



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Department of Political Science

STVM01 – 2008
Supervisor: Ole Elgström

Soft Power, Rhetorical Action and Hard Cash

An analysis of the EFTA-EU negotiations on the extended
EEA-agreement

Tom Oddgeir Johnsen

Abstract

I believe that it is uncomplicated to present a plausible rational account of the final result of the negotiations between Norway and the EU on the extension of the EEA-agreement. There are also reasons to believe that normative considerations played a role in Norway's decision to unilaterally increase its contribution to the Central and Eastern European countries. The purpose of this paper however is to show that in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the outcome one should take into account the concepts of *soft power* and *rhetorical action*. What I will demonstrate is that Norwegian actors' identity and the country's reliance on soft power can in material terms be a disadvantage in international negotiations. Furthermore, I will show that EU actors possibly can be said to have strategically used normative arguments towards a country that because of its identity and its reliance on soft power cannot easily ignore arguments of this character.

Key words: Norway, EU, Negotiation, Soft Power, Rhetorical Action, EFTA, EEA

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1 Introduction

In the academic literature on the European Union (EU) one encounters many theories that provide insight to which mechanisms and phenomena one can find *inside* of the Union. Less is written about the encounters between the EU and its neighbours. The academic focus on the EU's relations with its neighbours is mostly on Russia and Turkey. This is perhaps not very surprising as these relations can be considered more important than for example the EU's mostly unproblematic relations to Norway.

Norway has sometimes been labelled a “fax democracy”. The reason for this is the amount of EU legislation the country implements without being included in the actual policy-making. Furthermore, Norway has never made use of the “veto-clause¹” which is built into the European Economic Area-agreement (EEA²). Generally one can claim that the conflicts between Norway and the EU are relatively few and far between. Most of the political coexistence is based on formalities of implementing uncontroversial directives and regulations.

It was not only the EU that was enlarged in 2004. The EEA-agreement also got ten new signatories. The “enlargement” of the EEA-agreement was perhaps not a big historical event in the eyes of the international community, but for Norway it was an occurrence of great importance. The negotiations on the extended EEA-agreement were, just like the accession negotiations between the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) and the EU, complicated and at times controversial. Unfortunately there is little literature about the negotiations between Norway and the EU despite the importance of the negotiations for Norway. The case I will study in this paper is the negotiations between the EFTA-states³ and the EU on the extension of the EEA-agreement as a consequence of the Eastern Enlargement of the EU. This paper will hopefully provide an interesting read for anyone that is interested in negotiations and International Relations in general and Norwegian foreign policy in particular.

¹ Technically this clause is not a right of vetoing EU legislation. It is a right for Norway to reserve itself against implementing EU legislation. This right has never been used by Norway. The reasons for these are often seen to be the potential repercussions from the EU *and* that it would raise questions of the EEA-agreement itself which is something most Norwegian parties do not want. I would like to advise anyone with a great interest (and Norwegian reading skills) to read the research conducted by Debesay (2002).

² The European Economic Area-agreement is an agreement between the states of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) and the twenty-seven European Community (EC). The states of the EFTA are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. When referring to EFTA in this paper I do *not* include Switzerland as these negotiations were about the extension of the EEA-agreement which the Swiss are not part of. Switzerland has its own bilateral agreements with the EU.

My purpose in this paper is to present an analysis of the outcome of the negotiations which can provide insights that can be useful for understanding political outcomes involving normative considerations. I will present an analysis in which I seek to explain that *soft power* and *rhetorical action* are important concepts for explaining the outcome of the negotiations between Norway and the EU with regards to the extension of the EEA-agreement in 2004. I will show how the EU strategically made use of normative arguments to back up their claims and why Norway therefore was in an even tougher bargaining situation than can be accounted for by looking only at the power asymmetry.

1.1 Background⁴

The EEA Financial Mechanism (2004-2009) is the instrument through which EFTA and thus Norwegian contributions to social cohesion and development in the EU are channelled⁵. The size of these contributions was to be one of the most highly debated issues of the negotiations between the EFTA states and the European Union with regards to the enlargement of the EU in 2004. The EEA Financial Mechanism is not the first type of EFTA contribution to social cohesion and development in the European Union. Already from the time the EEA-agreement was signed, the EFTA states gave financial support to Greece, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Portugal and Spain. During the time period 1994-1999 Norway committed 102 million Euro to these states. When these arrangements were at their end the question of their future was debated⁶. The EFTA states decided to continue their contribution, but because of the need for it rather than any perceived obligation. The agreement that was made in 1999 for the period 1999-2004 was exclusively to be directed towards Greece, Portugal and Spain. Norway's share was close to 120 million Euro in total through the five years in question (Gjessing 2006).

The final outcome of the negotiations on the extended EEA-agreement was a solution with a two-tiered financial agreement; with general EFTA-grants and a bilateral Norwegian financial channel. The EFTA financial contribution is 600 million Euro, which is made available for commitment in annual trenches of 120 million Euro. The bilateral arrangement obliges Norway to pay about 115 million

⁴ I would advise anyone with an interest in the negotiations to read Gjessing (2006 (in Norwegian)) and Sverdrup (2004) for a more extensive empirical account than I provide in this paper.

⁵ The EFTA-funds are aimed at reducing the economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area, through financial grants for investment and development projects. The funds are distributed to the new and existing member states according to a formula based on the size of the economies.

⁶ Norway, with support from several EU member states argued that these grants were a one-time price to be paid. Not surprisingly the receiving countries did not agree (Gjessing 2006).

Euro annually. Norway's total contributions amount to approximately 225 million Euro per year. As a comparison, although the Swiss population is almost twice the size of the Norwegian, the outcome of the Swiss negotiations ended on 650 million euro over a five years period of time, or 130 million Euro per year, close to half of the contribution by Norway (Sverdrup 2004).

The Norwegian delegation consisted of an interdepartmental coordination group and a negotiating delegation. The coordination group presented instructions on behalf of the government. This group was led by Per Ludvig Magnus from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The negotiating delegation was led by Bjørn T. Grydeland who was Norway's ambassador to the EU at the time of the negotiations. The departments that were expected to be affected were represented both in the coordination group and the negotiating delegation (The Norwegian Government (TNG) 2003).

Formally the negotiations were to be conducted between each EFTA-country, a unitary EU and each of the candidate countries. The meetings were held approximately every 14th day in the Charlemagne building in the European Commission's headquarters in Brussels (Gjessing 2006: 17).

1.2 Structure

In the first part of this paper I will present a rationalist explanation of the outcome of the negotiations. Thereafter I will present arguments for claiming that Norwegian foreign policy is, to a considerable degree, based on a Norwegian traditional belief in a role for the country as a promoter of values and ideas. As a continuation of this I will illustrate how Norway has achieved a great amount of power despite its very small size. The type of power Norway has obtained is what Nye refers to as "soft power". I will illustrate why this soft power has been and still is critically important for Norway in the post-Cold War era. Before the conclusion I will, based on Norwegian foreign policy tradition and its reliance on soft power, demonstrate why one can claim that the mechanism of rhetorical action is an important dimension in the understanding of the negotiations on the extended EEA-agreement.

1.3 Methods

1.3.1 Triangulation

In this paper I will make use of pre-existing material but I will also use data that I have collected myself through an interview with Percy Westerlund⁷ who was the chief negotiator in the negotiations between EFTA-states and the EU on the extended EEA-agreement. The existing data is a combination of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are official documents, articles and speeches written by the actors themselves. The secondary sources are books, news articles and reports that can shed light on the case I have chosen. I have therefore used three types of data⁸. This method is called triangulation and is based on Yin (2003: 97-101). As Yin (2003: 98) argues "any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information". I think triangulation is a proper method in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the selected case.

1.3.2 Case Studies

For many scientist generalization is the ultimate goal for any study. According to Donmoyer (2000: 47) the role of research is to discover regularities in a certain environment and to apply these on a general level. I, however, agree with Stake (2000: 22) who argues that knowledge of particulars can be very useful especially when recognizing it in new and foreign contexts. The goal of a case study is to produce a "coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of that situation" (Schofield 2000: 71). When conducting a case study one seeks results that can be generalised analytically rather than statistically (Yin 2003). In other words, one makes claims based on empirical discoveries with the help of pre-existing theories.

Yin (2003: 39-46) emphasizes purposes which can justify a case as the focus of a research design. This paper satisfies at least two of Yin's claimed purposes. Firstly, the case study can "represent a *critical case* in testing a well-formulated

⁷ Percy Westerlund is currently Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Norway and Iceland.

⁸ I have had to translate much of the data from Norwegian to English. This has several flaws as no translation can ever be perfect and that especially value-laden words have a tendency to be used a bit differently across different languages and cultures. Nevertheless, I feel that I have been thorough in my translations and I have included the original language for the material that might be controversial or complicated to translate. As transparency is a very important principle in research I believe that this was necessary.

theory". I believe this paper satisfies this purpose as I apply a very interesting theoretical framework to a phenomenon for the first time. Furthermore, I believe that this paper will shed light on the connection between the theory of rhetorical action and the concept of soft power. Secondly, the case should be *unique* or *extreme* and thus strategic in the sense that decisive characteristics of the theoretical framework are present in the empirical case. I believe this criterion is satisfied as Norway is especially susceptible to certain dynamics that the theoretical framework is based on.

1.4 Theory

The theoretical framework in this paper is based on an eclectic theoretical approach. My argumentation is based on two theoretical concepts. On one hand I will make use of Joseph Nye's concept of soft power which is in many regards closely linked to realism. On the other hand I will make use of Frank Schimmelfennig's theory of rhetorical action which has roots in constructivism. It should be noted that neither of these concepts fit perfectly to their "isms". I will try not to wander *too* far off in the discussion surrounding the question of whether one can combine rationalism and constructivism. For this both my knowledge and space is too scarce. Nevertheless it is very important to be aware of the nature of one's claims.

1.4.1 Soft Power

Joseph Nye is the professor behind the claim that there exist two types of power in international politics. *Hard power* is materialised through threats or/and the use of force (Nye 2004: 31). This type of power has traditionally been in the centre of IR studies. *Soft power* on the other hand is the ability of "getting others to want the outcomes that you want" (Nye 2004: 5). Whereas threats and force are the "currencies" of hard power, "policies, values, culture and institutions" are the currencies of soft power (Nye 2004: 31). While hard power is the ability to force one's preferences on others, soft power "rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others" (Nye 2004: 5).

Nye (2004: 11) posits that a country's soft power is based on three resources: "its culture (where it is attractive to others) its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)". A country that is perceived to have a culture that is founded on universal values and take actions that promotes values and common interests has greater potential for achieving its interests than states who are not perceived this way. The reason for this is the "relationships of attraction and duty" such a good reputation creates (Nye 2004: 11).

Public diplomacy is a way of achieving soft power. The elements that soft power is founded on can be seen as image and reputation which is built on the

country's credibility. As "power" is something that inherently includes more than one actor, it is "intersubjective"⁹. One has to get the "signal" across to other actors. This is why visibility is such an important component in any country's *soft power* ambition. Nye (2004: 112) argues that Norway is an actor that exclusively bases its soft power on its foreign policy *actions*. Such actions can be labelled as *value promoting diplomacy*¹⁰ which can be seen as part of a country's *public diplomacy*. Such actions create an image and reputation of Norway as a "good international citizen". In order to maintain this image and reputation, Norway has to achieve credibility through actions coherently in accordance with its image and reputation. And in order for Norway to signal this *credibility* it needs *visibility*.

1.4.2 Rhetorical Action

Schimmelfennig presents the concept of "rhetorical action" which is basically "the strategic use of norm-based arguments" (Schimmelfennig 2001: 48). The theoretical framework for rhetorical action applied in this paper consists of two mechanisms – *framing* and *shaming*. These two mechanisms, utilised separately or combined, can leave the receiving actor *rhetorically entrapped* or with its tongue and arms twisted to use the words of Krebbs & Thaddeus (2007).

Framing is the way in which one defines the issues at stake, or as Krebbs & Thaddeus (2007: 43) write, a frame is something that "characterizes the issue at hand". Barnett argues (in Payne 2001: 39) that a frame is a persuasive device used to "alert others that their interests and possibly their identities are at stake". Payne (ibid) posits that "frames provide a singular interpretation of a particular situation and then indicate appropriate behavior for that context". One can say that framing appears not to be a neutral concept. It is not merely an interpretative tool, it is potentially an instrument which can, if utilised skilfully, be used by an actor to achieve a desired outcome.

Shaming means "the public exposure of illegitimate goals and behavior" (Schimmelfennig 2001: 64). By providing proof of inconsistencies between rhetoric and action one can *shame* an actor into an appropriate behaviour. As Schimmelfennig (2001: 65) argues, "if inconsistency is publicly exposed, credibility and reputation suffer". A receiving actor can be "rhetorically manoeuvred into a corner" regardless of whether the actor's prior rhetoric was based on genuine beliefs and values or not (Krebbs & Thaddeus 2007: 42). The most important variable is that the actor which shaming is applied against actually cares about its reputation and credibility. Schimmelfennig sees this in relation to

⁹ Intersubjective simply means that something relates to more than one person.

¹⁰ Matlary (2002) writes that value-promoting diplomacy (original "Verdidiplomati") should be understood as a foreign policy portfolio consisting of multilateral and bilateral peace-brokering, peace operations, foreign aid, democracy-building and human rights initiatives.

actors being part of a community or an institutional environment, but it can also be applied to other settings (Krebbs & Thaddeus 2007: 55).

Rhetorical entrapment is not a mechanism, but rather a state an actor can find itself in. Krebs & Thaddeus (2007: 36) describe a situation in which an actor is left "without access to the rhetorical materials needed to craft a socially sustainable rebuttal". This describes such rhetorical entrapment quite well. This description rests on two elements. Firstly, the entrapped actor is *trapped* rhetorically as the actor can provide no tenable counter rhetoric. Secondly, there is no tenable counter rhetoric as the nature of such a counter rhetoric would not be in line with norms of appropriateness, be it domestic or international. Any counter rhetoric would be a norm-violation and thus have reputational costs (and as a consequence possible material costs). Such reputational costs could be credibility and image. This is the essence of the metaphor of having ones tongue *and* arm twisted when one is rhetorically entrapped.

1.4.3 Theoretical Discussion

The reason that I have made use of *both* rhetorical action and soft power is because I believe that these concepts are closely intertwined. For rhetorical action to be relevant one must assume that countries care about their reputation and image, which are important aspects of soft power. Furthermore, the effectiveness of rhetorical action is dependent on the rhetorical actors' legitimacy, which is an important element of an actors' soft power. Nye (2004: 55) maintains that "perceived hypocrisy is particularly corrosive of power that is based on proclaimed values". An actor that is considered not to follow the values it preaches will suffer great losses to its reputation and the legitimacy of its arguments will be very weak. In other words, I would argue that a criterion for rhetorical action to be effective is that the receiver is an actor for which soft power is an important asset. The other side of the coin is that the sender ought to be an actor with considerable soft power in order for his message to be perceived as legitimate and thus effective. In this paper I will focus on the *receiver*.

I agree with Payne (2001: 54) that one should be very careful about offering frames as a causal explanation to change. Tarrow (in Payne 2001: 54) have shown that "frames must be understood in term of prevailing power structures". Any analysis of the relations between the EU and Norway has to acknowledge the fundamental power asymmetry. This is also the reason that I have found it necessary to include a rationalist account. This account does not serve as an explicit *alternative* explanation, but rather as a *complementary* explanation. With regards to this I would like to add that my purpose is to show that there is another dimension to the understanding than a strictly rationalist account.

A very serious drawback with this paper is the lack of Norwegian first-hand

sources¹¹. I have been fortunate to get access to the head of the EU delegation which has provided me with more knowledge than appears in this paper. However, there are always two sides of the story, or the negotiation table if you like. As I write about Norwegian *reaction* to aspects of the negotiations one could very easily criticise my research. Nevertheless, I think I have made some valid and interesting claims, albeit more theoretical than empirical by nature.

¹¹ I was informed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the relevant actors had moved to different positions across the world. Even if they would have agreed to contribute I don't believe I would have had enough time and resources to gather information from them. Furthermore, Gjessing (2006), who writes about the same negotiations claims that none of the actors would agree to being interviewed for her Master's thesis.

2 A Rationalist Account

In this part of the paper I will present a relatively brief rational account of why the outcome became what it did. I will present Norwegian interests prior to the negotiations *and* domestic and international factors which affected the outcome of the negotiations.

Norway's material interests in the negotiations on the extended EEA-agreement were to settle at a "reasonable" increase of contributions and to receive compensation for the worsened trade terms the country would have with the CEECs when the enlargement was finalised. Furthermore, Norway considered it very important for the new EEA-agreement to be implemented simultaneously with the Eastern Enlargement (TNG 2003). Before the enlargement Norway had free trade agreements with the CEECs. The most important of these was the free trade agreement on fish with Poland. To Norway's dismay, the negotiators on the EU side saw no direct connection between the scrapped free trade agreements and the negotiation on the extended EEA-agreement. In fact, the size of the financial contributions would have to be agreed before the EU even wanted to discuss future trading arrangements for Norwegian fish (TNG 2003).

In a proposition to the Storting¹², the Norwegian government claimed that there was "no realistic alternative to the EEA-agreement for us [Norway] to promote our [Norwegian] interests vis-à-vis the EU" (TNG 2003: 12 m.t¹³). This sense of very little leverage might have been strengthened as the EU made it perfectly clear that the one would have to question the continuation of the EEA-agreement if the EFTA-countries would not comply with the demand for a substantial increase of their contributions (TNG 2003). This can be interpreted as a threat and to some degree power tactics by the EU. However, I have not found any expressed *direct* threat against Norway. Nevertheless, the signal was clear: "pay more money or something bad will happen"¹⁴.

State Secretary Traavik (2003) has commented that the outcome of the negotiations was "as good as we [Norway] could realistically hope it would be". I think there are good reasons to share Mr. Traavik's view. One obvious reason for this view is the asymmetrical relationship between Norway and the EU. First of all, Norway is a very small country compared to the combined size of the EU. There are approximately 4.7 million Norwegian citizens compared to approximately 500 million EU inhabitants after the enlargement. Secondly,

¹² The Storting is the name of the Norwegian parliament.

¹³ "Det er idag ikke noe reelt alternativ til EØS-avtalen for å ivareta våre interesser vis-à-vis EU."

¹⁴ Torgeir Anda, a journalist from the Norwegian newspaper Dagens Næringsliv (DN) that followed the negotiations with several articles, wrote that the negotiations in fact had been nothing but a power struggle in which Norway had been completely run over (DN 2003b).

Norway is heavily dependent on access to the European market. This dependence is not mutual. In 2006 about 82% of Norwegian exports went to the EU, compared to approximately 3% of EU exports going to Norway (The European Commission 2006). On top of this, Norway is very interested in taking part of several EU projects and programmes that it does not have formal rights to participate in. In other words, Norwegians rely on goodwill from the EU in order to be accepted as a participant in initiatives such as EU's battle groups and R&D programmes. Matlary (2002) argues that *access* to the EU has become one of the most important interests of Norwegian "realpolitik". The general picture is that Norway had a much more critical wish for achieving an agreement than the EU had. As Hopmann argues, the party with the least to win (or the most to lose), or as in Putnam's two-level game, the party that will have the hardest time selling the deal to the domestic arena, might have a good position for demanding concessions in a negotiation (Hopmann 1996: 250, Putnam 1988: 440). Norway definitely stood to lose the most of a non-agreement if one looks at Norway's reliance on access to the European market. Furthermore, the political climate and signals from the government prepared everyone for an outcome where Norway would have to substantially increase its financial support to the EU. Norway was clearly in a poor bargaining position.

Norwegian politicians seemed to be generally satisfied with the result. However, it can be hard to argue that the short-term benefits of the final agreement on the extended EEA-agreement were obvious. Norway had after all lost free trade agreements with the candidate countries *and* had to pay money for it. On the background of the new quota-system for fish and the contributions that were negotiated, politicians from The Centre Party (SP) and the Socialist Left Party (SV) commented that Norway paid an extremely high price for selling fish (Nationen¹⁵ 2003). Another point to make is that the Norwegian party system is very vulnerable to "the EU-question". Percy Westerlund (interview) highlights what has been called the "suicide clause". This clause is a way for parties with differing opinions on the question of EU membership to be able to form governments together. One decides as a government that if Norway submits an EU membership application, the government dissolves (Semundseth 2004: 71). So, by accepting an extended EEA-agreement the government (and opposition parties)¹⁶ could remain silent of the highly controversial issue of Norwegian affiliation to the EU. It is important to keep in mind that the EEA-agreement is a cross cutting compromise in Norwegian politics. The No-side remains relatively quiet as Norway stays formally outside the EU and has exceptions in the EEA agreement for fish and agriculture. The Yes-side stays silent as Norway is as integrated as it can be as a non-member. One author sees the increased contributions as a way for Norwegian politicians to "pay for silence" (Gjessing 2006).

¹⁵ Nationen is a Norwegian newspaper.

¹⁶ The majority of political parties in Norway are internally split on their views on EU membership.

Norway initially wanted to pay as little as possible and achieve a trade agreement on fish that did not leave Norwegian export interests worse of than they were before the coming enlargement. The final outcome of differed quite substantially from this. As the negotiation deadline was approaching without any significant results, Norway came to the realisation that the EFTA-states had to come up with a substantially greater offer of contributions in order for the negotiations to continue. After consultations with Iceland and Liechtenstein, the Norwegians also realised that this increase would have to be provided by Norway¹⁷ (Værnes 2006: 36-40).

To summarize, one can definitely make sense of the negotiated outcome as a result of both the great asymmetry in the relationship between Norway and the EU, and the political climate in Norway regarding “the EU-question”. There is not only a power asymmetry in the relation between Norway and the EU. There is also a pattern of asymmetrical interdependence. Norway is much more dependent on access to the European market than vice versa. Furthermore, Norwegians in general were very positive towards the enlargement itself. Based on Putnam’s theory of two-level game this made any costly agreement for Norway more “yes-able” on the domestic arena. These observations does not however explain why when the negotiations had reached a standstill it was ultimately Norway that decided to give in to EU demands and construct a bilateral financial agreement making it by far the most generous of the EFTA-countries. The final outcome made much more sense for Iceland and Liechtenstein from an instrumental rational point of view as they ended up paying substantially less than Norway in relative terms. The same can definitely be said about the bilaterally negotiated outcome for Switzerland which ended up being about half of the Norwegian contributions.

Why did Norway decide to unilaterally take the bill through a separate Norwegian financial mechanism? I will show that it is not sufficient to explain the outcome of the negotiations as a result of a Norwegian material cost-benefit analysis or as a demonstration of power from the EU. In order to achieve a deeper understanding one should examine Norwegian foreign policy tradition and identity, and one should examine Norway’s critical dependence on its soft power and the implications of this. If one examines these factors one is faced with an explanation that is not as simple as a cost-benefit analysis, and that might tell us something more general about Norwegian foreign policy and the role of soft power and rhetorical action.

¹⁷ Sources in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had actually signalled prior to the negotiations that a bilateral Norwegian fund was seen as a possibility if the negotiations stranded (Gjessing 2006: 40).

3 The Importance of Norwegian Identity and Foreign Policy Tradition

I will now present reasons to believe that "Norwegian identity and foreign policy tradition" is founded on a set of values. Thereafter I will discuss what role these values, that Norwegian identity and tradition is built upon, played in the Norwegian decision to give in to EU demands during the negotiations.

In 2002, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a report on the history of Norwegian foreign aid. This report argued that "Norwegian foreign aid has to a greater degree than for many other countries, been founded on idealistic motives" (MFA 2002 m.t.¹⁸). Most countries in the world consider themselves unique and morally good. However, what makes the Norwegian tradition "special" is the sense of duty when it comes to altruistically spreading good throughout the world. To some degree this is a thought that Norway shares with its Scandinavian neighbours. "Scandinavian exceptionalism" is a term that has been used when referring to the values of the Scandinavian countries. Some authors argue that this ideal has been more prominent in Norway than in the other Scandinavian countries. Characterisations such as "humanitarian great power" (m.t.)¹⁹ have appeared in discussions about Norway's role in the world (Leira et al 2007: 10f).

Norwegian self-images are maintained and strengthened through rhetoric and actions. This self-image has a historical heritage. Knut Frydelund, former minister of foreign affairs, explains in his book from 1982 that the Norwegian ideals "have something to do with Wergeland and Bjørnson – they have something to do with [Norwegian] history, tradition and the wish to live up to the recognition that Fridtjof Nansen achieved for Norway through his work for refugees after the first world war" (Leira et al. 2007: 11 m.t.²⁰). One of the conclusions of the Norwegian "Report on power and democracy" of 2003 was that the self-image as a moral and "humanitarian great power" has become a national symbol and a part of Norwegians' identity. This self-image is primarily maintained for the Norwegians themselves²¹, but it is also for the rest of the world to see (Leira et al. 2007: 9).

¹⁸ "Norsk bistand har i høyere grad enn for mange andre land vært preget av ideelle motiver."

¹⁹ The Norwegian expression is "humanitær stormakt".

²⁰ "Dette har noe med Wergeland og Bjørnson å gjøre – med historie og tradisjon – og ønsket om å leve opp til den anseelse som Fridtjof Nansen skaffet Norge gjennom sin innsats for flyktninger etter den første verdenskrig."

²¹ I must acknowledge that as a Norwegian I see Norway through Norwegian lenses. This might make me biased in some respects. I try to be as objective as possible, and I hope my awareness of the potential bias *can* to some degree remedy the bias itself.

Since the end of the Cold War, Norway's external image has become increasingly important. This image is built on certain characteristics of Norway as a nation. The special traits that are presented are that Norway is a small country promoting peace, and that it is a country that is generous and therefore gladly shares its economic surplus with other countries through aid and peace efforts. There is in fact also a broad domestic support for the general perception that Norway is an altruistic and selfless actor (Leira et al. 2007: 9). A survey conducted in 2005 showed that 92 per cent of the Norwegian respondents strongly agreed to the statement "Norway is a rich country that shares its resources with others through humanitarian aid and promoting peace" (m.t²²). The same survey showed that 36 per cent strongly agreed with the statement "Norway is a nation that does not contribute enough to development and peace" (Leira et al. 2007: 11 m.t²³). In other words the Norwegians see their own country as a fair, generous and peaceful nation. Furthermore they are in favour of an even more active and generous foreign policy.

3.1 Norwegian Self-Declared Values

There are consistent expressions up to this day of certain values that Norway ought to stand for in the international community. Skaardal (2006: 91) found that all the national budgets from 2000 to 2006 has stated that Norwegian foreign policy is based on a foundation of values that is expressed through a Norwegian plight to contribute to helping people out of need, poverty and conflict. There are good reasons to believe that the values and norms of the government at the time of the negotiations (Bondevik II) had great significance for the Norwegian views on the question of financial contributions to the CEECs. The Norwegian Prime Minister of the Bondevik-II government, Kjell Magne Bondevik (2004), wrote an article in *Aftenposten*, one of the largest newspapers in Norway, where he called for an even more value-oriented foreign policy than in the past. He argued that the Norwegian foreign policy "ought to develop into an ever stronger tool for promoting overarching goals as peace, freedom, reconciliation, democracy, human rights, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability" (m.t²⁴). In the Prime Minister's traditional speech on New Year's Eve he claimed that Norway ought to be a nation of solidarity (Nordlys²⁵ 2005). In many ways Bondevik,

²² Norge er "En rik nasjon som deler sine ressurser med andre gjennom humanitær aktivitet og fredsarbeid".

²³ Norge er "En nasjon som ikke gjør nok for utvikling og fred".

²⁴ "Mitt ønske er å gjøre utenrikspolitikken enda mer verdibasert. Den skal utvikles til et stadig sterkere redskap for å fremme overordnede mål som fred og frihet, forsoning, demokrati og menneskerettigheter, fattigdomsbekjempelse og økologisk bærekraft."

²⁵ Nordlys is a Norwegian newspaper .

being the leader of the Christian Democratic Party (KrF) represents a Norwegian movement with a tradition of Christian missionary work. As Matlary (2002) points out, long before soft power was even “invented”, religious communities and organisations from Norway have worked abroad promoting “Christian” values. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bondevik II-government, Jan Petersen of the Conservative Party (Høyre), has argued that Norway’s international contributions demonstrate a set of Norwegian values implying that Norway has an obligation of helping other human beings to achieve a safer and a more worthy life (Aftenposten 2005). It is fair to assume that Prime Minister Bondevik and Foreign Minister Petersen were important actors in drafting Norwegian positions prior to and during the negotiations. As I have shown there are reasons to believe that both Bondevik and Petersen put considerable emphasis on the moral dimension of increased Norwegian contributions. In the Storting there was some critique of the Norwegian negotiation strategy as I will illustrate, but very few questioned the purpose itself or the virtue of the contributions (Gjessing 2006: 54). Norwegian foreign policy has traditionally emphasised values, and as we have seen this can also be said about the Bondevik II-government. The broad picture is that there exists a Norwegian foreign policy tradition of promoting values instead of pursuing narrow self interest. And from studying the Norwegian parliamentary debate it is clear that both political “camps” in the Norwegian party system generally considered an increase in Norwegian contributions to the CEECs as a moral obligation.

Wiken (2004: 24) argues that political parties constitute institutions with common priorities when it comes to values and interests. It is on the basis of these shared values and interests that the party leadership decides the party’s foreign policy priorities and agenda. One can assume that these priorities and agendas become institutionalised when they have been an important part of a political party for a long time. Parsons (in Wiken 2004: 24) has showed how social systems are founded on ideas that define how empirical phenomena ought to be understood. When these values and ideas are institutionalised and become a part of their identities they affect the actions of the organisation. In other words, tradition and identity matters for the political parties, and thus for the political system itself. If it is true that Norwegian foreign policy tradition is built upon a sense of moral obligation we should therefore expect that the political parties in Norway have carried with them value-oriented set of values which is manifested through their political agendas.

Despite all this, there are reasons to be sceptical to the significance of Norwegian altruistic values for the Norwegian position in the negotiations. During the parliamentary treatment of the outcome, Åslaug Haga, the leader of the Centre Party (SP), questioned the Norwegian government’s arguments that the financial contribution was an expression of solidarity. She pointed to the fact that Poland was to become the largest receiver of Norwegian aid and that Poland was not exactly poor in comparison with other countries receiving aid from Norway (Stortinget 2004b). Furthermore, if both the Norwegian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs felt very strongly about Norway’s moral obligations, then why did they not accept the EU’s initial demands of 500 million Euro per

year? And why did the negotiations have to reach a standstill before the Norwegian delegation decided to substantially increase its offer through the bilateral financial mechanism? The original offer from the Norwegians was to increase the country's contributions from 25 million Euro to approximately 38 million Euro per year (Gjessing 2006: 29). Although this represented a 50% increase, it is questionable that this could be seen as a great manifestation of Norwegian solidarity. Nevertheless, I have illustrated the importance of values for the Norwegian foreign policy tradition and identity.

One can imagine that identity is something that is created through repeated actions (Wendt in Ross 2006: 207). This process is self-reinforcing as Norwegian actors construct an image of Norway as a country that honours its expressions of solidarity and feel obliged to act in accordance with their identity. Norway becomes an actor that sees what it *ought to do* as affected by what Norway *is*. Furthermore, there should be no doubt that the discourse in the debates on the issue of the enlargement to a great extent evolved around normative considerations. As I will illustrate later in the paper, the EU reasoned its demands on values that Norwegian identity and tradition are built on. If one assumes that identity and tradition matter then one has to contemplate on whether it would be possible for Norway to act against EU arguments and thus its own identity and tradition. However, I think that one has to look at Norwegian idealistic aspirations in a wider context. In the political debate it was often emphasised that Norwegian foreign policy could be both idealistic and a result of rational considerations at the same time. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Petersen, has argued that acting idealistic ultimately is a good way for Norway to pursue its national interests. He claimed that Norwegian foreign policy is designed in order to "secure direct and indirect interests, but also in order to honour our political and moral commitments. The former does not exclude the latter" (Stortinget 2004a m.t²⁶).

²⁶ "Norsk utenrikspolitikk utformes altså både for å kunne ivareta direkte og indirekte nasjonale interesser, og ikke minst våre politiske og moralske fellesforpliktelser. Det ene utelukker ikke det andre".

4 Norwegian Reliance on Soft Power

I have now provided both rational and normative arguments for understanding the outcome of the negotiations. In order to tie the former arguments together I will now present reasons for assuming that Norwegian soft power is a concept one should understand in order to fully comprehend Norwegian actors' behaviour in the negotiations.

The general message from Nye's concept of soft power is that states can no longer rely only on carrots and sticks in order to reach ones foreign policy goals. In today's international environment, countries can as well achieve their goals and exert influence without "tangible threats or payoffs" (Nye 2004: 5). Ham (2002:252) argues that we have in fact moved in to a post-modern world where geopolitics and power has been substituted with images and influence. The value-agenda has become central in Western international politics. This development has turned many countries' foreign policy focus towards public diplomacy as a way of achieving soft power through a positive and credible image and reputation. Today the international political debate is to a greater degree than before about peace, democracy and human rights. The political discourse evolves around values such as justice, human rights and democracy – and not explicitly about national interests. The increased transparency in international politics and the increased influence of the media creates pressure on states to play positive parts in the international community even if they initially lack motivation for this. Value-promoting diplomacy has become more important than ever before (Matlary 2002).

Leonard & Small (2003: 1) argue that public diplomacy for Norway is about overcoming the country's "invisibility". Considering the fact that Norway has half the population of Paris this is obviously very challenging. As Nye (2004: 106) argues the international situation today is characterised by a "paradox of plenty". There are so many channels of information that it is very hard to get ones message out and thus it is very hard to gain attention and visibility. This leads to what Keohane and Nye (2001: 223) call a "poverty of attention". Today countries need to work on their images in order to get access and publicity. This is especially true for small countries. Thune & Larsen (2000: 81) posit that small states on an international market have to promote themselves through other means than military force. They have to pursue a positive image in order to get access to positions in international organisations and international assignments. Norway has even commissioned research on their public diplomacy (Bátora 2005: 11)²⁷. It is

²⁷ Sweden has done the same (The Swedish Government), and Britain has even established The Foreign Policy institute which is working with the "rebranding of Britain" (Matlary 2002).

beyond any doubt that image, reputation and visibility hold great importance for nation states in the 21st century.

4.1 The Increasing Difficulty of Being Relevant

Norway is a very small country, but as every other country it has crucial interests. For several reasons these interests are becoming increasingly difficult to preserve. Norway *was* strategically very important for the United States during the Cold War due to the fact that it shared borders with the Soviet Union. Today, Norway is a member of NATO, an organisation that is facing an unclear future as it is perceived to be challenged by EU initiatives and as it is no longer the most pre-eminent element in US foreign policy (Schmidt 2006). That might be one of the reasons Norway has approached and joined one of the battle groups of the European Union. However, there is no guarantee that Norway can just tag along with every new beneficial EU security initiative. Currently the High North has caught attention in the foreign policy debate in Norway. Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt (2006) commented in a speech that Norway could not automatically count on the EU and the USA in a potential future conflict in the High North. Norway is very vulnerable as they are no longer “on the radar” of the US and the European Union. In such an unfortunate situation a country like Norway depends on international goodwill in order to get *access* to channels where Norwegian concerns can be expressed.

Norway has since the end of the Cold War been an active player on the international stage. It was Norway who brokered the famous Oslo-agreement between Israel and Palestine. Norway has played an active role in the peace process in Sri Lanka, Colombia, Meso America and the Sudan (Østerud & Selle 2006: 40). Norway was despite its small population the 7th largest financial contributor to the United Nations (UN) from 2002 to 2004 (UN 2006). There are very clear signals that this is done not only because of an exceptional Norwegian sense of global responsibility. As officials and academics have argued, Norwegian initiatives are door openers and help Norwegian officials that try to get their voices heard on critical Norwegian interests (Matlary 2002, speech by Jan Petersen (Stortinget 2004b)). Pursuing an altruistic Norwegian foreign policy is in other words a way of pursuing the country’s self interest.

The benefits of possessing soft power should not be underestimated. It is ultimately “not just a question of image, public relations, and ephemeral popularity...it is a form of power – a means of obtaining desired outcomes” (Nye 2004: 129). Soft power creates political capital which at a later stage can be “used” in the international community. One thing that can be “bought” through this political capital can be important positions in international organisations, or a personal talk with the President of the United States. According to Nye (2004: 112), Norway “has developed a voice and presence out of proportion to its modest

size and resources". This attention and representation is priceless for a country that I have illustrated face the danger of being totally overlooked.

As I have illustrated, Norway relies heavily on public diplomacy through value promoting diplomacy in order to achieve and preserve its soft power. One has to keep in mind that soft power is something a country can lose much faster than it can achieve it. As Matlary (2002) claims: a reputation is built over a long period, but can be squandered in seconds. Nye (2004: 14) writes that "domestic or foreign policies that appear to be hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of others, or based on a narrow approach to national interests can undermine soft power". This potentially puts Norway in an awkward position in any negotiations that has ethical and moral dimensions. This is especially true as Norway is a country that put great emphasis on its virtues as a nation.

5 An Account Based on the Theory of Rhetorical Action

As I have shown there are good reasons to claim that a great deal of the outcome of the negotiations can be explained from a rational approach. It is also plausible that Norwegian identity and some sort of genuine altruism can have played a part. The interplay between these two explanations might be seen as an expression of the current Norwegian foreign policy that, judging by statements from Jan Petersen, is founded on the idea that appearing to be an idealist can serve one's interests in today's international environment. Nye has convincing arguments about the benefits from having a good reputation, and in many ways Norway's relative success in foreign policy might be contributed to its perceived idealistic foreign policy. Paradoxically, Norwegian interests are best pursued the more altruistic Norwegian foreign policy is (Matlary 2002).

I turn now to the part of this paper where I analyse in which way rhetorical action can provide insights for an explanation of the negotiated outcome of the negotiations. Firstly I will make a case for the importance of *framing*. Secondly, I will examine whether the concept of *shaming* can provide us any further understanding. Thirdly, I will discuss whether Norwegian actors were in a state of *rhetorical entrapment*.

5.1 How a Question of Money Became a Question of Morals

Schimmelfennig (2001) argues that the CEECs and the "driver" countries and their allies inside the EU institutions strategically used the Union's constitutive values and norms as arguments in favour of enlargement. I will present evidence that European actors used arguments of values and norms in favour of a drastic increase in Norwegian contributions.

The Swedish Minister of Commerce at the time, Leif Pagrotsky, certainly emphasised that it was completely *fair* that Norway should contribute substantially to the Eastern Enlargement. Mr. Pagrotsky emphasised this by highlighting the considerable difference between the Swedish annual contributions to the EU of 2.5 billion Euro and Norway's contributions of 25 million Euro (DN 2003a). The Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson claimed that it was only *fair* that Norway, "the richest country in Europe", should pay more than it did at the time. He commented that "*it would be very odd if Europe's*

richest country, that wants access to the market, were not to pay as much as Sweden with our weak economy and Denmark and Finland with their weak economies” (Nordlys 2003 m.t.²⁸). Then head of the EU delegation to Norway, Gerhard Sabathil, argued in a similar manner. He emphasised that Norway would become twice as rich as the EU after the enlargement. On the question of whether Norway should have to pay as much as EU members, he answered that every member of the common market should contribute equal. He continued by emphasising that “we now have the chance to make the arrangements fair (Aftenposten 2002b m.t.²⁹). Behind this argument one can assume that he considered the old arrangements unfair. Pagrotsky, Persson and Sabathil talked about the value fairness, and implicitly solidarity. It is striking that both ministers refer to Norway as “the richest country in Europe”³⁰. Percy Westerlund (interview) echoed similar sentiments. Based on the fact that considerably poorer EU-countries contributed, Mr. Westerlund had difficulties understanding why the EFTA-states should not contribute³¹. He also shares the views of Sabathil that the former arrangements were unfair³². Based on the theory of rhetorical action one can assume that such a moral framing of the questions of financial contributions is something that Norwegian officials not easily could ignore³³.

Percy Westerlund (Interview) admits that behind the EU’s rational and logical arguments, although not explicitly expressed “there was perhaps an impression of freeriding if these countries [Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein] did not contribute more” (m.t.³⁴). The notion of the EU seeing Norway as a freerider was also echoed in a leader in Aftenposten (2002a). In the Storting Fridtjof Frank Gundersen from The Progress Party (FrP) already in 2000 commented that “many Europeans are increasingly displeased with the fact that we despite possessing considerable wealth, refuse to show solidarity and contribute to Europe’s development. We should try to do something to reverse this image...There should be no doubt about our solidarity with the European states[...]No one should get the impression that we only care about ourselves” (Stortinget 2000 m.t.³⁵). According

²⁸ ”Det er ytterst merkelig om Europas rikeste land, som vil ha tilgang til markedet, ikke skal betale like mye som Sverige med vår dårlige økonomi og Danmark og Finland med deres dårlige økonomi.”

²⁹ ”Nå har vi mulighet til å gjøre dette [finansieringsordningene] rettferdig.”

³⁰ These were in fact incorrect statements as Norway is not the richest country in Europe.

³¹ ”Om betydeligt fattigare EU-länder bidrar så var det svårt att förstå varför inte de här länderna skulle bidra.”

³² ”Jag tyckte alltså att den tidigare situationen var orimlig.”

³³ Schimmelfennig (2001) argues that rhetorical action is most effective when used by representatives of a country that is itself considered righteous and benevolent. The fact that *Swedish* ministers made these arguments *can* also have strengthened the legitimacy of the EU demands.

³⁴ ”Under detta låg det kanskje et resonemang att om man inte bidrar mer så blir det en slags freerider. Det går inte att komma från”.

³⁵ ”På den annen side er det mange i Europa i dag som ser med økende uvilje på at vi sitter på vår store pengebinge og våre olje- og gassreserver, men nekter å ta solidarisk del i utviklingen og oppbyggingen av et Europa. Denne ulempen bør vi gjøre noe for å kompensere... Vår solidaritet med de europeiske stater og USA bør ikke trekkes i tvil. Man bør ikke få det inntrykk at vi til de grader er oss selv nok. ”

to Lodgaard, Norway *has* to play a positive role in the world in order to not to be perceived as greedy (Skaardal 2006: 76). The general picture is that Norwegian actors are very cognizant of how the rest of the world views Norway. Therefore it can be quite effective for other actors to frame questions into having a moral element.

Percy Westerlund (interview) emphasised the "leverage"³⁶ of Switzerland as an explanation for their relative "success" in its bilateral negotiations with the EU. Surely it is just as *fair* that Switzerland pays as much or even more than Norway³⁷? Mr. Westerlund also seemed generally aware of Norwegian "identity" and tradition through certain comments in the interview I conducted with him. Broman (2008: 84) argues that "from a strategic perspective[...]it seems rational to frame interests in a way that makes other states positive towards your ideas". If one is to follow Allison & Zelikow's (1999: 10) advice to translate theoretical claims into common sense, I would assume that a rational EU delegation would strategically frame the negotiations into being a question of two values Norwegian foreign policy (and to a large degree domestic politics) is built on - fairness and solidarity. Regardless of whether this framing was strategic or not, it was very hard for Norwegian actors to work against. EU actors presented arguments on which Norwegian foreign policy and identity is founded on.

One can find several empirical examples in scholarly works of how frames are "fashioned by norm advocates so as to appeal to particular target audiences" (Payne 2001: 39). As I have illustrated, it seems that EU actors *framed* the negotiations into being a question of solidarity and fairness. In an interview in 2005, Percy Westerlund claimed that the Commission's bargaining power was strengthened by the fact that they presented logical and *normatively good* demands (Gjessing 2006: 45). The "target audience", Norway, is a country in which these values are seen as something to strive for. The question of the negotiations became "how fair will the richest country in Europe be to its neighbours?" as opposed to what the question materially was: "How much money will the European Union receive from wealthy Norway?" The strategic difference between the two questions is very important for understanding the rhetorical action of EU actors.

5.2 Norwegian Actors Shamed into Compliance?

Schimmelfennig (2001: 64) argues that shaming or a "soft mechanisms of *social*

³⁶ Leverage is a word Percy Westerlund applies as a general expression of the bargaining strength of an actor. Among many things, Mr. Westerlund highlighted Switzerland's geographical position and its position as a centre of finance.

³⁷ It is also a fact that the preconditions were totally different in the Swiss case. While a satisfactory contribution was a precondition for an extended EEA-agreement for Norway, there were no such linkages in the EU-Swiss negotiations on their bilateral agreements (Nationen 2004).

influence” can explain norm-compliance. He argues that it is a possibility for countries with “legitimate” interests to shame other countries into what he refers to as “norm-conforming” behaviour (Schimmelfennig 2001: 48). Just like NGOs can shame governments into action, state actors can shame other state actors in order to influence them. The criterion for shaming to be successful is that the receiver at an earlier point in time has expressed support for a given set of norms or values. Inconsistencies between an actor’s rhetoric and behaviour can be exploited by other actors in order for the shamed actor to alter its behaviour. This shaming can influence the actor in question regardless of whether its initial rhetoric was based on genuine conviction or as strategic rhetoric. The former might “feel genuinely ashamed and will change their behavior in order to straighten things out with themselves”. The latter might “be concerned with what the public exposure of their illegitimate preferences and behavior will do their standing and reputation in the community” (Schimmelfennig 2001: 64). As we can see from this rhetorical action can be used regardless of whether the actor in question is a norm-driven or a rational actor. The ones claiming that Norway is a genuinely altruistic country would agree that an institution like the EU providing proof that Norway is not living up to its international obligations would genuinely hurt Norwegian self-image and thus make it change its preferences. The ones arguing that Norway’s foreign policy is based on obtaining soft power would agree that such a shaming would put pressure on Norway to change its preferences in order to protect and rectify its reputation and image.

No state can readily afford to be “shamed”. A loss of reputation and goodwill can have dire consequences both for a state’s economy (through a loss of investments and tourism) and its *credibility* (Matlary 2002). Not only did EU actors claim that an increase would be just and fair, it was also emphasised that the former arrangement was unfair. Percy Westerlund commented that “the EU can’t any longer afford to let its richest friends take part in the common market with contributions that are not corresponding with their economic strength” (DN 2003c m.t.³⁸). It is obvious that this comment is very normative. As I have showed there were also many references to the former arrangements being *unfair*.

Whereas “shaming” was a very useful tool for the pro-enlargement camp in the EU, I don’t believe that this type of rhetorical action was prevalent in the negotiations on the extended EEA-agreement³⁹. Interestingly there were instances of shaming in 2002 during the parliamentary debate about the EEA-cooperation from 1994 to 2001. During this debate the parliament also discussed the prospect of the negotiation regarding the extended EEA-agreement. Morten Høglund, a representative from FrP said that he did not see many good reasons for the EFTA

³⁸ ”Hittil har det norske bidraget vært svært begrenset. EU har ikke lenger råd til å la sine rikeste venner delta på like vilkår i det indre marked med et bidrag som ikke er i samsvar med deres økonomiske styrke.”

³⁹ Bailey (2008) makes a very interesting point when writing that American shaming tactics against Norway regarding whale fishing was unsuccessful as Norway was generally seen as a ”good” country with respect to environmental issues. It would be interesting to make further research on an actor’s reputation as an obstacle to external shaming.

financial contribution to continue, even less so for it to increase. He argued that Norway had to link the contributions to EU concessions on the trade of Norwegian fish. He further commented that Norway was in a situation where it paid a great share of the bill, but did not receive anything in return. His speech could be seen as a call for Norway to focus on national interests rather than just contributing without any concern for Norwegian interests. Haakon Blankenborg from the Social Democratic Party (Ap) argued that Høglund's words, if Europeans had listened, would strengthen the impression of Norway as a greedy and rich peripheral country that solely thinks of itself and does not want to contribute to the development in Europe (Stortinget 2002). Foreign Minister Jan Petersen repeated the criticism against Høglund. He confirmed Blankenborg's view and said "I think it is important that one is not left with the impression that Norway is a country that merely seeks benefits...Norway is a country that contributes to the common good" (Stortinget 2002 m.t.⁴⁰). Inge Lønning from the Conservative Party (H) maintained that "we [Norway] have chosen to enjoy the economic benefits of the European common market and it is therefore obvious that we have both a political and a moral obligation to reciprocate" (m.t.⁴¹). Based on speeches made by members of parliament he continued by questioning the validity of certain political parties' expressed support for the EU enlargement. All parties had expressed support, but the signals from some of the representatives, including of course the remarks made by Mr. Høglund, indicated that this support was quite weak according to Inge Lønning (Stortinget 2002). In the parliamentary debate on the extended EEA-agreement, Inge Lønning once again argued in the same vein. He reminded politicians that were sceptical to the size of the Norwegian contributions that Norway is one of Europe's most wealthy countries. He continued by claiming that Norway has a clear responsibility in Europe and that it would be both unwise and inappropriate not to contribute (Stortinget 2004b). These observations indicate that there were mechanisms of shaming internally in the Norwegian parliament. Norwegian politicians that questioned Norwegian contributions to the CEECs were confronted with the impossible question: "Do you not support the Eastern Enlargement?" These shaming mechanisms can be said to entrap Norwegian actors in the domestic debate.

Despite my conclusion that there is no clear evidence that EU actors tried to shame Norway into compliance there are still points to be made. I believe that my assumptions are in line with Beneš (2006) who argues that states can have different degrees of sensitivity to shaming. The existing mechanisms of shaming in the Norwegian parliament can make Norway even more susceptible to external shaming than I believe it already is. Political actors who are in line with the ideas and norms of Norwegian foreign policy tradition can contribute to the

⁴⁰ "Jeg tror det er viktig at man ikke sitter igjen med inntrykket av at Norge er et land som bare skal ha fordeler, men at det også er spørsmål om å bidra... Norge er et land som også bidrar til det felles beste."

⁴¹ "Når vi har valgt å nyte godt av de handelsmessige fordelene av det europeiske fellesmarked, burde det være soleklart at vi også har påtatt oss både en politisk og en moralsk forpliktelse til å yte en rimelig grad av gjengjeld."

effectiveness of external shaming in those instances where the external shaming is based on a discrepancy between Norwegian rhetorical commitments and actual Norwegian behaviour⁴². One might imagine a situation in which an external actor rigorously follows a shaming strategy which resonates with institutionalised values that are prevalent in the Norwegian political system. One might assume that such a scenario would put any Norwegian government under considerable pressure.

5.3 Rhetorically Entrapped?

Just like the Eastern Enlargement of the EU was made in to a question of the EU's credibility (Schimmelfennig 2001: 68), Norwegian commitment to the European project was also a question of Norwegian credibility. State secretary Widvey (2003) explains that "in order to create an *image* of a genuine and trustworthy nation *we have to practise what we preach*" (emphasis added). Schimmelfennig (2001) argues that even if a country has expressed support for certain legitimate values only in order to promote their self interest, it can "become trapped" by its arguments and have to act as if their past rhetoric was sincere. This is exactly the essence of why one can assume that Norwegian political leaders to some extent felt rhetorically entrapped in the question of contributions to the new EU members regardless of whether "Norwegian tradition" is truly morally founded or not. Furthermore, as I have already argued, this positive *image* is crucial for Norway to preserve.

Norway had already in 2001 expressed a dedication to assist the CEECs in their "return to Europe" and that there was a "broad agreement both in the EU countries and in Norway" that the EU and Norway shared a responsibility for showing solidarity with the candidate countries (MFA 2001). Prior to the negotiations both Prime Minister Bondevik and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Petersen indicated that it was "only natural" that Norway was to increase its contributions in order to increase the welfare in the CEECs (Gjessing 2006: 28). Failure to honour these promises would provide severe proof of discrepancies in Norwegian rhetoric and practice. This could indeed jeopardize Norway's external credibility (which I have shown is a critically important asset) and its image, and therefore its soft power. Furthermore, as I have already argued, this soft power is beyond any doubt crucial for Norway to preserve.

⁴² This is really not very much different than if internal interest groups or NGOs to seize the opportunity to echo external actors criticism of the policy of their parent country.

6 CONCLUSION

I began this paper by stating my ambition of providing reasons to believe that the concepts of soft power and rhetorical action are important to include in the analysis of the negotiations between Norway and the EU on the extended EEA-agreement. There are in my opinion strong indications that EU actors framed the negotiation on the size of EFTA's financial contributions into being a question of Norwegian sense of fairness and solidarity. There was also an emphasis on Norway being "Europe's richest country" and thus it would implicitly be expected that the country showed solidarity towards its poorer neighbours. Whether this framing of the issue was strategic or not is an open question. However, it would perhaps be naive to believe that in an era where reputation and images are so important, strategic actors, be it states or NGOs, won't try to find ways to exploit that reputation or image for their own benefit. On the other hand one can assume that European actors genuinely hold these beliefs and values themselves. However, the accession negotiation between the EU and the candidate countries were by no means uncomplicated. These negotiations proved that not all EU members were equally enthusiastic about the enlargement. The trade agreements made between the EU and the Visegrad countries in the early 90's were also very complicated. As Attali said in 1992 "the Europe Agreements appeared to be designed to restrict their [Visegrad countries] access to key Western markets rather than to integrate them" (in Strömö 1997). Furthermore, Percy Westerlund (interview) highlighted the "leverage" of Switzerland as an explanation for *Swiss* relative success in their bilateral negotiations with the EU in relation to the enlargement. Surely it is objectively just as *fair* that Switzerland pays as much or even more than Norway? These inconsistencies in the EU's claims against Norway and its behaviour in other circumstances might indicate that the EU delegation to a larger degree used normative arguments against Norway than towards Switzerland.

I can not find evidence that there were instances of shaming during the negotiations. An interesting observation in this respect was that there were instances of shaming in the Norwegian parliament itself. It seems that it was frowned upon to make sceptical statements to an increase in Norwegian contributions. This shaming was based on the notion that Norwegian reluctance to show solidarity would both create an unfavourable image of Norway *and* it would also go against a perceived Norwegian obligation to help poorer countries on the continent.

Perceived Norwegian identity and altruistic foreign policy, regardless of its genuinity, provides Norway with as much power that it can realistically obtain. This is an assumption founded on the concept of soft power. I have tried to

illustrate the great importance of this kind of power for Norway since the end of the Cold War. The elements of this type of power are image, reputation, visibility and credibility. This means that it is crucial for Norway to maintain the type of power it still is capable of having. If Norway is perceived to act inconsistently with its professed values and identity this will be a proof of Norwegian double standards. I have also tried to illustrate the important role of values for Norwegian identity and foreign policy tradition.

The picture one is left with is that Norway as an “idealist” country was trapped by its own rhetoric and could therefore not reject EU demands without at the same time rejecting principles that Norwegian identity *and* power are founded on – the principles of solidarity, fairness and idealism. This leads me to the assumption that rhetorical action directed towards Norway can be an effective instrument for other actors to make use of. There are two important reasons for this. The first reason is that Norway critically relies on its soft power. The other reason is that Norway has a strong idealistic identity and tradition and that the political discourse in Norway regarding foreign policy is very much based on certain legitimate values.

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