serious crimes.⁸⁵ It's important to consider that institutions like the International Criminal Court didn't exist during the time of Aiken, the Court was only established in 2002. This reflects the wider fact that when Aiken was head of the Irish delegation, there was very few specific bodies or treaties, outside the UN General Assembly, the Security Council and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, charged with the specific task of promoting or protecting human rights. Even still, Aiken presents a narrative on human rights which reflect a position from Ireland which sees them at the heart of many issues, speaking in 1960, Aiken connect the cause of many political problems 'arise where people are still denied their liberty or where their human rights and dignity are not respected'.⁸⁶

5.4 Representation of Ireland

As has been shown both Aiken and Martin focus their speeches on a specific representation of Ireland on the global stage, by comparing these representations this thesis observes a distinct evolution in the country's international identity and diplomatic priorities.

Aiken's references to Ireland were deeply rooted in its historical struggle for independence. Not only that but there are of a very personal note for Aiken, as he was a volunteer in the Irish revolutionary army in 1913. When, in 1960, he refers to 'we' when discusses Irish history who does so as someone who actual was present when 'we fought elections as well as guerilla battles until we established our government'.⁸⁷ This narrative was used to establish a moral authority and solidarity with other decolonising nations. In contrast, Martin's references, while acknowledging historical contexts, are more focused on current contributions and future commitments, reflecting a proactive stance in addressing global challenge. For instance, Martin concludes his 2020 describes Ireland as a nation that does not 'have historical baggage, or special interests'.⁸⁸

Aiken portrayed Ireland as a small nation with a significant moral duty to support freedom and justice, leveraging its historical narrative. For instance, in 1960, Aiken leverages Ireland's

⁸⁵ "General Assembly Official Records, 75th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Saturday, 26 September 2020, New York," 85.

⁸⁶ "General Assembly, 15th Session: 890th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 6 October 1960, New York," 1960, 481.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 480.

⁸⁸ "General Assembly Official Records, 75th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Saturday, 26 September 2020, New York," 85.

own colonial history to ‘warn against the propaganda which attempts to represent the United Nations as providing in some way a mask for imperialist intervention’.⁸⁹ Martin maintains a moral dimension too, especially in his 2022 speech in reference to the Russian invasion of Ukraine stating that ‘all states, and particularly small countries such as my own, should fear a world where might equals rights, where the strong can bully the weak; where sovereignty and territorial integrity can be blatantly violated’.⁹⁰ Martin also emphasised Ireland’s leadership on global health and climate action. In his speeches, he pointed to Ireland’s substantial contributions to global health initiatives and its ambitious climate targets. For instance, Martin declared in his 2021 speech that ‘Ireland will reduce its emissions by 51 per cent by 2030 compared to 2018 levels’ and highlighted the importance of climate action in achieving global peace and security.⁹¹ Martin can therefore be seen to present a more balanced view of Ireland as both a principled and a pragmatic actor on the global stage.

5.5 Ireland’s Relationship with Key Global Partners at the UN

Ireland and the European Union

During Aiken’s era, Ireland was not yet a member of the EEC. It has also been already stated that will pursuit of Irish membership to the organisation was already underway during the time of Aiken, it was under the watch of then Taoiseach Seán Lemass. Nonetheless, Aiken’s speeches demonstrate a clear interest in European affairs and a recognition of the importance of regional cooperation. His advocacy for decolonisation and support for newly independent states align with the broader European movements towards integration and cooperation. By the time of Martin, Ireland was a firmly established member of the EU. Martin’s speeches at the UN underscore Ireland’s commitment to the EU’s values and policies, particularly in areas such as human rights, climate change, and global health. Martin’s narratives often reflect Ireland’s role as a bridge between the EU and other global powers, emphasising solidarity and collective action with the European framework. For instance, in his 2020

⁸⁹ “General Assembly, 15th Session: 890th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 6 October 1960, New York,” 480.

⁹⁰ “General Assembly Official Records, 77th Session :9th Plenary Meeting, Thursday, 22 September 2022, New York” ([New York]: UN, 2022), 6

⁹¹ “General Assembly Official Records, 76th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Friday, 24 September 2021, New York” ([New York]: UN, 2021), 4.

speech, Martin identifies the EU alongside the African Union as ‘making an increasingly important contribution to how the UN responds to international crises’.⁹²

Ireland and the United States

Aiken speeches reflect a cautious approach to the US, consistent with Ireland’s policy of neutrality during the Cold War. While recognising the importance of the US as a global power, Aiken often positioned Ireland as an independent actor committed to peace and the principles of the UN. A specific example of Aiken pursuing a narrative that could be seen to complicate Irish relations with the US can be seen regarding the issue of who should take the Chinese Seat on the UN Security Council. First raised in 1962⁹³, Aiken specifically advocated for a UN led discussion between the governments of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan to negotiate an agreement that would see the PRC take up the Chinese seat at the Security Council and Taiwan as a member of the General Assembly. This was certainly not a decision solely pursued with an anti-American sentiment. Rather, Aiken’s reasoning is based on his desire for nuclear non-proliferation, furthermore, he caveats his position by stressing the intolerableness if this was done but Taiwan was denied its own UN membership or that the PRC was not ‘subjected [...] to the same pressure to refrain from aggression and to free its colonies as other colonial Members have been.

A similar situation is at play during the time of Martin. In 2021, He specifically refers to the US in terms of a positive appraisal for its return to negotiations over nuclear disarmament with Iran in the form of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. However, Martin also makes repeated reference to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine, which saw numerous flashpoints of violence which Martin also specifically references. Repeatedly Martin declares Ireland support for a two-state solution but specifically, in 2021, he refers to a deep frustration felt by Ireland in relation to ‘the Security Council’s inability to speak throughout this latest outbreak of hostilities’.⁹⁴ This is an implicit challenge towards the US, which often wield its veto in favour of Israel at the Security Council. Both Martin and Aiken,

⁹² “General Assembly Official Records, 75th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Saturday, 26 September 2020, New York,” 86.

⁹³ “General Assembly, 17th session :1142nd plenary meeting, Thursday, 4 October 1962, New York,” 1962, 3.

⁹⁴ “General Assembly Official Records, 76th Session :13th Plenary Meeting, Friday, 24 September 2021, New York,” 3.

therefore, construct narratives which implicitly challenge the US while explicitly calling for greater efforts to mediate and promote dialogue.

Ireland and the United Kingdom

As has been discussed, the situation of Anglo-Irish relations during both Aiken's and Martin's tenure were complex. For Aiken, this was best characterised by historical tensions and the ongoing issue of Northern Ireland. Aiken does refer to the UK as a member of the nuclear club, i.e. possessing nuclear capabilities and so is included in the narratives he constructs around the need for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agreements to be signed by the nuclear powers. More specifically a specific approach to the United Kingdom, the issue of partition is raised once, in 1957, as something which may be solved by the practical application of the UN Charter, however this is the only mention of 'the outstanding national problem'.⁹⁵ In fact, as Dorr argues, in a sensible approach, Aiken and the Irish delegation used this historical experience and 'always argued strongly against any suggestion that partition could be an appropriate solution to conflicts or problems.'⁹⁶ Contrasting this sensible approach, MacQueen highlights the 'ritual presentation of the evils of partition at every public opportunity [...] had achieved little beyond the bewilderment of other national representations'.⁹⁷ As such any specific mention of Anglo-Irish relations is absent from the rest of Aiken's speeches. The contemporary dynamics of Anglo-Irish relation for Martin's speeches bear strong similarities in complexity to Aiken, particularly in the context of Brexit. Martin, in fact, make no specific mention of the UK in any of his speeches therefore highlighting the continued dynamic where specific Anglo-Irish relations are absent from Ireland's UN membership.

5.6 Conclusion

The comparative analysis of Frank Aiken's and Micheál Martin's United Nations speeches reveals both continuity and evolution in Ireland's foreign policy narratives, reflecting shifts in the global context and the country's diplomatic priorities over time. Aiken's speeches during

⁹⁵ "General Assembly, 12th session :682nd plenary meeting, Friday, 20 September 1957, New York," 1957, 48

⁹⁶ Noel Dorr, "Ireland at the United Nations: 40 Years On," 44.

⁹⁷ Macqueen, "Frank Aiken and Irish Activism at the United Nations, 1957-61," 215.

the Cold War focused on nuclear disarmament and peacekeeping, reflecting the era's primary concerns of nuclear proliferation and superpower rivalry. In contrast, Martin addressed contemporary global challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change, highlighting the need for multilateral cooperation. Both Aiken and Martin emphasized the importance of peacekeeping, with Aiken advocating for strategic balance and robust international mechanisms, while Martin integrated peacekeeping with human rights and climate change. This shift illustrates how Ireland's commitment to international stability has expanded to include broader global responsibilities. Aiken's focus on human rights was tied to decolonization and the rights of newly independent states, reflecting the era's context. Martin linked human rights to modern challenges, advocating for the protection of vulnerable populations and supporting international justice mechanisms. Aiken portrayed Ireland as a small nation with a significant moral duty, leveraging its historical struggle for independence. Martin presented Ireland as a proactive actor addressing global challenges, portraying a balance between principled and pragmatic foreign policy. The speeches of Aiken and Martin also provided valuable insights into Ireland's relationship with key global partners and the influence of these partnerships on its foreign policy narratives at the UN. Aiken's speeches indicated a clear interest in European affairs and regional cooperation despite Ireland not being an EEC member. Martin's speeches, as Ireland's EU membership was firmly established, emphasized Ireland's commitment to EU values and its role as a bridge between the EU and other global powers. Aiken maintained a cautious approach towards the US, reflecting Ireland's neutrality and sometimes implicitly challenging US policies. Martin balanced recognition of the US's influence with calls for greater mediation and dialogue, particularly on issues like nuclear disarmament and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Anglo-Irish relations during Aiken's time were influenced by historical tensions, with strategic avoidance of sensitive bilateral issues in his UN speeches. Martin continued this trend during the contemporary dynamics of Brexit, highlighting broader international issues while sidestepping specific bilateral tensions at the UN. In conclusion, the analysis of Aiken's and Martin's speeches demonstrates Ireland's consistent commitment to peace, human rights, and international cooperation, adapted to reflect the evolving global context and contemporary challenges. This continuity and evolution illustrate Ireland's dynamic role on the global stage, balancing historical principles with modern pragmatism in its foreign policy narratives.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This thesis sought to address the central research question: *“How did Frank Aiken (1957-1966) and Micheál Martin (2020-2022) construct Ireland’s foreign policy narratives in their United Nations speeches, and what does this reveal about Ireland’s role on the global stage?”* Through detailed narrative analysis, this research has illuminated the evolution and continuity in Irish foreign policy narratives as articulated by these two key political figures at the United Nations.

The central question is clearly answered through a thorough examination of speeches made by Frank Aiken and Micheál Martin, demonstrating how each constructed narratives that reflected Ireland’s diplomatic priorities and its evolving role in international relations. Aiken’s speeches during the Cold War era highlighted Ireland’s stance on nuclear disarmament, anti-colonialism and the importance of small nations in the international community. Conversely, Martin’s speeches during the Covid-19 pandemic emphasized multilateralism, climate action, and global health, aligning Ireland with contemporary global challenges and showcasing its commitment to human rights and peacekeeping.

The previous chapters have meticulously built on this conclusion by analyzing the narrative elements of setting, characterisation, and emplotment in the speeches of Aiken and Martin. Each chapter addressed specific sub-questions that collectively contributed to answering the central question. Chapter Two offered historical contextualisation to highlight a history of Irish Foreign policy and the UN, preceding 1955 this was marked by a complicated tension between a nascent Irish Free State and its Commonwealth Status, a small yet not insignificant role in the League of Nations and neutrality during the Second World War followed by Soviet Veto to the UN which marked Ireland thoroughly isolated on the global stage. This was the necessary background for the tenure of Aiken which was shown to be marked by the Cold War and decolonisation. Meanwhile Martin’s period was defined by global health crises, Brexit, and climate change. These contexts shaped the narrative settings in their speeches. Chapters Three and Four gave specific attention to the narrative elements present in the speeches of Aiken and Martin and through their identification, the core themes and narrative used by these two statesmen. Both utilized themes of peacekeeping, human rights, and multilateralism. While Aiken sought to focus more on nuclear disarmament and anti-colonialism which reflected the geopolitical tensions on his time, Martin addressed contemporary issues like climate change and global health equity in relation to the Covid-19

pandemic and its aftermath. There was also specific attention paid to how both Aiken and Martin employed specific rhetorical strategies and historical analogies. Aiken was shown to employ metaphors related to military action and geopolitical stability, as well as leveraging Ireland's own historical legacy to leverage support for the principles of the United Nations Charter. This rhetorical approach was aimed at fostering solidarity and emphasising Ireland's moral leadership in advocating for disarmament and anti-colonialism. Meanwhile, Martin was shown to use health and climate metaphors to emphasise interconnectedness and global responsibility. He also referenced historical events, such as, like Aiken, Ireland's own history with conflict and peacebuilding, to underline the credibility and depth of Ireland's commitment to international peace and cooperation. These rhetorical strategies were designed to resonate with a global audience and reinforce Ireland's proactive stance on contemporary global challenges. Chapter 5 engaged in a critical comparative analysis of Aiken and Martin which highlighted continuities and adoptions or evolutions in Ireland's foreign policy. Both Aiken and Martin consistently emphasised Ireland's commitment to peace, justice and international cooperation. This continuity reflects a deep-seated diplomatic identity that transcends the different historical periods and geopolitical contexts. While maintaining core principle, the narratives adapted to address the most pressing issues of their respective times. Aiken focused on nuclear disarmament and decolonisation during the Cold War, while Martin addressed global health, climate action and blatant disregard for international law in regard to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. These adaptations demonstrate Ireland's ability to remain relevant and influential in the ever-evolving landscape of international relations. This relevance is further highlighted by the almost cyclical twenty-year span between Irish presence at the UN Security Council, where during the time of Martin, it served its fourth time as a non-permanent member where it co-authored two resolutions on humanitarian corridors and strategic post-conflict resolutions.

This conclusion synthesises these answers to the sub-questions to offer new insights by demonstrating how Ireland's foreign policy has been both consistent and adaptable. Aiken laid the groundwork by positioning Ireland as a moral voice in international diplomacy, advocating for disarmament and supporting newly independent nations. Martin expanded on this foundation, integrating global challenges into Ireland's foreign policy narrative, thus reinforcing Ireland's image as a proactive and principled actor on the global stage.

This thesis adds to the existing historiography by specifically examining the narrative constructions of Ireland's foreign policy at the UN through the speeches of Frank Aiken and

Micheál Martin. By focusing on the narrative elements of setting, characterisation, and emplotment, this research provides a detailed analysis of how Ireland projected its identity and diplomatic priorities at different historical junctures. It bridges the historical context of the Cold War and contemporary challenges like climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, offering a longitudinal perspective on the evolution of Ireland's foreign policy narratives. This thesis situates itself within a well-established historiographical tradition while also offering new insights through its narrative analysis and contributes a deeper understanding of how Ireland's foreign policy is articulated at the United Nations. Expanding on the findings of this thesis, there are many potential areas that could provide deeper insight into Ireland's foreign policy and its role at the United Nations. This could include a comparative analysis with other small states, Ireland's role in UN Peacekeeping operations, the evolution of Ireland's human rights advocacy as well as an examination of the impact of EU membership on Ireland's UN diplomacy. Such studies, like this thesis has done, would enrich the historiography of Irish foreign policy at the UN while also underscoring the importance of narratives in international relations.

In summary, this thesis successfully answers the central research question by showing how Frank Aiken and Micheál Martin constructed narratives that not only reflected their respective global contexts but also underscored Ireland's commitment to peace, justice and international cooperation. In his speeches, Aiken focused on nuclear disarmament and anti-colonialism, leveraging Ireland's historical struggle for independence, while Martin emphasised multilateralism, global health, and climate change, aligning Ireland to face contemporary global challenges. This continuity and evolution of Ireland's dynamic role on the global stage, balancing historical principles with modern pragmatism in its foreign policy narratives.

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