

The Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Irish Diplomacy during Decolonisation: The Case Study of the Nigerian Civil War

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Abstract

This thesis delves into the intricate and multifaceted impact of the Roman Catholic Church on Irish diplomacy during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), a complex period where Biafran forces sought independence. The collaborative efforts of Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church in providing aid and advocating peace reveal a nuanced intersection of religion, geopolitics, and humanitarianism in global affairs. Throughout history, religion has wielded significant influence on international relations, with the Church adeptly employing soft power strategies and diplomacy. This thesis thoroughly analyses the Church's diplomatic engagement, including its role in Nuclear Deterrence and Indigenous Rights. It also delves into Ireland's foreign policy during decolonisation, highlighting its unwavering commitment to maintaining peace and assisting new states with gaining international recognition and securitisation. The thesis further explores the Nigerian Civil War, underscoring the Church's profound influence on Ireland's response to the conflict, encompassing protecting its citizens, delivering and distributing humanitarian aid, and partial recognition. In sum, the thesis enhances the understanding of religion's pivotal role in international diplomacy during decolonisation.

Keywords: Nigeria, Roman Catholic Church, Ireland, United Nations, Apostolic Nuncios, Decolonisation

List of Abbreviations

BC = Before Christ

FGN = Federal Government of Nigeria

ONUC = United Nations Operations in Congo

RCC = Roman Catholic Church

RTÉ = Radió Telifís Éireann

UK = United Kingdom

UN = United Nations

USA = United States of America

USSR = Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Introduction

The Nigerian Civil War was a conflict between the FGN and Biafran forces from 1967 to 1970 when the Biafran forces seceded the Eastern Region from Nigeria and made a proclamation as an independent Republic. This conflict was felt across the world and had repercussions beyond Nigeria. The involvement of major global players such as the USA, the USSR, and France internationalised the conflict. An estimated one to three million deaths were caused by famine and disease.¹ While this conflict is known for having a confusing set of supporters on either side, the involvement of the Republic of Ireland and the RCC was also notable. Both provided humanitarian assistance and diplomatic support and advocated for ending hostilities throughout the conflict, highlighting an intersection of religion, geopolitics, and humanitarianism within international relations.

The solid Catholic demographics, culture, and law in the Republic of Ireland during the conflict suggest a significant influence of the RCC on political and diplomatic actions, viewing the conflict as a fight against oppression and an opportunity to aid fellow Christians. Decolonisation, with its complexities and negotiations, saw the Church bringing its values and development initiatives into diplomatic discussions, shaping the foreign policies of nations through international diplomacy. This dynamic role of the Church in Irish diplomacy underscores the intersection of religious principles with national interests, shaping foreign policy choices.

¹ Anna K. Luepke, *The Other Side of the Nigeria-Biafra War: A Transnational History*, (Bangor University, 2018), 8

This thesis aims to better understand international relations by shedding light on the diplomatic choices and mindsets of Ireland² and the RCC during this period. It also aims to demonstrate that the Church significantly shaped diplomatic decisions made by the Irish government at this time. This topic holds significant importance as many studies have focused on describing the influence of the Church on internal politics in Ireland and its external relations with countries such as the US, the UK, and Europe during this period. Ireland prioritised its support for African states based on a moral imperative rather than economic interests, despite the critical role of its relationships with countries such as the US, the UK, and Europe in its trade and economy.

The research question of this thesis is: How did the Roman Catholic Church impact the Irish Government's diplomatic endeavours in Africa during the period of decolonisation? The thesis consists of three chapters, each with a subquestion to answer. The first chapter will examine the impact of the RCC on diplomacy during decolonisation, asking how the Church utilised diplomatic means to achieve its objectives. The second chapter will explore how the decolonisation movement influenced Ireland's foreign policy to ascertain the reasons behind Ireland's changes in foreign policy during this period. The third and final chapter, an analysis of the Church's influence on Ireland's foreign policy during the Nigerian Civil War, will be conducted to gain insight into its impact on the country's foreign policy. Answering these questions will allow one to answer the research question.

Before delving in, it is imperative to establish a comprehensive understanding of the geographical context underpinning the case study. Nigeria was initially inhabited by various ethnic groups up to the late 19th Century when it was colonised by the British, leading to the

² Please note when referencing "Ireland" or the "Irish" government in this thesis, it concerns the Republic of Ireland, disregarding Northern Ireland's situation, unless specified

formation of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria in 1914. The nation comprises three main ethnic groups: the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, each with distinct cultural and religious characteristics. Following independence on October 1, 1960, political instability and ethnic tensions plagued the country. After ethnic tensions sparked up against the Igbo population in the country, many of them fled to the Eastern Region. When political leaders in the Eastern Nigerian regions decided to secede from the rest of the country in June 1967, the FGN invaded the territory, beginning the Nigeria Civil War. During the conflict, Nigeria garnered support from the UK, US, and USSR, motivated by economic and geopolitical interests, while France and China backed the Biafrans. Despite the Biafrans' initial advantage, including support from France and their impassioned fight, a Nigerian blockade in 1968 led to widespread suffering and, ultimately, the surrender of Biafran forces in 1970. The conflict, marked by international involvement and devastating humanitarian crises, resulted in an estimated one to three million deaths, primarily due to starvation and disease, underscoring the tragic toll of the war.³

The relationship between the RCC and the Irish government has a complex and evolving historiography. Before Ireland gained independence, the Church played a heavy role in Irish people's lives. In the late 19th century, Ireland went through what is known as the "Devotional Revolution", where most of the Irish population increased their devotion towards Catholicism, likely due to the anti-British mindset that formed after the famine.⁴ This allowed the Church to take control of the mindset of many Irish, the Irish population during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, and embedding itself in the Republican Movement in Ireland,

³ Luepke, *The Other Side of the Nigeria-Biafra War*, 10

⁴ Emmet J. Larkin, *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (The Catholic University of American Press, 1984), 6

which advocated for “Home Rule”.⁵ After Ireland gained Independence in 1921, the Church looked to increase its control. While the new government of the country was concerned with the political and economic issues, the church was happy to take many aspects off their hands, including Education, Welfare and Healthcare, stating that they were “responsible for the moral well-being of the nation”.⁶ This affected voting patterns and appointments to significant civil roles, which were evident within the country's elite. Eamon de Valera, a revolutionary leader and the Taoiseach⁷ in the 1930s, was very close friends with John Charles McQuaid, the Archbishop of Dublin. They were so close that McQuaid assisted de Valera in writing the constitution of the Republic of Ireland in 1937, making divorce and blasphemy unconstitutional and incorporating Catholic teachings on family, education and private property.⁸

The Church was also influential in controlling foreign policy at the time. In 1946, Aloysius Stepinac, the Archbishop of Zagreb, was tried for treason for assisting the fascist Ustaše government during WW2 and was sentenced to prison for 16 years. A motion was put forward in the Dáil⁹ to condemn this imprisonment and for the state to pursue the case through international diplomacy for the sake of “freedom-loving people”. The motion was defeated in the Dáil, but the Taoiseach issued a strongly worded letter advocating for his release and called for a convention to safeguard the practice of religion worldwide. The Yugoslav government responded aggressively to these actions.¹⁰ Irish diplomats were instructed to report on communist parties in other states. Thomas Kiernan, an Irish diplomat

⁵ Féilim Ó hAdhmaill, "The Catholic Church and revolution in Ireland." *Socialist History* 43 (2013): 9, <https://cora.ucc.ie/items/4a378740-a535-4c9e-8a50-cf7579d25def>

⁶ Larkin, *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism*, 121

⁷ The Irish Head of Government/Prime Minister

⁸ Michael O'Carroll, "Inspired educator and ecumenist of sorts." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 87, no. 348 (1998): 369, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30113955>.

⁹ The Irish parliament

¹⁰ Mirjana C. Hamill, "The Case of Archbishop Stepinac – the Irish point of view." *Radovi Zavoda za ...*46, no. 1 (2014): 383-398. <https://doi.org/10.17234/RadoviZHP.46.11>

stationed in Australia during the 1940s and 1950s, revealed that he was tasked with monitoring the activities of the Communist Party of Australia and highlighting any negative aspects to exaggerate their threat. This intelligence was relayed to the Australian government, ultimately resulting in the party's ban in 1951.¹¹

During the period under examination, the RCC wielded considerable influence over the media landscape in Ireland. Notably, newspapers such as the *Irish Catholic* and the *Catholic Herald* enjoyed widespread readership and were prominent platforms for disseminating the Church's teachings and perspectives. Moreover, the Church exerted significant sway over *Raidió Teilifís Éireann* (RTÉ), the national broadcaster responsible for television and radio content. Through RTÉ, the Church effectively propagated its religious doctrines and influenced the public on various social issues and campaigns it championed.¹² Furthermore, the Church censored materials deemed incompatible with Catholic doctrine. This involved prohibiting books, films, and publications considered morally objectionable, reflecting the Church's efforts to control societal norms and values.¹³

In comprehending the Church's decision-making processes during this period, it is imperative to scrutinise its leadership, notably the Pontiffs. Within decolonisation, two successive heads of the RCC, namely Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, were intricately involved. Pope John XXIII significantly influenced diplomacy during his pontificate from 1958 to 1963. Before the Pope ascended to the papacy, he had spent several years serving as an Apostolic Nuncio in various countries, allowing him to gain valuable insights into diplomatic relations and

¹¹ Gerard Madden, "Thomas J. Kiernan and Irish diplomatic responses to cold-war anti-communism in Australia, 1946-1951." *Twentieth Century Communism* 21, no. 21 (2021): 32. <https://doi.org/10.3898/175864321834645805>

¹² Gladys Ganiel, "Clerical Modernisers and the Media in Ireland: The Journalism of Fr Gerry Reynolds." *Contemporary British History* 34, no. 4 (2020): 641, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2020.1779066>

¹³ Mark, O'Brien, "Policing the press: censorship, family planning, and the press in Ireland, 1929–67." *Irish Studies Review* 29, no. 1 (2021): 27, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1080/09670882.2021.1869354>

international affairs.¹⁴ After ascending to the role of Pope, central to his pontificate was modernising the Church and fostering relations with other religions. His decision to convene the historic Second Vatican Council aimed to modernise the Church and promote Christian unity.¹⁵ Pope Paul VI, whose papacy lasted from 1963 to 1978, was significant in shaping Vatican diplomacy. Before ascending to the position of Pope, he worked his way up to his diplomatic service for the Holy See. His proficiency in multiple languages and grasp of international relations established him as a skilled and esteemed diplomat. After becoming Pope, he prioritised diplomacy to foster peace and reconciliation worldwide. He actively promoted dialogue between nations, particularly during the tumultuous years of the Cold War.

¹⁴ David Wilsford, *Political leaders of contemporary Western Europe: a biographical dictionary*. (1995), 204-207

¹⁵ Joseph Komonchak, "Pope John XXIII: Essential Writings." *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 10, no. 1 (2010): 107, <https://doi.org/10.1353/scs.0.0079>

Chapter 1 - How the Roman Catholic Church Engaged in Diplomatic Relations in the 1960s

Throughout the years, the RCC has exerted substantial influence in global diplomacy, utilising its extensive network and moral authority to promote peace, advocate for human rights, and address social injustices on a global scale. The mid-20th Century emerged as a crucial period for the Church, characterised by transformative occurrences like the Second Vatican Council and its attainment of observer state status at the UN in 1964. These events reshaped the Church's global position and diplomatic endeavours significantly. This chapter delineates three key sections: the mechanisms through which religions participate in diplomatic relations, the historical trajectory of the RCC's diplomatic endeavours, and two examples of its involvement during the 1960s, Nuclear Deterrence and Indigenous Rights. By delving into these historical dimensions, this chapter aims to elucidate the nuanced interplay between religion and diplomacy, particularly within the context of the Church. In subsequent chapters, it lays the groundwork for exploring its potential impact on Irish foreign policy and the Nigerian Civil War.

How Religions Engage in International Relations

Throughout history, religion has played a significant role in shaping international relations. While leaders often used divine right to justify starting wars, they also engaged in diplomatic efforts and negotiated treaties.¹⁶ Dating back to the third millennium BC, treaties have consistently featured introductions of authors and leaders, historical accounts of relations,

¹⁶ John D.F. Stempel, *Diplomacy and the International System*. (University of Leicester, Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, 2000), 3

stipulations, and often invoked deities as witnesses, with blessings for compliance and curses for violators, demonstrating the profound influence of religion on diplomacy.¹⁷ The teachings of various religions have consistently influenced treaty-making approaches. For instance, in Judaism, adherence to these laws, as illustrated in the Book of Joshua's Ninth Chapter, was considered binding and could not be abrogated, even for reasons of state.¹⁸ Similarly, Hindu principles contributed to constructing a complex interstate political system, with a collective norm against treaty-breaking or profiting from such actions.¹⁹ These foundational conditions facilitated the flourishing of diplomacy in ancient times.

The art of conducting negotiations with people tactfully is commonly referred to as diplomacy. In order to achieve success in diplomacy, it is essential to recognise the significant impact that religion can have on people's decisions. There are two areas in which the Church assists in this: Track II Diplomacy and Soft Power. The term Track-II diplomacy was first coined in 1981 by two US State Department Employees in a magazine discussing the types of diplomatic engagements that occur between groups and how Track-I diplomacy would use official diplomats in a formal setting, Track-II would use unofficial professionals in a non-formal setting.²⁰ Soft Power, as defined by Joseph Nye, is the ability to influence others through attraction and persuasion rather than force or payment.²¹

While religion has historically been a cause of conflicts around the world, Track-II Diplomacy has proven to be an effective means of bringing peace to regions and forging

¹⁷ David J. Bederman, *International law in antiquity. Vol. 16.* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 16

¹⁸ Robert A. Denemark, Matthew J. Hoffmann, and Hasan Yonten. "Religion and Diplomacy: The 'Clash of Civilizations' as Historical Libel." *Histories* 3, no. 1 (2023): 49, <https://doi.org/10.3390/histories3010005>

¹⁹ George Modelski, "Kautilya: Foreign policy and international system in the ancient Hindu world." *American Political Science Review* 58, no. 3 (1964): 555, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1953131>, 555

²⁰ William D. Davidson and Joseph V. Montville. "Foreign Policy According to Freud." *Foreign Policy*, no. 45 (1981): 155, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.2307/1148317>

²¹ Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power." *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (1990): 161, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.2307/1148580>

agreements. Religions have a transnational reach and have historically established relationships with people before states. The success of religion as a form of Track II Diplomacy in Diplomatic Theory is attributed to its combination of Idealism and Realism. It is Idealistic in perceiving itself as a progressive, altered set of hypotheses about international affairs and human behaviour while also being Realistic in acknowledging the potential for evil in human nature.²²

Incorporating Religious Gestalt into Track-II Diplomacy is crucial for its success, as evidenced by the peace agreements in Northern Ireland during the 1990s. It is important to note that this approach is not about imposing one's religious beliefs but recognising the diverse worldviews involved in a conflict and engaging them respectfully and innovatively as part of diplomatic relations. Faith-based diplomats in Northern Ireland were able to effectively navigate the complex religious dynamics of the conflict, creating peace-building associations that evolved into peace-building organisms. These organisms engaged with various groups, including the media, local leaders, and the general public, ultimately influencing their representatives to come to the table and engage in peaceful dialogue.²³

Religion's potential to shape human behaviour and influence global preferences is a significant aspect of Soft Power in diplomacy. Religion, with its deeply ingrained values, traditions, and narratives, can be a potent tool for projecting a nation's cultural values, ethical principles, and societal norms, thereby enhancing its international reputation. Through legitimacy and expertise, religion can organise and influence large groups of people without

²² Jodok Troy, "Faith-based diplomacy under examination." *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 3, no. 3 (2008): 211, <https://doi.org/10.1163/187119108X378088>

²³ I.A.A Thompson, "Politics, Religion and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Honor of De Lamar Jensen." *The English Historical Review* 112, no. 447 (1997): 736-738.

resorting to reward or coercion.²⁴ Throughout history, people have often identified with their culture more strongly than their geographic location, enabling Soft Power to wield significant influence. Religion, in particular, held immense sway over individuals in the past, with many prioritising their religious beliefs over loyalty to their state. This historical reality undermines any argument suggesting religion was not essential in shaping societies.²⁵ Over the past century, self-determination has emerged as a significant element of international politics, with many nationalist and transnational movements arising to pursue shared goals. Though diverse in their ideologies, these movements share the ability to mobilise people across borders.²⁶ In the 1980s and 1990s, the RCC employed soft power strategies to persuade key decision-makers to support their objectives.²⁷

Diplomatic Endeavors: The Historical Role of the Catholic Church

Since early Christianity, the RCC has wielded significant influence globally, engaging in international relations. The Papal States and the Pope's dual role as spiritual and temporal leaders solidified its impact. During the Middle Ages, Popes pursued global dominance, shaping diplomatic channels as the Carolingian Empire expanded—the Church's network of bishops mediated disputes, aiding stability. Pope Leo III's coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor in 800 underscored the intertwining of religious and political power. This early church diplomacy exemplifies Track II Diplomacy, highlighting the Church's pivotal role in shaping international affairs.²⁸

²⁴ Luc Reyckler, "Religion And Conflict." *International Journal of Peace Studies* 2, no. 1 (1997): 35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45037971>.

²⁵ Ganesh P. Pokhariyal, "The Influence of Religion, Technology, and Economy on Culture, Diplomacy, and Peace." *International Journal on World Peace* 32, no. 2 (2015): 48

²⁶ Jeffrey Haynes, *Religious transnational actors and soft power* (Routledge, 2016), 7

²⁷ *ibid*, 28

²⁸ I. S. Robinson, David Luscombe, and Jonathan Riley-Smith. "The Institutions of the Church, 1073–1216." *New Cambridge Medieval History* (2004): 369

During the Renaissance and Reformation eras, the RCC faced significant opposition to its authority and influence from figures such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, who challenged the papacy's dominance. Concurrently, rulers in these regions sought to leverage the Reformation to diminish the Church's power while consolidating control over religious affairs.²⁹ In response, the Catholic Church intensified its involvement in international relations, forging alliances with powerful rulers, conducting diplomatic negotiations, and deploying clergy and bishops as emissaries. It contributed to European peace efforts, exemplified by its role in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which acknowledged the independence of individual states and introduced the idea of non-interference in one another's internal affairs. These principles align with the Catholic Church's recognition of the authority and autonomy of secular governments, which aimed to prevent further conflicts.³⁰

During the 16th to 20th centuries, Europe's Christian community was considered the birthplace of Modern International Law.³¹ Scholars have extensively researched Christianity's role in diplomacy during this period, which is crucial in understanding International Relations. Hugo Grotius, an influential figure in the philosophy of international law, believed in reason, natural law, and mutual self-interest as the foundation of diplomatic relations between states. He argued that religion should not dictate the terms of engagement. Instead, he explored the concept of universal natural law, separate from religious doctrine, which could provide a framework for resolving conflicts and establishing peace.

During the 19th-century colonisation of Africa, the Church played diverse roles, encompassing missionary activities, education, and humanitarian assistance. Missionaries

²⁹ David Ryall, "How many divisions? The modern development of Catholic international relations." *International Relations* 14, no. 2 (1998): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1177/004711789801400202>

³⁰ *ibid*, 28

³¹ Denmark, Hoffmann, and Yonten, "Religion and Diplomacy: The 'Clash of Civilizations' as Historical Libel." 49

were crucial intermediaries between colonial authorities and local populations, establishing early contact with native African communities. Beyond religious endeavours, the Church's involvement extended to social, economic, and political realms, evident in establishing schools, hospitals, and orphanages to cater to the needs of converts. The Church significantly influenced African societies' social and cultural landscapes through missions and educational institutions, fostering interactions with colonial powers and foreign entities.³² Its stance on issues like slavery impacted European nations' actions in their African colonies, prompting calls for abolition.³³ Moreover, the Church's network of missions facilitated dialogue between diverse cultural groups, shaping international relations and perceptions during that period. This noteworthy occurrence is an early instance of the Church's transnational engagement in Track II Diplomacy in Africa, a testament to its significant impact on the region's socio-political landscape.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the Church held significant diplomatic sway, negotiating the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 and promoting peace via Pope Benedict XV's Seven Point Peace Plan.³⁴ Vatican City's establishment as an independent state via the Lateran Treaty enabled the Church's direct involvement in international affairs. Amid World War II, the Church utilised its diplomatic channels to aid those impacted by the conflict, with Pope Pius XII issuing condemnatory messages in response to Nazi atrocities. His clandestine involvement in foreign policy, particularly aiding Jewish refugees, showcased the Church's

³² Michael Rozier, "A Catholic contribution to global public health." *Annals of Global Health* 86, no. 1 (2020): 8 <https://doi.org/10.5334/aogh.2762>

³³ Brian Stanley, "Christian missions, antislavery and the claims of humanity, c. 1813-1873." *Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 8. World Christianities c. 1815-c. 1914*, (2005): 450, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521814560.028>

³⁴ Benedict XV, *Seven Point Peace Proposal*, August 1, 1919, <https://www.catholictextbookproject.com/post/pope-benedict-issues-a-peace-plan-august-1-1917>

Soft Power, laying the groundwork for future Popes' international engagements, notably John XXIII and Paul VI.

Amid the Cold War, the Church emerged as a significant player in global diplomacy in the 1940s and 1950s, despite its inherent distrust of communism due to its threat to religious freedom. Despite this scepticism, the Church remained committed to its pursuit of global peace and actively fostered dialogue between the East and West. Pope Pius XII played a discreet but pivotal role in facilitating communication and diplomatic initiatives to ease tensions and promote peaceful coexistence between the USSR and Western powers. Utilising its extensive diplomatic network and sovereign status, the Church acted as a mediator, highlighting its dedication to advocating for human rights and advancing peace on the international stage.³⁵

With the advent of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, spearheaded by Pope John XXIII, the Church's diplomatic strategy underwent a significant transformation. The Church began to address contemporary issues such as decolonisation and supporting independence movements in Africa and Asia. The Vatican's attainment of observer status at the UN in 1964 further empowered the Church to articulate its interests and principles on the global stage, signifying a reevaluation of its role in international diplomacy and reaffirming its commitment to shaping global affairs.³⁶

In 1965, Pope Paul VI delivered a historic speech to the UN General Assembly in New York, becoming the first Church leader to do so. In his address, the Pope underscored the importance of the UN and expressed the Vatican's support and collaboration with the

³⁵ Peter C. Kent, *Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Division of Europe, 1943-1950*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 10

³⁶ Lucian N. Leustean, "Roman Catholicism, Diplomacy, and the European Communities, 1958–1964." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 15, no. 1 (2013): 75, https://doi.org/10.1162/JCWS_a_00308

organisation. He also discussed various topics, such as the church's commitment towards global peace, nuclear de-escalation, and the well-being of humanity. The Pope called for worldwide solidarity and recognition of the inherent dignity of all individuals, regardless of nationality or ideology. In essence, the Pope's address was a defining moment in the Catholic Church's use of Soft Power and engagement in diplomacy, highlighting their steadfast commitment to promoting peace and justice on a global scale.³⁷

Nuclear Deterrence

The spectre of nuclear war loomed large over the world during the era of the 1960s, as geopolitical tensions between the USA and the USSR reached unprecedented heights. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 stands as a stark reminder of how close humanity came to the brink of nuclear catastrophe. Where the threat of *Mutually Assured Destruction* cast a shadow over International Relations, the RCC emerged as a pivotal player in efforts to avert any nuclear conflict. Putting aside its dislike for communism, the Church recognised the importance of averting nuclear war and promoting Global Peace. Pope John XXIII emerged during the crisis as an essential factor in getting the two sides to talk with one another. The release of the encyclical "Pacem in Terris" spread the message of global peace, and billions of people worldwide took it up, leading to the change of the nuclear doctrine of both nations. Later efforts by Pope Paul and Pope John Paul II with Nuclear Non-Proliferation allowed the two superpowers to see Nuclear deterrence as a long-term goal.

During the tense and uncertain days of the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962, the Pope's unwavering commitment to peace served as a beacon of hope in a world on the brink

³⁷ Paul VI, "Address to the United Nations Organisation", 4 Oct, 1965, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651004_united-nations.html

of nuclear annihilation. In addition to publicly urging restraint and dialogue, the Pope sought to reduce tensions by proposing direct discussions between US President John F. Kennedy and USSR Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Both leaders acknowledged the Pope's pivotal role in promoting peace and expressed gratitude for his efforts.³⁸ The Pope's leadership played a crucial role in de-escalating the crisis and averting a catastrophic nuclear confrontation by facilitating communication between the two superpowers and fostering an atmosphere of dialogue amidst the height of Cold War hostilities. The Pope's bold initiative in advocating for Track II diplomacy underscored his proactive approach to international relations.

In 1963, Pope John XXIII released an encyclical entitled "Pacem in Terris"³⁹. This document addressed the current global situation and stressed the importance of peace, fairness, and human rights. It emphasised the need for social and international collaboration, coexistence, and nuclear weapons disarmament. *Pacem in Terris* called on all people of goodwill to work towards a world where peace, justice, and respect for human dignity prevail.⁴⁰ What set *Pacem in Terris* apart was its language and structure. It was not an academic treatise on political theory but a persuasive appeal to the broadest possible audience. The diverse religious landscape of the world has made it challenging to find common ground and consensus in multilateral negotiations. The encyclical was based on a Natural Law interpretation that differed from previous Church teachings in papal documents, reflecting the impact of the Second Vatican Council. It recognised that coexistence required more than traditional diplomacy and called for reconciliation between diplomacy and political theory.⁴¹

³⁸ John L. Allen Jr, "Amid nuclear fears, remember a pope once helped avert Armageddon", *Crux*, August 17, 2017

³⁹ Latin for "Peace on Earth"

⁴⁰ John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963,

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html

⁴¹ Leslie Dewart, "Soviet-American Diplomacy And 'Pacem In Terris'". *CrossCurrents* 14, No. 3 (1964): 294, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24457429>

The Catholic Church's engagement with global affairs took a significant turn with the release of *Pacem in Terris*. For a considerable period, the Church had remained relatively hands-off, but this encyclical received high praise from nations and religions worldwide. Observers considered it innovative and superior to previous efforts by either superpower due to its well-crafted nature. However, both nations expressed some frustrations with it. The USSR expressed scepticism and reservations about their ideological stances and called for greater individual liberties. At the same time, the US government was concerned about the encyclical's calls for disarmament, as it conflicted with their Cold War strategy and arms race.⁴² Regardless, both countries formulated a doctrine of coexistence out of necessity and found this document advantageous to their ideologies. In the early stage of the Cold War, their focus had been on dismantling their adversaries' ideology through any means necessary for theirs to prevail. Both sides now aimed for peaceful victory, believing their ideals would triumph peacefully instead of through conflict.⁴³

The Church's political ambitions sparked a diplomatic crisis, resulting in a greater emphasis on multilateral diplomacy and the expansion of international partnerships and peace treaties. The UN established a committee of 18 members from both Western and Eastern Bloc countries in 1965 to negotiate the disarmament of nuclear weapons. The committee aimed to facilitate active discussions and negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Many countries recognised the significance of Pope John XXIII's encyclical and sought to align their foreign policies with its principles. For instance, Canada established diplomatic relations with the Holy See in 1963 and collaborated closely with the Vatican by incorporating its perspectives

⁴² David Hollenbach "Pacem in Terris and Human Rights." *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 10. No. 1 (2013): 6, <https://doi.org/10.5840/jcathsoc20131012>

⁴³ Dewart, "Soviet-American Diplomacy And 'Pacem In Terris'", 288

into future anti-nuclear treaties.⁴⁴ This collaboration led to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968, signed by both major powers in 1970.⁴⁵

In 1982, Pope John Paul II delivered a poignant speech at the UN, tackling the pressing issue of nuclear weapons. The Pope emphasised the necessity of nuclear disarmament and global harmony, emphasising the moral responsibility of world leaders to collaborate internationally for the eradication of nuclear weapons.⁴⁶ This speech is widely regarded as instrumental in convincing both nations to adopt nuclear disarmament as a long-term objective and played a part in both nations re-signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995.⁴⁷ Overall, the Church's political endeavours proved fruitful as they allowed them to bolster their diplomatic connections with other governments.⁴⁸ Today, under the leadership of Pope Francis, the Church remains steadfast in its commitment to bring nuclear weapons to zero.⁴⁹ The Church utilised Soft Power to influence global politics and achieve its desired outcomes.

Indigenous Rights

Before the 1960s, the RCC did not actively support the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide. Their stance on proselytism and communism often resulted in the neglect of human rights advocacy. However, the publishing of various works and decisions made by

⁴⁴ Joanna D. Kulska, "Towards 'global zero': The Role of the Holy See in the campaign on nuclear disarmament." *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Sklodowska, sectio K-Politologia* 25, no. 2 (2018): 69, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17951/k.2018.25.2.67-80>

⁴⁵ INFCIRC/140, *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, March 5, 1970, <https://treaties.unoda.org/t/npt>

⁴⁶ John Paul II, *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the General Assembly of the United Nations*, June 7, 1982 https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/pont_messages/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19820607_disarmo-onu.html

⁴⁷ Gerard Powers, "From Nuclear Deterrence to Disarmament: Evolving Catholic Perspectives." *Arms Control Today* 45, No. 4 (2015): 12

⁴⁸ Hollenbach, "Pacem in Terris and Human Rights", 9

⁴⁹ Powers, "From Nuclear Deterrence to Disarmament: Evolving Catholic Perspectives.", 12

Church leaders during the Second Vatican Council marked a turning point. Since then, the Church has engaged in diplomatic efforts with states to promote Indigenous Rights, which has become a cornerstone of their decolonisation movements and remains a significant belief of the Church today.

Throughout history, the Church has engaged in extensive efforts to spread its faith, dating back to the late 15th century with the "Voyages of Discovery." These efforts coincided with discovering the New World and the first interactions between Westerners and Indigenous peoples of North and South America.⁵⁰ In many states throughout the Americas, it was illegal to promote any religion outside of Catholicism. For example, in Peru, Catholicism was the official religion of the government, and practising any other religion was illegal, including local traditions.⁵¹ During this time, many communist and socialist groups in South America supported indigenous rights, leading to the Church's stronger stance against these movements.⁵² It was not until 1915 that other religions were legalised, mainly due to the efforts of the Seven-Day Adventists to improve the rights of indigenous people in the country, and many indigenous peoples willingly joined their movement.⁵³ The actions of the Seven-Day Adventists likely influenced future decision-makers within the Catholic Church.

During the Second Vatican Council, the Church made important decisions to address various issues, including indigenous rights. The publication of influential documents such as "Gaudium et Spes"⁵⁴ happened despite resistance from conservative clerics. In this document, the Church emphasised its commitment to upholding the dignity and rights of indigenous

⁵⁰ Robert J. Schreiter, "Changes in Roman Catholic attitudes toward proselytism and mission." *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations* (1988): 113

⁵¹ Victoria A. Castillo, "Indigenous "messengers" petitioning for justice: Citizenship and indigenous rights in Peru, 1900–1945." *PhD diss., University of Michigan* (2009): 17

⁵² *ibid*, 7

⁵³ *ibid*, 81

⁵⁴ Latin for "Joy and Hope"

peoples worldwide, advocating for their protection and respect while working towards inclusivity in diverse societies. Initially received for its theological implications, the Church now recognises the document as a pivotal moment in its history. The reception of this and other documents from the Second Vatican Council prompted the Church to shift its focus to the world, leading to a decline in the practice of proselytism in the decades following their publication.⁵⁵ The Church created this document to encourage dialogue and action in support of indigenous rights on a global scale.

In 1967, Pope Paul VI authored an encyclical titled "Populorum Progressio," which focused on the progress and development of humanity. The document emphasised the importance of international cooperation to promote social justice and called for solidarity with impoverished individuals and countries. Specifically, the Pope urged affluent nations to assist underdeveloped countries, particularly those formerly colonised or recently gained independence. The encyclical highlighted economic inequality in these regions and advocated for a more equitable distribution of resources.⁵⁶ Although it received mixed reviews, many praised it as a groundbreaking work of social vision. Some speculate that the Pope's observations of poverty during his travels to Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East in the early 1960s influenced the writing of the encyclical.⁵⁷ When announcing its release, the Pope believed that "Populorum Progressio" teachings would benefit all humanity.⁵⁸ These speeches and writings demonstrate the Church's Soft Power influence on its followers.

In South America, Church leaders expressed a desire to improve the rights of indigenous peoples, and Paraguay saw a significant movement in this regard. Alfredo Stroessner ruled

⁵⁵ Schreiter, "Changes in Roman Catholic attitudes toward proselytism and mission.", 114

⁵⁶ Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, March 26, 1967,

https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html

⁵⁷ Mari R. Heidt, "Development, Nations, and 'The Signs of the Times': The Historical Context of *Populorum Progressio*." *Journal of Moral Theology* 6, no. 1 (2017): 3

⁵⁸ *ibid*, 15

the country with a military dictatorship for over three decades, from 1954 to 1989. The regime sought to "integrate" indigenous populations into the larger society with the assistance of Protestant missionaries.⁵⁹ However, the RCC in Paraguay did not support these efforts. In 1971, the top bishops in Paraguay held an Episcopal Conference, during which they abandoned attempts to convert indigenous peoples and instead focused on defending human rights by participating in local politics, advocating for lower classes, and restructuring ecclesiastical structures.⁶⁰ The indigenous groups were also aware of the Catholic Church's broad audience and platform. They often relied on the Church to intervene and resolve disputes between them and the regime. This demonstrated the Church's experience with Track II diplomacy. As a result, more indigenous people identified as Catholic at the end of the regime than before.⁶¹

The Church has demonstrated its unwavering support for indigenous rights. It has evolved its stance on proselytism to become one that can harmoniously coexist with other major world religions. The Vatican has been a vocal advocate for indigenous rights globally, endorsing the "Declaration for Rights of Indigenous Peoples" multiple times at the UN, including in 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2014.⁶² This proactive advocacy is a testament to the Church's unwavering dedication to promoting social justice and protecting human rights.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the RCC wielded significant influence over international relations in the 1960s, employing unique diplomatic approaches such as Soft Power and Track II Diplomacy.

⁵⁹ René H. Horst, "The Catholic Church, Human Rights Advocacy, and Indigenous Resistance in Paraguay, 1969-1989." *The Catholic Historical Review* 88, no. 4 (2002): 723, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25026263>

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 725

⁶¹ *ibid*, 744

⁶² Steven T. Newcomb, "The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Paradigm of Domination." *Griffith Law Review* 20, no. 3 (2011): 578-579. doi:10.1080/10383441.2011.10854711.

By examining the Church's historical engagement in diplomacy, we can categorise major events and analyse their outcomes through these lenses. The changes initiated by the Church in the 1960s, mainly through initiatives like the Second Vatican Council, paved the way for its active involvement in global issues such as nuclear deterrence and indigenous rights. These examples shed light on the diplomatic tactics employed by the Church during this period, offering valuable insights for understanding its interactions with entities like the Irish government during the Nigerian Civil War. By understanding the Church's diplomatic strategies and their impacts, we can better comprehend its role in shaping international affairs and promoting peace and justice on a global scale.

Chapter 2 - How the Decolonisation Movement Changed Ireland's Foreign Policy

The Republic of Ireland was established in 1949, marking the end of colonial control and allowing for independent decision-making. Initially adopting a neutral stance on global politics to avoid association with either side during the Cold War, Ireland became more outspoken about its beliefs and took significant steps to support them in the 1960s. This shift coincided with a period of heightened decolonisation movements globally. It is crucial to recognise that supporting decolonisation during Ireland's struggle for independence could have harmed its trade, economic stability, and foreign relations, particularly given its desire to join the EEC during this tumultuous period.

This chapter aims to demonstrate the significant impact of the Decolonisation movement on Ireland's shift in foreign policy. The country's foreign policy during this period can be categorised into three main areas: promoting peace, supporting nations in their quest for independence and international recognition, and aiding in the security of newly established nations. As African countries pursued liberation from colonial powers, Ireland sought to amplify their voices on the global stage. Ireland played a role in securing international acknowledgement for these nations throughout these independence movements. Following their independence, these countries required support to sustain themselves, and Ireland provided economic, social, and security assistance. Despite being economically reliant on its neighbours, Ireland remained steadfast in pursuing its objectives. Mindful of the potential risks, the Irish government astutely navigated these endeavours by involving seasoned diplomats with substantial experience in relevant domains.

Ireland's foreign policy initiatives can be best described through several case studies, including its efforts in the UN, the Congo Crisis, its relationship with newly independent Zambia, and the case of South West African independence. These cases will highlight the three areas Ireland focused on: maintaining peace, assisting with international recognition, and securitising new states. By examining Irish diplomatic papers from this period, we can better understand how Ireland achieved these.

History of Ireland and its Foreign Relations

Ireland's history as a British colony dates back to the 12th century. The English Crown took its first step towards establishing control over Ireland through the Plantations of Ireland initiative in the 17th century, involving confiscating land from Irish Catholics and distributing it to Protestant settlers. The Crown also introduced penal laws similar to those enforced in Africa during the 19th century. The Act of Union merged the two islands into one country and declared the formation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. Despite the theoretical representation in the British Parliament, systemic discrimination persisted against Catholics. These and other significant events, like the Great Famine, led to a rise of Irish nationalism. In 1916, Irish Nationals fought a failed rebellion against the British known as the Easter Rising. The trial and execution of these nationals led to public outcry and further conflict. After several years of further conflict, the British signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 and established the Irish Free State. Ireland's struggle for independence profoundly shaped its identity and governance, affecting its foreign policy for the coming years.⁶³

⁶³ Patrick S. O'Hegarty, *A History of Ireland Under the Union: 1801-1922*, (Routledge, 2022), 3-5

Ireland's post-independence neutrality was pivotal in shaping the nation's identity. Ireland sought to chart an independent foreign policy course, distancing itself from European conflicts. In 1923, Ireland joined the League of Nations and actively maintained a policy of neutrality. Anti-colonial sentiment and a strong desire to safeguard its recently acquired sovereignty and avoid getting entangled in global conflicts drove this policy. There was the looming threat of Nazi Germany, which allowed Ireland to create some economic and military ties without fully allying themselves.⁶⁴

Ireland's neutrality during World War II was characterised by a strict policy of non-participation, refraining from favouring any warring factions. Despite being offered a United Ireland by the British, the Irish turned it down and remained neutral for the entire war. However, Ireland did encounter challenges, such as the Battle of the Atlantic impacting its maritime trade routes and the presence of German spies on Irish soil. In practice, there was some bias towards the Allies, with any planes, German or British, that crashed on Irish territory being sent up North to British territory.⁶⁵ The commitment to neutrality during this tumultuous period not only defined Ireland's foreign policy but also served as a crucible for testing its diplomatic relations on the global stage.

In the post-World War II era until the 1960s, Ireland's foreign policy was marked by a delicate balance between maintaining its policy of neutrality and cultivating strategic relationships. Irish foreign policy faced solid domestic pressure to remain within parameters defined by religious sentiment. When against communism, Fianna Fáil took a neutral stance, while Fine Gael took a more pro-western stance. This divide continued until the 1960s when

⁶⁴ Patrick Keatinge, "Ireland and the League of Nations." *An Irish Quarterly Review* 59, no. 234 (1970): 137, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30088887>

⁶⁵ Matthew McNamara, "The Challenge of the Irish Volunteers of World War II". *K-Lines Internment Camp 1940-44*, (2008), <http://www.curragh.info/klines.html>

Taoiseach Lemass took power.⁶⁶ Ireland actively participated in the Marshall Plan, an American initiative to aid the post-war reconstruction of Europe. This collaboration provided economic and trade benefits and aligned Ireland with Western values. It contributed significantly to Ireland's economic recovery and demonstrated a practical alignment with Western interests.⁶⁷ At the same time, Ireland was alienating itself from the Eastern Bloc, Choosing not to seek diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia over the state's treatment of Christians. Ireland condemned the imprisonment of Catholics and advocated diplomatic intervention to safeguard religious freedom.⁶⁸

Despite these minor influences, Ireland was committed to their neutrality. In 1949, during the formation of NATO, the Irish government was approached regarding potential membership. A representative from the US State Department conveyed to the Irish Ambassador to the US, Sean Nunan, that the NATO founders desired Ireland's inclusion and that a formal invitation would follow if the government agreed, but Ireland turned it down. Although supportive of NATO's objectives, Ireland declined membership due to its reluctance to align with the United Kingdom.⁶⁹ Ireland did not support Decolonisation efforts in Africa at this time, skillfully balancing its autonomy while leveraging relationships for economic and strategic benefits.

⁶⁶ Enda Staunton, "The Case of Biafra: Ireland and the Nigerian Civil War." *Irish Historical Studies* 31, no. 124 (1999): 513, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1017/S0021121400014395>.

⁶⁷ Bernadette Whelan, "Ireland and the Marshall Plan." *Irish Economic and Social History* 19, no. 1 (1992): 49, <https://doi.org/10.1177/033248939201900103>

⁶⁸ Michael Kennedy, "'A Deed Agreeable to God': Andrija Artuković and Croat Ustaše Connections with Ireland." *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 25 (2014): 191, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3318/isia.2014.25.17>

⁶⁹ Ronan Fanning, "The United States and Irish participation in NATO: The Debate of 1950." *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1979): 38, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30001704>

Maintaining Peace

Ireland's most significant contribution to peace during this period was its involvement in peacekeeping missions. UN peacekeeping missions were developed to replace the collective security efforts of the major powers during the Cold War, following the end of World War II and reaching a stalemate in power. It represented a new non-coercive and non-authoritative system compared to previous approaches, making it suitable for participation by all types of states. However, each contributing state has unique motivations and policies for international peacekeeping missions. Despite being relatively small, Ireland consistently participates in peacekeeping efforts. This commitment reflects Ireland's strong focus on UN-centered policy and reinforces its politically and militarily neutral stance. Frank Aiken, the Irish Minister of External Affairs, launched the initiative from 1957 to 1969. Maintaining active forces was also identified as a key motivation behind this decision. Furthermore, two amendments to the Irish Defense Act of 1960 allowed for Ireland's involvement in peacekeeping missions as tangible evidence of their dedication to this cause.⁷⁰

The first peacekeeping mission that the Irish government were involved in was the United Nations Operations in Congo (ONUC). In July 1960, the UN passed Resolution 143, sending a UN-led peacekeeping force into the country.⁷¹ ONUC assisted the police and government in bringing peace and stability to the state but refused to help the government in its war against the secessionists. However, this changed after the UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, died in a plane crash. The UN then passed Resolution 169 in November 1961, rejecting any independence movements within the DRC and changing the mission to

⁷⁰ Katsumi Ishizuka, *Ireland and international peacekeeping operations 1960-2000: a study of Irish motivation*. Vol. 13. (Psychology Press, 2004), 60

⁷¹ UN Resolution 143, *A/RES/143*, February 8, 1960

have ONUC assist the state in their fight against the Katangan secessionists.⁷² Throughout 1962, ONUC fought the secessionists, leading to their surrender in January 1963. ONUC declared the mission complete and left the country in June 1964.⁷³

Maintaining peace was the Irish government's aim throughout the mission. In November 1961, despite having already lost 17 troops in the conflict, the Irish diplomatic mission expressed their disdain for Resolution 169 in declaring war on the secessionists. Even with foreign mercenaries, the Irish government speculated it would end any current ceasefire.⁷⁴ With the resolution eventually passing in November 1961, the Irish asked the mission to be patient with their actions and give conciliation a chance, asking for an appointment of a conciliator.⁷⁵ In 1962, with the secessionists on the back foot, an ONUC win was inevitable. The Irish backed a proposal to make constitutional amendments to federalise the country and have Katangan peacefully reintegrate itself into the DRC. If the Katangan government does not comply, we will take action against them through sanctions, not violence.⁷⁶ With the war over and the mission declared won, the DRC government wanted to bring the secession leader, Tshombe, to justice in the capital, Leopoldville. They proposed sending the army to get him. Wanting to maintain peace in that region and the capital, the Irish government proposed bringing him under UN control to avoid any further conflict.⁷⁷

In the latter part of the 1960s, as more nations gained independence and recognised the significance of peacekeeping forces in conflicts, the Irish government took a new approach to

⁷² UN Resolution 169, *A/RES/169*, August 8, 1961

⁷³ ONUC Mission Debrief, Accessed February 8, 2024, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/onucB.htm>

⁷⁴ Con Cremin, "Extract from a note (M/13/6/III) (Confidential) (Copy)", Dublin, November 15, 1961, *NAI DFA PMUN/430*

⁷⁵ Con Cremin, "Letter to Hugh McCann (London) (Urgent) (Copy)", Dublin, November 30, 1961, *NAI DFA 5/313/31/G*

⁷⁶ Frederick H. Boland, "Extracts from a report to Con Cremin (Dublin) (M/13/6)", New York, August 3, 1962, *NAI DFA 5/305/384/31/V*

⁷⁷ National Archives of Ireland, "Code Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to Frederick H. Boland (New York) (No.1)", Dublin, January 2, 1963, *NAI DFA PMUN/431*

secure funding for missions. Instead of requesting funds for specific missions, they proposed mandatory contributions to Peacekeeping funds for future operations. During discussions at the UN Security Council in 1965 and 1966, concerns arose regarding finances for peacekeeping missions. Minister Aiken emphasised that their delegation should be more assertive with this proposal by seeking support from co-sponsors, expressing frustration with other Western countries like Sweden and Canada, and advocating voluntary contributions.⁷⁸ He also instructed the new Irish Representative to the UN, Cornelius Cremin, to engage African countries in supporting the proposal. Recognising a weak willingness to adopt recommendations but seeing potential in mandatory assessments of missions as a solution, Aiken envisioned further plans involving himself and Irish diplomats contacting foreign offices globally to promote the proposal backed by sponsors while utilising media support.⁷⁹ This proposal was later adopted and added to the UN Charter.⁸⁰

Assisting with International Recognition

Before the Decolonisation movement, the Irish government cautiously acknowledged newly independent states. Various factors, including economic implications, contribute to taking a cautious approach. Recognising these states required establishing diplomatic relations and offering financial aid or support, which was scarce for the Irish government then. During the 1950s, the Irish government aimed to carefully manage its international relationships with the US, the UK, and the USSR. Its diplomatic strategy led it to be reluctant to acknowledge states. It also aimed to assess emerging states' political stability and legitimacy before

⁷⁸ Seán Ronan, "Extracts from a letter to Con Cremin (New York) (417/249/3)", Dublin, June 9, 1966, *NAI DFA PMUNJ/74II*

⁷⁹ Frank Aiken, "Unsigned 'Instructions' on 'Financing of future U.N. Peace-keeping Operations'", Dublin, July 29, 1966, *NA 98/3/29I*

⁸⁰ Article 17 (3), https://legal.un.org/repertory/art17_3.shtml, Accessed February 19, 2024

granting recognition.⁸¹ It demonstrated Ireland's careful approach to foreign policy as a neutral and recently independent country, navigating its course while considering multiple considerations.

Ireland's approach at the beginning of the decolonisation movement could best be described as hesitant but logical, whereby they would be supportive of campaigns to do so but would look to avoid standing out and causing controversies. When South West Africa was looking to gain independence from South Africa in the early 1960s, the Irish expressed their support for South West African independence. The Irish government was dissatisfied with previous UN efforts to help achieve the goal and wanted the Irish delegation to express this. The Irish Representative to the UN, Frank Bolands, aimed to express the Irish opinions without alienating itself from the decision-making process. The Security Council established a committee to address the issue of South Africa's possession of the territory. With little effect made by the end of 1961, this committee had ended its tenure and wanted to reelect its members. There was only one African state within this committee, South Africa, which preferred not to be a part of the new committee. The President of the General Assembly, Mongi Slim, had reached out to Ireland to join the committee in their place, given that Ireland was known for their independence and moderation. Boland suggested that Ireland not be a member of this new delegation as any suggestions they would make would likely go ignored or that, in compromise, they would have to make poor suggestions.⁸²

In 1960, the UN passed Resolution 1514, characterising foreign rule as a violation of human rights, affirming the right to self-determination, and calling for an end to colonial rule.

⁸¹ Hajer Gandouz, "Ireland's Diplomatic Performance in the Mid and Late-Twentieth Century: A Model for Other Small States?." *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* 13 (2023): 132, <https://doi.org/10.36253/SIJIS-2239-3978-14620>

⁸² Frederick H. Boland, "Telex message to Con Cremin (Dublin) (No.45) (Immediate)", New York, February 22, 1962, *NAI DFA 2000/14/262*

Ireland voted in its favour despite its close trade partners like the UK, France and the US abstaining from the vote.⁸³ In the past, Ireland had not recognised several states, including Tunisia, Cambodia and Israel, to prevent political fallout. When Ireland became a member of the UN Security Council in 1962, many states were granted recognition by the UN, and they passed every resolution in the Security Council favouring membership of states to the UN, including Nigeria's membership.⁸⁴ The Irish government recognised that the lack of "de jure" recognition prevented them from trading with these states or the rest of the world, which could lead to terrible economic depression within these states if the colonial powers were to pull out all their assets. The secretary to Minister Aiken, Con Cremin, wanted the Irish government to recognise all newly recognised states, given the political support it would have in Ireland.⁸⁵

Ireland also assisted nations directly with getting recognition, such as Zambia. Led by Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's journey to independence was peaceful and diplomatic, declaring its independence on October 24, 1964. Ireland established diplomatic relations with Zambia in 1965.⁸⁶ During a meeting between the Taoiseach of Ireland, Sean Lemass and Kunda, Lemass offered to assist Zambia with getting global recognition. Given their recent position on the UN Security Council, the Irish knew the organisation's procedure for recognising a nation. They were confident in their ability to help them with this using their connections with the US and other allied nations. They insisted on giving equal treatment to all members, with a particular emphasis on African states, as they felt they had received less favourable treatment than others. In his meeting with President Kenneth Kaunda in 1964, Taoiseach

⁸³ UN Resolution 1514, *A/RES/1514 (XV)*, December 16, 1960

⁸⁴ UN Security Council Resolutions 133-160, 1960, *S/RES/133 - S/RES/160*

⁸⁵ National Archives of Ireland, "Draft note by Con Cremin on the recognition of certain states by Ireland", Dublin, July 7, 1962, *NAI DFA 5/305/149/I*

⁸⁶ Ireland-Zambia Embassy, Accessed February 10, 2024, www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/zambia/

Sean Lemass described his frustration with the UN for excluding other African states in meetings that involved South Africa or Portugal to ease tensions.⁸⁷

When Cornelius Cremin became the Irish representative of the UN in 1965, the Irish increased their vocal support of recognising decolonised nations. On October 3, 1966, Minister Aiken delivered a speech at the UN outlining his proposed approach to the Mandate of South West Africa. This proposal, now known as the "Irish Formula," garnered significant attention and discussion within the international community. This formula involves highlighting the failure of a party to fulfil a mandate and approaching its termination in a responsive and orderly manner. In this case, the mandate that South Africa failed was its League of Nations Mandate, which was responsible for the administration of the territory. The Irish delegation wanted the commission to determine the best way to terminate the mandate so that South West Africa could gain independence.⁸⁸ Western and African delegations received this speech well. Less than a month later, the General Assembly passed a resolution terminating the mandate. Aiken also acknowledged that whatever the UN did, South Africa would be unhappy with any interference by the UN in the territory and would do everything to prevent it. To overcome this, he implored the importance of looking at new ideas to achieve their aims and abandoning old ones that failed.⁸⁹ Being proud of their previous work on the UN Security Council, Ireland sought to rejoin the council again in 1969.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ National Archives of Ireland, "Report of talks between Taoiseach and President Kaunda of Zambia", Dublin, November 23, 1964, *NAI TSCH 3/SI7693/95*

⁸⁸ Department of External Affairs, "Extracts from a memorandum for Sean Lemass (Dublin)", Dublin, October 17, 1966, *NA DFA 2000/14/265*

⁸⁹ National Archives Ireland, "Extracts from a memorandum for the information of the Government by the Department of External Affairs 'The General Assembly of the United Nations (Twenty-third Session) (417/294)'" , Dublin, October 8, 1968, *NA 99/1/266*

⁹⁰ Con Cremin, "Extract from a report to Hugh McCann (Dublin) 'Security Council' (L/4/1)", New York, June 24, 1968, *NAI 98/3/87*

Securitisation of Newly Independent States

The involvement of foreign nations is critical in the process of securitising newly independent states. These external actors can significantly impact security dynamics within these states through economic assistance, military aid, and diplomatic ties. Support from external nations can enhance the new state's ability to secure its borders, maintain internal stability, and deter outside threats. Additionally, foreign countries can contribute to this process by establishing bilateral or multilateral security agreements involving counterterrorism, border protection, and modernisation cooperation. Moreover, they may offer training and assistance for developing local security forces to strengthen the state's capability in addressing security issues. It is important to note that, at times, external powers may aim to influence this process for their strategic benefits, creating a complex situation where foreign agendas impact national security priorities. Consequently, the role of external states in securitising newly independent states is diverse and has extensive implications for their safety and stability.⁹¹

As discussed earlier, Ireland's involvement in the UN peacekeeping missions was its first involvement in helping states securitise. Ireland made considerable efforts to be involved in the ONUC mission, contributing hundreds of troops and funding the missions. During the conflict, Ireland lost over 26 soldiers, which marked the highest number of casualties in any conflict that Ireland had participated in since gaining independence.⁹² During the Siege of Jadotville, 155 Irish soldiers were compelled to surrender as the support for the mission back

⁹¹ Charlotte Fiedler, Jörn Grävingholt, Julia Leininger, and Karina Mross. "Gradual, cooperative, coordinated: Effective support for peace and democracy in conflict-affected states." *International Studies Perspectives* 21, no. 1 (2020): 60, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1093/isp/ekz023>

⁹² Militaryarchives.ie, *United Nations Operations in Congo*, Accessed February 12, 2024 <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/reading-room-collections/united-nations-operations-in-congo-1960-1964>

home was waning. Nevertheless, the government stayed on this mission, maintaining peace and securitising the country. Having visited the country twice in 1960 and 1961, Minister Aiken expressed his frustration with the infrastructure of the state, proposing to the new UN Secretary-General, U Thant, that there be more funding to the state once the conflict ends.⁹³ He also proposed that they penalise Union Minière by having them pay 40% of their revenue and an export tax of 15% towards the DRC government.⁹⁴

After defeating the Katangan secessionists, the UN considered its mission in the country accomplished and decided to withdraw its troops due to a lack of funds. Minister Aiken requested Boland to advocate for continued funding for the UN mission to sustain the country's economy and social life.⁹⁵ However, this did not happen, and in 1963, peacekeeper troops started pulling out of the country. The Irish government was unhappy with this, including the Taoiseach Lemass, who expressed this to the Zambian President. He said he was happy to be involved in the ONUC mission and was upset that the UN had pulled out too early.⁹⁶ The Irish wanted to send another mission to Congo to train their police, similar to the "Garde Mobile" described by Aiken. They wanted this to allow the Congolese to curb further social unrest, weaning themselves off international organisations.⁹⁷ Despite the high cost to Ireland and its lack of effect on the state, the Irish were happy to help the DRC.

After Zambia gained its independence, the Irish government established bilateral agreements with the Zambian government, offering to train their military and police. Having expressed

⁹³ Frank Aiken, "Letter to U Thant (New York) (M/13/6/4) (Copy)", New York, November 27, 1961, *NAI DFA PMUN/450*

⁹⁴ Frederick H. Boland, "Extracts from a report to Con Cremin (Dublin) (M/13/6) (Dublin)", New York, November 21, 1961, *NAI DFA 6/402/218/A*

⁹⁵ National Archives of Ireland, "Code Telegram from the Department of External Affairs to Frederick H. Boland (New York) (No.1)", Dublin, January 2, 1963, *NAI DFA PMUN/431*

⁹⁶ National Archives of Ireland, "Report of talks between Taoiseach and President Kaunda of Zambia", Dublin, November 23, 1964, *NAI TSCH 3/S17693/95*

⁹⁷ Hugh McCann, "Letter to Frederick H. Boland (New York) (305/384/44)", Dublin, March 30, 1963, *NAI DFA 5/305/384/44*

frustration with the UN pull-out of Congo⁹⁸, Taoiseach Leamas offered to help improve the Zambian military, which was done by having Zambian troops come to Ireland to teach, but also later included Irish platoon officers travelling to Zambia to train their forces. Colonel Alastair Slater stated that Irish soldiers would not be involved in active fighting but would be allowed to assist with any internal strife.⁹⁹ Minister Aiken had previously expressed his interest in increasing policing throughout Africa. He aimed to base this on the French police force, the Garde-Mobile, to train them for internal matters rather than military purposes.¹⁰⁰

It was not only military securitisation that the Irish wanted to offer. Zambia was new to running its country internally. Having seen how this affected the Congo, Sean Lemass offered to assist Zambia with its healthcare, trade, and workforce. Lemass offered to build a hospital in Zambia and have Irish doctors assist them with running it, suggesting they reject any help from international organisations. After President Kaunda mentioned that he feared Zambia's dependence on South Rhodesians regarding trade and energy, Lemass agreed to develop trade with Zambia. Kaunda also expressed his frustration with the gap left by European civil servants leaving post-independence. Lemass said he would happily offer civil servants and professionals from Ireland to fill this gap temporarily before passing their skills on. These professionals included lawyers, accountants, farmers, architects and engineers.¹⁰¹

This mission was a landmark for both the UN and Ireland. It marked the first time the UN took the side of a country in a peacekeeping mission. The UN also realised that decolonisation would birth further secessionist movements and that the sovereignty of newly

⁹⁸ National Archives of Ireland, "Report of talks between Taoiseach and President Kaunda of Zambia", Dublin, November 23, 1964, *NAI TSCH 3/S17693/95*

⁹⁹ National Archives Ireland, "Extract from a note by Brian Gallagher", Dublin, June 23, 1965. *NA 97/6/328*

¹⁰⁰ Hugh McCann, "Letter to Frederick H. Boland (New York) (305/384/44)", Dublin, March 30, 1963, *NAI DFA 5/305/384/44*

¹⁰¹ National Archives of Ireland, "Report of talks between Taoiseach and President Kaunda of Zambia", Dublin, November 23, 1964, *NAI TSCH 3/S17693/95*

decolonised states was affected by external and internal actors. From there on, the UN took a very anti-secessionist stance. This mission was the first primary mission for Ireland to be involved in and had significant losses. Incidences like the Siege of Jadotville and the high death count have been covered in Irish newspapers in a primarily negative light.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the Irish never sought aggressive means of revenge, only promoting peaceful approaches. The mission also had minimal benefit to Ireland's economy or trade, yet it still promoted funding the mission. From this, Ireland took on a more interventionist attitude towards future conflicts, being central towards funding peacekeeping initiatives and being involved in many more peacekeeping missions, including UNIFIL and UNMIL.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the decolonisation movement profoundly influenced the Irish government's foreign policy. While previously adopting an isolationist stance towards conflicts, the Irish government began participating in UN Peacekeeping missions and aimed to uphold global peace by intervening in disputes. Previously hesitant to recognise nations out of concern for upsetting political allies, the Irish government gained the ability to acknowledge these states without fearing any consequences. Witnessing the devastating impact of insecurity on a country like Congo, Ireland recognised the importance of ensuring security for newly independent states. It expanded its support through alliances like with Zambia. The actions taken by Ireland during this period continue to influence its diplomatic relations with African states and have contributed to forging solid ties that endure today. In the next chapter, we will

¹⁰² Ronan McGreevy, "Only one Jadotville siege Army veteran to get a medal", *The Irish Times*, July 15, 2021, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/only-one-jadotville-siege-army-veteran-to-get-medal-1.4621329>

see how these, combined with the ambitions and actions of the Church, affect their policy during the Nigerian Civil War.

Chapter 3 - How the Roman Catholic Church Influenced Ireland's Foreign Policy throughout the Nigerian Civil War

The Nigerian Civil War illustrates the interaction between the Roman Catholic Church and the Irish Government during decolonisation. This conflict, spanning three years, featured unique elements such as media involvement, charitable activities, and lack of unification by the Western world around one side. In this chapter, an analysis will be conducted on how the Church impacted Ireland's foreign policy throughout the war. The discussion will be divided into several sections, including an overview of the region's history and a summary of critical events during the war. The study will also examine significant influences on the Irish government during that time. Furthermore, it will explore three main ways the Church influenced Ireland's policy towards the war: seeking protection for its citizens still in the country, altering methods for collecting and delivering humanitarian aid, and offering partial recognition to Biafran forces.

Background of the Conflict

Nigeria's history reflects a rich tapestry of ethnicities predating British colonisation in the 19th century. The formation of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria in 1914 amalgamated diverse entities and ethnic groups into a single state under British rule. Among the prominent ethnic groups are the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. The predominantly Muslim Hausa inhabited northern Nigeria, wielding significant military power. In southwestern Nigeria, the Yoruba,

blending Muslim and Protestant Christian beliefs, held considerable political influence and wealth, particularly in Lagos. Meanwhile, the Igbo, primarily Roman Catholic, resided in eastern Nigeria on land later valued for its abundant natural resources. The RCC dominated the region, particularly in the late 19th century when Irish missionary Father Joseph Shanahan introduced Catholicism. His persuasive storytelling and charisma led to the conversion of the Igbo people, earning them the epithet "The Irish of West Africa" from an Apostolic Delegate.¹⁰³

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria achieved independence, with Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a Northern leader, becoming the first Prime Minister. Ireland established its first African embassy in Nigeria, likely influenced by the widespread presence of missionaries and missions nationwide. However, post-independence Nigeria faced political instability and ethnic tensions, exacerbated by the North's dominance in governance. Several coups ensued, leading to the overthrow of civilian rule and the assassination of key political figures, including Prime Minister Balewa and Premier Ahmadu Bello. Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon seized power in a counter coup, while Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu assumed leadership in the East. Despite Gowon's ascendancy, ethnic tensions persisted, notably evidenced by the forced displacement of the Igbo people from the North and South West. Ojukwu's decision to secede from the Eastern Region as Biafra sparked the Nigerian Civil War in June 1967, rejected by Gowon, escalating tensions further¹⁰⁴

At the start of the conflict, Nigeria received support from the United Kingdom, the USA, and the USSR, while France and China backed the Biafrans.¹⁰⁵ The Irish government aligned its

¹⁰³ John P. Jordan, *Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria* (1949), 476

¹⁰⁴ Alexander A. Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War*. Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishers (1980), 60

¹⁰⁵ John J. Stremlau, *The international politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970*. Princeton University Press, (2015), 39-70

foreign policy with the UK and the US, not recognising the newly independent state in the region, and even ignored letters addressed to the Taoiseach from Colonel Ojukwu.¹⁰⁶ While the RCC took an anti-communist stance during the conflict, their primary concern was to prevent death and destruction, advocating for peace and partial recognition of the Biafrans.

Despite being outnumbered, the Biafran forces had the advantage of fighting on their territory and the unwavering passion to fight for their cause. With the added support of weapons from France, they held their ground for a year. However, the FGN imposed a blockade on the East in 1968 to halt any arms transfers, causing widespread famine whereby the only aid allowed in was through Lagos Port and had to be analysed and dispersed by a neutral intermediary agreed upon by the FGN, the Red Cross.¹⁰⁷ The international community was outraged by the images of the suffering, but the UN could not pass any resolutions due to the Security Council's veto power. In September 1968, the Red Cross estimated that eight to ten thousand Igbo were dying every day due to starvation.¹⁰⁸ In 1969, the FGN launched its final offensive in the East, and the Biafran forces surrendered in January 1970, with Colonel Ojukwu fleeing. The conflict claimed an estimated one to three million lives, primarily due to starvation and disease.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Rush, "Extracts from a political report to Hugh McCann (Dublin) 'Position in Enugu of Mr Eamon Ó Tuathail, First Secretary of the Embassy in Lagos' (Strictly Confidential)", Lagos, August 26, 1967, *NA* 97/6/227

¹⁰⁷ Marie-Luce Desgrandchamps, "'Organising the unpredictable': the Nigeria–Biafra war and its impact on the ICRC." *International Review of the Red Cross* 94, no. 888 (2012): 1413, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1017/S1816383113000428>

¹⁰⁸ Chima J. Korieh, "Biafra and the discourse on the Igbo Genocide." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 48, no. 6 (2013): 737, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909613506455>

¹⁰⁹ Luepke, *The Other Side of the Nigeria-Biafra War*, 10

The Influences of Media

The media significantly impacted external involvement during the conflict. While aiding missionaries and charitable organisations by facilitating fundraising and support for their missions, it hindered larger international bodies like the Red Cross and the UN in delivering aid effectively. Additionally, media coverage influenced the perceptions and actions of governments involved in the conflict. Two mass communication theories must be considered to understand media influence: agenda-setting and framing. Agenda-setting posits that media determine the importance of various issues by selecting topics and determining their prominence.¹¹⁰

The media coverage was pivotal in shaping international perceptions and responses throughout the conflict. Reports in late 1967 and early 1968 focused on allegations of civilian massacres by the FGN. However, in the latter half of 1968, media stories shifted to human misery due to the war. Major Irish newspapers started reporting the high level of misery regarding levels of starvation and illness, contributing to a sense of urgency and outrage among global audiences.¹¹¹ Recognising the power of communication, the Catholic Church strategically utilised missionaries in the region as primary sources for significant newspapers, ensuring that stories of suffering and atrocities received widespread attention. British TV journalist Alan Hart attested to the ability of missionaries to have access to scenes of despair through communication with the missionaries.¹¹² This was framing the conflict as a religious war and leveraging the agenda-setting aspect of media coverage to maintain continuous attention to the crisis.

¹¹⁰ Shannon L. Blanton and Charles W. Kegley, *World Politics: Trend and Transformation* Cengage Learning, (2017), 507

¹¹¹ Mazaarella, David "The babies die as Biafra starves". *The Irish Times*, July 22, 1968: 3

¹¹² Ken Waters, "Influencing the message: The role of catholic missionaries in media coverage of the Nigerian civil war." *The Catholic Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (2004): 704, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25026697>

The significant media influence wielded by the RCC enabled it to shape the narrative of the conflict according to its interests and objectives. Different countries interpreted the conflict through their lenses, with the US and UK framing it within a context of imperial responsibility. At the same time, Ireland portrayed it as a struggle against oppression and famine.¹¹³ By evoking parallels between the famine in Biafra and the Great Famine of Ireland in the 1840s, the Church emphasised the importance of private donations over government aid, influencing public opinion and encouraging support for humanitarian efforts. However, the intensifying media coverage, mainly through television broadcasts, also pressured the Irish government to respond. It was during this time that the "starving African child" image first gained public attention. This distressing sight would become all too familiar in future conflicts and aid efforts, including the Ethiopia famine relief of the 1980s.

Despite attempts by the government to manage diplomatic sensitivities, pro-Biafran sentiments were expressed in Irish media outlets, leading to a defence of press freedom by the Irish government.¹¹⁴ Meanwhile, Biafran leaders strategically shifted their focus to propaganda, framing the conflict as a religious war to appeal to Irish Catholics and further bolster support for their cause. The conflict was marketed as a "Religious War," a narrative that appealed to Irish Catholics influenced by biased media pieces. This strategic move gained further reinforcement when a Biafran representative travelled to Dublin to hold a press conference and attempted to secure an audience with Minister Aiken, only to be turned down.¹¹⁵ This concerted media effort underscored the interplay between media, diplomacy, and public perception during the conflict.

¹¹³ *ibid*, 705

¹¹⁴ Eamon Ó'Tuathail, "Code telegram to Kevin Rush (Lagos) (No.8) (Dearg)", February 15, 1968, *NA 2000/14/20*

¹¹⁵ Ciaran Carty, "Biafra asks Ireland to Mandate", *The Sunday Independent*, March 24, 1968: 1

The Influence of Religious Leaders in the Conflict

The Vatican was deeply committed to ending the conflict and achieving a peaceful resolution. Pope Paul VI, who had overseen Vatican II less than two years prior, was devoted to promoting worldwide peace and prosperity. His encyclical, “Populorum Progressio”, not only explored ideas of economic and social development but is seen as a social commentary on the African decolonisation movement, expressing to some his support for self-determination.¹¹⁶ Throughout the conflict, the Pope made numerous speeches advocating for regional peace. During a visit to the African continent, he addressed West African and Nigerian Bishops, calling for peace and reconciliation in Nigeria and offering to help negotiate a peace settlement between the two sides.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately, these efforts were unsuccessful, and the Pope acknowledged his failure but still wanted peace, asking there to be no slaughter of more Biafrans in Nigeria.¹¹⁸

Many Catholic leaders in Ireland supported the recognition of Biafra, including the influential Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid. McQuaid had previously served as a missionary in Eastern Nigeria in the 1920s under Joseph Shanahan. He was widely known for his sway over public policy, having successfully lobbied against the "Mother-Child Scheme", a healthcare programme providing free access to healthcare for mothers and children by the Irish government in the 1950s, resulting in the resignation of the Minister of Health.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Anthony A. Akinwale, "Authentic Development and Its Absence: Populorum Progressio as Commentary on Africa." *Angelicum* 84, no. 3/4 (2007): 707, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44616655>

¹¹⁷ Paul VI, *Address to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Lagos, Kaduna and Onitsha*, February 7, 1969, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1969/february/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19690207_vescovi-nigeria.html

¹¹⁸ New York Times, (Author Unknown) "Pope Prays That the Nigerians Won't Massacre Biafran Rebels", 12 Jan 1970: 13, <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/01/12/archives/pope-prays-that-the-nigerians-wont-massacre-biafran-rebels.html>

¹¹⁹ Eamonn McKee, "Church-state relations and the development of Irish health policy: the mother-and-child scheme, 1944-53." *Irish Historical Studies* 25, no. 98 (1986): 159, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30008527>

McQuaid was also aware of the generous donations made by the Irish during times of conflict and had discussed with the Apostolic Nuncio the possibility of an extensive collection for the region.¹²⁰

The Holy Ghost Order had the most significant influence on Ireland's humanitarian efforts. Having been in East Nigeria since the 19th century, the order's missionaries had developed close relationships with their parishioners during the conflict, leading many to sympathise with their cause.¹²¹ Father Raymond Kennedy was one of the most vocal missionaries advocating for Biafran recognition and support. Alongside two other missionaries, he met with Minister Aiken to discuss potential ways to stop hostilities without ending Biafra's autonomy.¹²² Kennedy and his brother established Africa Concern, a charity that delivered tonnes of food aid to the region in the later part of the war.¹²³ Although the FGN initially wanted to remove the Holy Ghost Fathers and other missionaries, they ultimately agreed to let them stay and assist with the aftermath of the conflict. It is clear that missionaries significantly impacted Ireland's foreign policy during this time.

Guaranteeing the Protection of Irish Citizens

Historically, Ireland's approach to protecting its citizens mirrored that of other Western nations by removing or deploying troops to safeguard them. Neither option was viable in this particular instance. On September 28, 1967, the FGN declared that foreign citizens could not reside in the Eastern Regions. A majority of citizens still in the region were missionaries,

¹²⁰ John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland*. (New York: The O'Brien Press, 1999), 187

¹²¹ Kevin O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire*, (Manchester University Press, 2018), 90

¹²² Con Cremin, "Letter to Hugh McCann (Dublin) with enclosure (Urgent) (Confidential) (Copy)", New York, December 8, 1967, *NA 97/6/228*

¹²³ O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire*, 116

dedicated to their work and unwilling to leave unless forced to.¹²⁴ Sources had alerted the Irish Ambassador to Nigeria, Kevin Rush, about threats made against the missionaries that "Irish priests need to expect no mercy if they are caught".¹²⁵ Consequently, the Church exerted pressure on the Irish government to intervene. Instead of taking a militaristic approach, the Irish government engaged in a high level of dialogue with both sides to secure the safety of these citizens.

The Irish approach to protecting its citizens can be broken into two distinct periods: during the conflict and post-conflict. Initially, Irish government officials worked tirelessly to establish relationships with the FGN and Biafran leaders to ensure their safety. In Lagos, meetings with key figures involved with the military government were held, such as Ambassador Rush's meeting with General Gowon, where he agreed to work with Bishop Thomas McGettrick and consider their safety a priority.¹²⁶ In the East, Eamon Ó'Tuathail, the Secretary of the Ambassador, liaised with "local de facto" leaders to reassure Irish citizens that their concerns were taken seriously by the government.¹²⁷

As the war drew to a close and the Biafran forces faced a likely defeat, the Irish government took steps to prevent missionaries from being expelled once hostilities ceased. The new Nigerian Ambassador, Paul Keating, convinced the FGN of the value the missionaries were to the local economy and reconstruction efforts.¹²⁸ The Irish Department of External Affairs assisted this by submitting a list of Irish citizens in Nigeria along with their roles.¹²⁹ During a

¹²⁴ Eamon Ó'Tuathail, "Extracts from a report 'Protection of Irish National in Eastern Nigeria ("Biafra") - 2nd November 1967' (Confidential) (Copy)", Dublin, December 23, 1967, *NA 2001/43/129*

¹²⁵ O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire*, 91

¹²⁶ Tadhg O'Sullivan, "Minute to Nicholas Nolan (Dublin) (305/338/3)", Dublin, June 21, 1967, *NA 97/6/227*

¹²⁷ Brian Gallagher, "Letter to Kevin Rush (Lagos) (305/338/3) (Copy)", Dublin, September 7, 1967, *NA 2001/43/128*

¹²⁸ Paul Keating, "Letter to Eamon Ó'Tuathail (Dublin) (Copy)", Lagos, September 12, 1968, *NA 2000/14/23*

¹²⁹ National Archives Ireland, "Aide-Mémoire from the Department of External Affairs to Government of Nigeria", Dublin, October 11, 1968, *NA 2000/14/27*

meeting between Nigerian politician Chief Anthony Enaharo and Minister Aiken, Enaharo expressed frustration with the Holy Ghost Order and demanded their removal from the country. However, Aiken defended them, emphasising their importance in rebuilding the region after the war.¹³⁰ Ultimately, Irish missionaries in Nigeria reported difficult conditions but acknowledged that the Irish government's quiet diplomacy had successfully protected them.¹³¹ Only two Irish casualties were reported in total, showing that the Irish government effectively safeguarded its citizens during and after the war.

Delivery and Distribution of Humanitarian Aid

The Irish government has traditionally been a big supporter of UN and Red Cross relief. However, the international organisations' inability to access the Eastern Nigerian region due to the FGN blockade was distressing for the Irish government. The RCC suggested the use of its preexisting network of missions to get aid to the front lines but knew that the Nigerian government would reject these suggestions. Despite initial opposition, the Irish government eventually allowed and even assisted with delivering external aid via preexisting networks of missionaries and charities. The two major incidents that allowed this to happen were the USA's decision on how it would distribute its aid and the sailing of the *Columcille* ship.

NGOs, like the Red Cross, made the first airlifts of humanitarian aid in early 1968, but poor distribution channels prevented the aid from being delivered to the correct individuals. One advantage the Roman Catholic missionaries had over the NGOs was their long and extensive network in the region going back decades. The US Government recognised this, and at the

¹³⁰ National Archives Ireland, "Report of meeting in Iveagh House at 11 a.m. on the 9th October, 1968 between the Tánaiste and Chief Enahoro, the Federal Nigerian Commissioner for Information, who was accompanied by the Nigerian Ambassador. Also present were the Secretary and Mr. Denis Holmes", Dublin, October 9, 1968, NA 2000/14/40

¹³¹ O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire*, 102

end of 1968, they agreed to split the resources it traditionally had given to the Red Cross between itself and the Joint Churches Appeal, a group of churches that united to increase the flow of aid into the region.¹³² This decision likely influenced the Irish government to open itself to external aid pathways for future conflicts, as it would not have had the audacity to do this by itself before.

In July of 1969, Concern Africa's vessel, the *Columcille*, was planning on departing Dublin to deliver aid to conflict-ridden regions within Nigeria. Before it could leave, it needed permission and assistance with its ship from the Irish government. The mission aimed to deliver aid to the region and send a message to the Irish and Western governments to do more to alleviate the misery caused by the conflict.¹³³ The Irish government wanted to keep it at arm's length but was also aware of the political fallout if they did not allow the boat to sail.¹³⁴ The Department of External Affairs agreed to allow the *Columcille* to sail and also provided the charity with £25,000.¹³⁵ When confronted by the Nigerian Government, Minister Aiken defended the decision to do this.¹³⁶ This event was significant in Ireland's shift towards supporting external aid and marked a significant change in how Ireland engaged with its delivery of humanitarian aid.

Partial Recognition

Ireland fully recognised Nigeria upon its independence, just as it did with Zambia. By acknowledging Nigeria's sovereignty, Ireland recognised it within all its territorial

¹³² Nwachukwu J. Obiakor, "Of Airlift To Biafra: Rethinking External Humanitarian Intervention During The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967-1970." *Interdisciplinary Journal Of African & Asian Studies* 6, no. 2 (2021): 6 <https://www.nigerianjournalonline.com/index.php/ijaas/article/viewFile/1787/1746>

¹³³ Staunton, "The Case of Biafra: Ireland and the Nigerian Civil War.", 518

¹³⁴ Paul Keating, "Letter to Seán Ronan (Dublin)", Lagos, August 27, 1968, *NA 2000/14/36*

¹³⁵ Staunton, "The Case of Biafra: Ireland and the Nigerian Civil War.", 521

¹³⁶ Seán Ronan, "Letter to Paul Keating (Lagos) (Copy)", Dublin, September 9, 1968, *NA 2000/14/36*

boundaries. However, when the conflict started, the RCC believed that the only way to prevent a potential war was through mediation and suggested that some form of recognition be given to the region to facilitate this process. Initially, Ireland adopted the perspective of not recognising Biafra during the first two years of the conflict. However, the country later shifted its approach and worked alongside the Church to bring both sides to the negotiating table. To fully grasp this change in strategy, it is essential to distinguish between the early and later stages of the conflict.

At the onset of the conflict, Ireland initially avoided taking responsibility for intervening. However, Secretary O'Tuathail of the Irish Embassy was dispatched to the eastern region to establish and maintain communication with the remaining Irish population and the de facto leadership. Despite pressure to directly communicate with Dublin on matters from regional leaders, no direct line was established.¹³⁷ The Dáil held debates, but the government did not acknowledge Biafra, stating, “The [Irish] Government recognises the Federal Republic of Nigeria and maintains diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Recognition of an independent State has not been extended to the eastern region”.¹³⁸ In recognition of Ireland's significant role in the UN, Father Raymond Kelly appealed to Minister for External Affairs Frank Aiken to encourage Catholic delegates from African nations at the UN to urge Nigeria to seek peaceful dialogue.¹³⁹ However, Aiken declined, citing concerns that involvement by non-African nations could potentially disrupt the conflict in Nigeria.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Brian Gallagher, “Letter to Kevin Rush (Lagos) (305/338/3) (Copy)”, Dublin, September 7, 1967, *NA 2001/43/128*

¹³⁸ Dáil Éireann debates, *Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Irish Nationals in Biafra*, February 13, 1968, Vol. 232, no. 6, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1968-02-13/>

¹³⁹ Father Raymond Kelly to Minister Frank Aiken, December 16, 1968

¹⁴⁰ Frank Aiken, “Letter to Father Bernard Kelly CSSp (Dublin) (Copy)”, Dublin, January 5, 1968, *NA 2000/14/20*

During the latter part of the conflict, the Irish government's stance evolved significantly. Despite their awareness of the unlikelihood of Biafra gaining autonomy, they began advocating for peace talks.¹⁴¹ This shift in position was a testament to Ireland's adaptability and commitment to peace. Meanwhile, Pope Paul VI visited West Africa and met with Nigerian Bishops to call for reconciliation, offering to help negotiate a settlement.¹⁴² During this period, the concept of "The Irish Contribution" began to gain prominence, signifying the proactive role of a relatively small country in promoting peaceful resolutions to conflicts. This notion highlighted instances where Ireland took affirmative actions to support peaceful endeavours, whether through diplomatic interventions, humanitarian aid, or other means to foster harmony and reconciliation in regions plagued by strife. As the Irish government and people demonstrated their commitment to such endeavours, particularly in conflict zones, the Catholic Church increasingly perceived Ireland as a nation willing to align with its efforts towards peace-building initiatives. This recognition bolstered the Church's confidence in the Irish government and populace as allies in promoting peace and stability on both national and international fronts.¹⁴³

Conclusion

Conclusion This chapter underscores the impact of the RCC on Irish foreign policy dynamics during the Nigerian Civil War. It highlights the Irish government's strategic shift, emphasising dialogue and diplomatic initiatives over direct intervention. Media was pivotal throughout the conflict, particularly in Ireland, where the Church wielded significant Soft Power influence.

¹⁴¹ O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire*, 103

¹⁴² Paul VI, *Address to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Lagos, Kaduna and Onitsha*, February 7, 1969, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1969/february/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19690207_vescovi-nigeria.html

¹⁴³ O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire*, 103

During the conflict, figures like Pope Paul VI, Archbishop McQuaid, and Father Raymond Kennedy employed diplomatic strategies to get what they wanted. Despite the peril faced by Irish citizens amidst the conflict and its aftermath, the government pursued a strategic course of dialogue and negotiation to ensure their safety. Additionally, the chapter delves into Ireland's involvement in humanitarian aid and relief efforts, elucidating the utilisation of charities and missionaries with established local networks for aid distribution, diverging from reliance on international institutions like the UN and the Red Cross. Moreover, the Irish government's evolving stance on Biafran recognition, transitioning from strict non-recognition to partial recognition in pursuit of peace and reconciliation, underscores a nuanced diplomatic approach. Ireland's engagement in the Nigerian civil war reflects a strategy that harmonises diplomatic pursuits, humanitarian considerations, and alignment with the Church's teachings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis examines the Roman Catholic Church's influence on the Irish Government's diplomatic efforts in Africa during decolonisation. Addressing the research question of its impact, each chapter unveils significant discoveries. The first delves into the Church's history and aims regarding Nuclear Deterrence and Indigenous Rights, showcasing its unique diplomatic approaches of Soft Power and Track II Diplomacy and their influence on international relations. The second chapter analyses diplomatic papers from the decolonisation period, highlighting shifts in the Irish government's approaches to foreign policy areas like peacekeeping, state recognition, and securitisation. Lastly, the third chapter explores the Church's impact on Ireland's foreign policy during the Nigerian Civil War, revealing its efforts in citizen protection, humanitarian aid delivery, and public recognition of Biafra.

The thesis findings have implications across multiple domains. Firstly, the RCC's adept use of Soft Power and Track II diplomacy highlights a sophisticated approach to international relations, prioritising dialogue, understanding, and consensus-building. This suggests religious institutions and non-state actors may adopt more nuanced diplomatic strategies. Secondly, Ireland's foreign policy has evolved towards a proactive stance in promoting self-determination and sovereignty, particularly in response to decolonisation. This evolution suggests Ireland's recognition as a responsible global actor committed to peace and stability in post-colonial contexts. Furthermore, the Nigerian Civil War case study demonstrates a broader shift towards pragmatic and compassionate foreign policy approaches grounded in human security and solidarity principles. These implications suggest potential advancements

in diplomatic practice, policy formulation, and theoretical understanding within international relations.

This thesis looks to contribute to the field of International Relations by providing a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted role of the RCC in global diplomacy and its interactions with state actors during a pivotal period in history. Examining the Church's use of Soft Power and Track II diplomacy provides valuable insights into the evolving nature of diplomatic engagement by non-state actors and their impact on international affairs. Additionally, the thesis highlights the significance of comprehending the historical context and religious dynamics in shaping diplomatic strategies and outcomes. An in-depth analysis of case studies and historical events elucidates the complex interplay between religious institutions, state actors, and global politics, offering a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics in international relations. Hopefully, this thesis can be used as a resource for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to navigate the complexities of religious diplomacy and its implications for contemporary global governance and peacebuilding efforts.

Although the thesis provides valuable insight into the Church's role in international relations during decolonisation, several potential shortcomings could be addressed. Diplomacy examination lacks precise, evaluated methods.¹⁴⁴ While some scholars view diplomacy as primarily involving textual analysis, as evidenced in this paper's approach, the introduction of religion into the discourse further complicates matters. The study of faith-based diplomacy presents significant challenges due to the scarcity of religious-diplomatic texts available for examination, compounded by diverse diplomatic methodologies. While the thesis identifies

¹⁴⁴ Martin Wight, "Why is there no International Theory?." *International Relations* 2, No. 1 (1960): 35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/004711786000200104>

the Soft Power and Track II diplomacy tactics employed by the Church, there may be an opportunity to delve deeper into the theoretical frameworks underpinning these strategies and their effectiveness in achieving diplomatic objectives.

The thesis has limitations that require acknowledgement. Firstly, it focuses on the decolonisation period of the 1960s, which may not fully capture the diverse timelines of decolonisation across regions. While significant strides were made during this period, variations in decolonisation commencement in different countries could offer additional insights beyond the thesis's scope. Secondly, access to primary sources, particularly Irish government diplomatic papers, is constrained. Although the Royal Irish Academy provided access to relevant documents ¹⁴⁵ ¹⁴⁶, papers beyond this period are limited. Additionally, the confidential nature of these documents and potential redactions restrict data comprehensiveness. Obtaining information from the RCC presents challenges due to clandestine operations, hindering a comprehensive understanding of its diplomatic activities. Furthermore, more Nigerian sources are needed. While speculation on their fate is plausible, clarity is needed to confirm their status, hampering research thoroughness. These limitations highlight the need for future studies to address gaps and enhance understanding of diplomatic history.

Additional case studies would be beneficial to contextualise the findings of this thesis further within a broader historical and geopolitical context. This would enable more nuanced interpretations and generalisable conclusions. Future research could explore the role of other religious institutions in diplomatic affairs during decolonisation. Comparative studies could

¹⁴⁵ Michael Kennedy, Eunan O'Halpin, Kate O'Malley, Bernadette Whelan. *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy: V.12: 1960-1964*. Royal Irish Academy. (2020)

¹⁴⁶ Michael Kennedy, Eunan O'Halpin, Kate O'Malley, Bernadette Whelan, Kevin O'Sullivan, Jennifer Redmond, John Gibney. *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy: V.13: 1965-1969*. Royal Irish Academy. (2023)

also investigate how different religious traditions utilise Soft Power and Track II diplomacy to address global challenges and influence international relations. To gain a deeper understanding of their impact on global governance, we should examine the effectiveness of these diplomatic strategies in achieving tangible outcomes like conflict resolution or human rights advocacy. Additionally, future research could explore the interplay between religious institutions and state actors in shaping foreign policy, focusing on how religious values and principles inform decision-making processes at national and international levels. Furthermore, studies incorporating diverse perspectives, including voices from African sources and marginalised communities, would enrich our understanding of the complexities of religious diplomacy in diverse geopolitical contexts.

This thesis highlights religion's pivotal role in promoting peace amidst enduring conflicts. Examining the Church's diplomatic engagements during decolonisation reveals its profound influence on international relations and peacebuilding. Religion emerges as a potent force for peace in an era marred by prolonged conflicts and geopolitical tensions. Possessing moral authority and extensive networks, religious institutions transcend political divides to prioritise dialogue and reconciliation in diplomacy. Recognising and harnessing the potential of religious diplomacy is imperative for addressing conflict's root causes and fostering lasting peace in violence-stricken regions. Policymakers, scholars, and practitioners must acknowledge the significance of religious actors in peacebuilding and collaborate to utilise their influence to advance global peace and security. A comprehensive understanding of religion's diplomatic role is essential for navigating contemporary conflicts and striving for a more peaceful and just world.

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Plagiarism Awareness Statement



Faculty of Humanities
Version September 2014

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