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The Neutral Ally: Sweden and the Social Construction of Security Identity

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March 22, 2017

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## Abstract

Since the Napoleonic Wars, Sweden has not been the direct participant in any armed conflict, and has officially embraced a policy of neutrality. For centuries, this led to a strong policy of territorial defence and little interest in international cooperation in the fields of security and defence, despite a number of turbulent periods of war spreading across Europe. Focusing on the origins and evolution of Swedish neutrality since its inception, this paper aims to illustrate how the social construction of the Swedish security identity firmly established neutrality within the Swedish approach to foreign policy, and how this identity continues to influence Sweden's contemporary approach to security and defence policy. Through the examination of Sweden's entry into the European Union and participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Partnership for Peace program, this paper demonstrates how Swedish leaders have progressively shifted the Swedish security identity away from a traditionally neutral identity and towards a more 'European' identity, which has resulted in a number of substantial impacts on foreign and security policy at both the domestic and European levels. Finally, this paper contends that Sweden has adopted a progressively narrower definition of neutrality in order to better suit the realities of European security in the twenty-first century, and accommodate a growing willingness to cooperate with international partners in the fields of security and defence.

## Introduction

Following its emergence as a unified and independent state in the late Middle Ages, Sweden gradually expanded its territory and influence across Europe, eventually reaching the status as a great European power by the late 17th century. However, Sweden's role as an influential power was relatively brief, coming to an end less than a century later. Following the loss of major territories across Northern Europe, the Swedish crown sought an alliance with France during the Napoleonic Wars, and waged a military campaign against neighbouring Norway, forcing the establishment of a union between the two countries in 1814.<sup>1</sup>

Since that time, Sweden has not been the direct participant in any armed conflict, and has officially embraced a policy of military neutrality. Throughout modern history, this led to adoption of a strong policy of territorial defence and minimal interest in international cooperation in the fields of security and defence, despite a turbulent period of major wars spreading across Europe and around the world, in some cases resulting in the invasion and occupation of Sweden's neighbouring states.

In the aftermath of the Second World War and the emergence of the modern international order, Sweden's policy of neutrality remained intact. Throughout the Cold War, the security policies of the Nordic states were collectively referred to as the 'Nordic Balance', and represented a combination of policies aimed at preserving peace in a region with significant strategic importance located between two superpowers. While acting as a neutral buffer between North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members Denmark

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<sup>1</sup> Kent, 2008, Chapters 3-7

and Norway to the West and Soviet-dominated Finland to the East, Sweden was able to develop an active role at the international level, playing a prominent role as an ‘active internationalist’ while protecting its status as a non-aligned state.<sup>2</sup>

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent shift in the global security landscape, most observers suggested that neutrality no longer served any significant purpose, and assumed that neutral states, particularly those in Europe, would quickly be absorbed into the existing security framework.<sup>3</sup> While membership in the European Union (EU) had long been considered incompatible with Sweden’s neutral status, it quickly became obvious that due to significant changes in a number of political, economic, and security priorities, the pursuit of full membership was in Sweden’s best interest. However, the process of integrating into an increasingly compressive political and economic union did not come without a number of complications.

While Sweden’s neutral status has been gradually redefined as a non-alignment in military alliances, it became clear that with the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, the nature of both Sweden’s non-alignment and the EU’s security identity were both still in the process of evolving. With the emergence of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), it quickly became a Swedish priority to influence the nature of security and defence policymaking at the European level, a priority shared by many of the post-neutral EU members.

Alongside its integration into the EU, Sweden was also embraced closer cooperation with NATO through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. While

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<sup>2</sup> For a complete description of Sweden’s Cold War ‘Active Internationalism’, see Chapter I.

<sup>3</sup> For a review of critical approaches to neutrality, see Chapter I.

officially remaining outside the alliance, in line with an official policy of non-alignment, it remains obvious that this significant shift in Sweden's attitude towards an increasingly influential trans-Atlantic security framework further signals an evolution towards a more 'European' security identity.

Throughout the recent past, through its membership in both the EU and close partnership with NATO, Sweden has continued to play a key role in the development of a European security identity that has avoided collective defence while embracing an actively internationalist approach of civilian crisis management and conflict prevention. The approach is one that Sweden continues to embrace as an active participant in EU military operations in conflict areas across the region and elsewhere around the world, and has since come to represent a core dimension of the European security identity.

The primary research goal of this paper will be to examine the evolution of Swedish foreign and defence policy and evaluate how Swedish neutrality and non-alignment has remained a core component of the Swedish national identity despite significant integration within the European foreign and security policy framework. While recognizing the historical role of Sweden in the defence of both the Nordic regions and the European continent, as well as the evolving role of Sweden in the context of contemporary military interventions and peacekeeping operations, the analysis contained within this paper will focus primarily on factors at the domestic and European policymaking levels. Furthermore, the origins of Swedish neutrality, and how the norm of Swedish neutrality has been interpreted and reinterpreted over time will feature prominently in this paper's analysis of the Swedish security identity.

The following represents the core research question presented by this paper: How does Sweden interpret neutrality, particularly in the context of membership within the European Union and close partnership with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization? This paper aims to demonstrate that Sweden has shifted its security identity away from what would be considered a traditional ‘neutral’ identity and towards a more ‘European’ identity, replacing a rigid policy of self-defence with a collective approach to regional and global security.

This analysis contained in this paper will focus closely on the evolution of the various policy components of the Swedish security model, as well as how Sweden has constructed an identity and has adapted itself to fulfil a number of different roles at the international level. This process, while relatively stable throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries, experienced a number of successive shocks following the end of the Cold War. For that reason, Sweden’s entry into and integration within the European Union, as well as close partnership with NATO through the Partnership for Peace will act as the two major case studies as to how Swedish foreign and defence policy has been subject to the dynamics of Europeanization. In addition to the effects on Swedish policy and identity, this paper will explore how Sweden has used shifts in its identity to influence policy adoption at the supranational level.

In order to do so, this paper will proceed as follows. Before evaluating Sweden’s approach to neutrality, the first chapter will explore theoretical and practical approaches to neutrality throughout history, from the emergence of the concept in ancient Greece to the contemporary debate over the role of neutrality and neutral actors in what many contend to be a ‘post-neutral’ security environment. Of special interest will be the

competing theoretical approaches to analysing neutrality, most notably contributions from realist and constructivist observers.

More specifically, this section will also explore the decline of Sweden as a major European power and the adoption of neutrality as an official policy. Of particular interest will be the uneven practice of neutrality over the course of the past two centuries, with periods involving Swedish activism during the interwar period, the Swedish ‘pendulum policy’ during the Second World War, and Sweden’s non-alignment and international activism throughout the Cold War. Importantly, this chapter will illustrate the origins of Sweden’s policy of neutrality and the impacts that continue to have on the modern Swedish security identity, which will enable a more complete understanding of the dynamics underlying the recent series of major shifts in foreign and security policy.

The second chapter will focus on two of the key moments in the evolution of the Swedish national and security identity, entry into the EU and official partnership with NATO. This section will provide an overview of the debate surrounding Swedish membership in the European Community, as well as Sweden’s historical role as a ‘reluctant European’. It will then explore the roles individual member states continue to play in influencing and implementing policy at the EU level, and the effects of the ‘Europeanization’ of policymaking at a domestic level, with a particular focus on foreign and defence policies. This section will feature a major focus on both the power and influence of larger member states as the drivers of EU foreign policy priorities, as well as the ways in which smaller member states have been able to achieve success in influencing shared policy goals and strategies for global engagement.



Of particular interest is the role of both the post-neutral and Nordic states, including Sweden, which is considered to have played a significant role in the ‘bi-directional’ processes of Europeanization throughout their membership in the EU, and has come to represent an influential figure in shaping the Common Security and Defence Policy while redefining its own approach to European security.

Building on the theme of exploring the shift from Swedish neutrality to ‘military non-alignment’, which remains one of the most significant policy shifts in modern Swedish history, this section will also examine Sweden’s close relationship with NATO, despite remaining officially outside the alliance. Although full NATO membership remains incompatible with Sweden’s status as a non-aligned state, it is obvious that Sweden has developed a strong relationship through prolonged cooperation with both active NATO members in northern Europe and the organization as a whole. Sweden has played an active role through NATO’s Partnership for Peace, which after joining in 1994, has allowed Sweden to play an active role in various NATO-led operations and missions, and contribute both resources and expertise in the fields of military training and multi-national conflict prevention operations.

This section will seek to illustrate the factors that can explain the evolution of Sweden’s security identity that allowed it to develop a close working relationship with NATO while rejecting full membership and retaining an official policy of military non-alignment. This section will also involve an analysis of Sweden’s efforts to both influence and coordinate defence policy at the international level, and the potential for future cooperation within the international security framework.

Finally, having developed an understanding of Sweden's contemporary security identity and current roles within the EU, NATO, and the UN, the third chapter will focus on number of recent developments that continue to have a major impact on Swedish foreign and defence policy. These developments include a shifting approach to European security due to an increasingly assertive Russia, and a series of civil wars and humanitarian crises that continue to destabilize the Middle East. In both cases, public perceptions of Sweden's status as a militarily non-aligned EU member and close partner of NATO continue to shift, leading Swedish policy makers to explore future options for growing Sweden's presence within the global security community. This section will primarily draw on statements from policymakers, media reporting, and public opinion polling to evaluate the impacts of a changing global security situation has had on Sweden, and will seek to offer some insight into how Sweden may continue to evolve as a security actor.

## Chapter I – Exploring Neutrality

### Origins and Modern Approaches to Neutrality

While contemporary debate surrounding the roles and identities of neutral and post-neutral states often suggests that the concept of neutrality is a relatively modern phenomenon, the practice of neutrality can be traced through historical records back into antiquity. One of the earliest recorded examples of a political entity adopting a neutral position is detailed in Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War, where the Melians reject the offer of alliance from the Athenians and proclaim their neutrality in the conflict. In response, the Athenians go on to claim the decision is fundamentally irrational, suggesting that the Melians have acted in a manner that sacrifices security for the sake of their own morals. The disagreement highlights the competing understandings of the value of a neutral position, with the more realistic Athenians eventually defeating the idealistic Melians.<sup>4</sup>

In the centuries that followed, debate surrounding the legitimacy of a position of neutrality remained a consistent theme.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the emergence of the sovereign state as the main actor in a time of war, the position of neutrality was often difficult to justify, with neutrality at an individual level equated to that on a national scale. Just as an individual could not be neutral while another individual was in need of assistance, a nation choosing to remain neutral would be doing so without a fundamental 'moral basis'.<sup>6</sup> Without any significant codification, neutrality was generally practiced in an

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<sup>4</sup> Thucydides, 1982

<sup>5</sup> Agius & Devine, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Walzer, 2006

uneven way throughout most of history, with individual treaties and agreements determining the acceptable conduct of neutral actors.

Overall, an approach to neutrality rooted in realism became the dominant understanding of the concept, one that eventually influenced the more formal efforts to codify the rights and responsibilities of neutral states. According to the Hague Convention of 1907, territory belonging to a neutral power is inviolable, thereby preventing belligerents from using neutral territory to transport troops and supplies in a time of war. Neutral powers were also required to resist efforts to violate their neutrality, which would not be recognized as an act of hostility.<sup>7</sup> In the context of the Hague Conventions, neutrality was considered to be a ‘passive’ approach to conducting foreign policy, one which small and weak states could use to protect their sovereignty from more powerful neighboring entities.

Such an understanding remained dominant throughout the twentieth century, where neutral states were often considered to have opted for an isolationist position in order to defend their status as sovereign actors and remain separated from the political, military, and economic dynamics shaping the relations between other global actors. In other cases, some states could even be coerced into adopting a neutral position through the efforts of a superpower, as was the case in both Finland and Austria following the end of the Second World War.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the dominant tradition of understanding neutrality through a fundamentally realist approach, a number of states used their identities as neutral powers

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<sup>7</sup> Hague Convention, 1907 (Article V)

<sup>8</sup> Beyer & Hofmann, 2011, p. 288

to develop a variety of new roles within an increasingly complex international system, with many neutral states playing a prominent role within the non-aligned movement and a number of international organizations, most notably the United Nations (UN).<sup>9</sup> In some cases, “the ‘good offices’ of the neutrals (such as their peacekeeping activities, mediation, and bridge-building between the superpowers) elevated them beyond the label of ‘small and weak’ states, showing that they could exert a different type of power and influence on the international stage.”<sup>10</sup>

However, regardless of the many contributions from neutral states across previous decades, many considered the concept of neutrality to have lost virtually all relevance following the end of the Cold War, as global politics continued to evolve rapidly beyond the isolationist and state-centric conceptions of the past. Just as traditional approaches to understanding international relations were unable to explain the end of the Cold War and significant shifts in the international system, the resilience of neutrality and many of its modern variants required a fundamentally new approach. According to Agius,

“The bipolar structure that allowed neutrality to exist had disappeared and traditional military threats no longer dominated the security agenda; the sovereign state alone could not manage the wider range of security threats that now characterized the globalized world. Neutrality belonged to the era of bloc tensions, territorial sovereignty and conflict between states – immigration, terrorism, environmental and economic insecurity, disease, and intra-state war now occupied the security agenda.”<sup>11</sup>

### Social Constructivism, Identity, and Security

Due to the sudden and unexpected end of the Cold War and radical reformation of the global political order, a number of observers struggled to explain the situation using

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<sup>9</sup> See the discussion of the Swedish Model below for further details.

<sup>10</sup> Agius, 2011, p. 374

<sup>11</sup> Agius, 2011, p. 371

existing theoretical approaches, all of which failed to consider the outcome a possibility. In response, social constructivism emerged as an approach critical of past understandings of global politics, and offered a fundamentally different way of seeing inter-state relations within the newly reformed global political order.

When compared to the two previously dominant approaches, realism and liberalism, constructivism rejects the primary importance of material factors, most notably military and economic strength, and instead focuses on how the ideas, identities, and interests of state actors influence their actions and activities at the international level. According to Alexander Wendt, the constructivist approach rests on two fundamental ideas: that “structures of human association are determined primarily by shared interests rather than material forces” and that “the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature.”<sup>12</sup>

In practice, Wendt admits that the realm of international politics does not appear to be an ideal environment to examine the roles and identities of state actors, especially considering the fact that even today’s complex and interconnected international system of actors, organizations, and institutions often appears to have little influence on state action.<sup>13</sup> However, the fact that foreign policy behavior is determined at a domestic level, independent of the pressures and structures of the international system, does lend some weight to the assertion that state identity can be constructed and subsequently used to

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<sup>12</sup> Wendt, 1999, p. 1

<sup>13</sup> Wendt, 1999, p. 1

influence actors elsewhere within the international system, as well as the norms, rules and structures of system itself.<sup>14</sup>

Through the lens of a constructivist approach, identity plays a critical role in analyzing and understanding the foreign policies implemented and pursued by state actors. Flockhart suggests that “by conceptualizing agents in international politics as influenced by their identity, constructivists also acknowledge the importance of the historical, cultural, political, and social context of the agents in question, as these are (some of ) the factors that would have contributed to the construction of identity in the first place.”<sup>15</sup>

When taking the underlying factors that influence a state’s identity into consideration, it becomes easier to recognize the remarkable differences that often appear in the foreign policies of states with comparable physical or material assets. Instead of simply assuming that states engage with each other at the international level on the basis of material motivations and purely rational calculations of costs and benefits, constructivists would instead focus on the role of a state’s identity in determining appropriate actions while engaging with other states and within the international system more generally. In much the same way, the concept also of choice can also be seen to enter into the equation of foreign policy implementation and practice.<sup>16</sup>

An approach that places the determination of policy within the state also inherently recognizes the fact that state actors do have a choice in implementing policy at

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<sup>14</sup> See Kowert, 2010

<sup>15</sup> Flockhart, 2012, p. 85

<sup>16</sup> For a case study of the social construction of Sweden’s Conflict Prevention Policy, see Björkdahl (2007).

the international level, even if these choices are heavily influenced by a number of factors, most importantly identity. Smith contends that “foreign policy is a realm of (albeit limited) choice: actors interpret, decide, pronounce, and implement.”<sup>17</sup> The ability to exercise choice among a range of potential foreign policy options give greater weight to the argument that states are not simply unchanging components of a rigid international framework of actors and institutions. More importantly, it also supports the notion that states can and do play an active role in shaping identity through conscious interaction and policy implementation.

Looking specifically at neutrality, Agius suggests that neutrality is not simply a foreign policy choice employed by states to protect material interests, but in many cases comes to form a significant component of a state’s identity, making it critical to a state’s understanding of its own identity and role in the global political framework. Much like Wendt’s claim that ‘anarchy is what states make of it’, Agius works to illustrate the fact that neutrality can be seen in the same way, with states interpreting the actions and responsibilities associated with the norms of neutrality and incorporating it into their own identities in various way as a result of a number of factors.

“Neutrality has played a substantive part in constructing nation-state identity and actions, both internally and externally. For many neutral states, neutrality has been closely tied to issues of identity and has provided the foundation to pursue other aspects of nation-state building and international participation. Foreign and security policy is essentially reflective of the internal identity of the nation-state. A neutral state responds differently to the anarchical international system than a non-neutral state.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Smith, 2001, p. 38

<sup>18</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 45



Since many traditionally realist and liberal observers considered neutrality to be an obsolete method of framing foreign policy actions following the end of the Cold War, the fact that a number of states remain actively engaged in a variety of foreign policies built around maintaining a neutral approach to engaging with the international system seems to defy explanation. However, through an understanding that recognizes the role of state identity in adopting and integrating neutrality as a core normative aspect of national identity, it is easy to understand how, in spite significant changes to the global security environment, neutral states maintained neutrality as a primary foreign policy approach. Instead of abandoning neutrality, states have in many cases adjusted their approach over time based on a variety of factors, both international and domestic.

Beyer and Hofmann illustrate the decline and revision of the norm of neutrality through the examination of a number of European case studies (detailed in Figure 1.1), and conclude that a number of factors influence how states can shift their neutral identities over time. The timing of institutionalization, the form of institutionalization, as well as both political elite opinion and public opinion all play a role in determining the evolution of neutral identity over time.

In each of the cases, the four factors each play a significant role in shaping the ongoing redefinition of neutrality, leading to significant variation in the revision of national security identities over time. According to shifts in identity affecting their neutrality and the corresponding policy outcomes, states where neutrality was adopted and practiced in a voluntary manner and where public opinion remains widely in favour in protecting a neutral identity are far less likely to be influenced by sudden shifts in the

international security framework, even when elite political influencers introduce competing normative interpretations.

Figure 1.1

	<i>Initial Form and Degree of Neutrality</i>	<i>Today's Form and Degree of Neutrality</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Ireland	Voluntary choice around Second World War, nation-building measure (public internalization), narrow definition	Voluntary continuation but increased politicization, narrow definition	Ireland's membership in CSDP and PfP enables the government to change the norm of neutrality in practice but the political elite is more in favour of change than public
Finland	Coerced norm in reaction to USSR, broad practice of neutrality (no EU membership)	Voluntary continuation but much more narrow definition of the norm (non-membership of mutual defence alliances)	New Security environment gave impetus to reassess norm, elite and public are more inclined for change as adoption of norm was coerced
Sweden	Voluntary choice in 1814, refraining from membership of regional organizations	Voluntary continuation but narrow definition of neutrality	Sweden's membership in CSDP and PfP enables the government to change the norm of neutrality in practice but the political elite is more in favour of change than public
Austria	Coerced norm, very holistic and constitutional, no EU membership	Voluntary continuation of some practices are part of the norm of neutrality, but politicization around the issue, narrow definition of neutrality	New security environment gave impetus to reassess norm, politicization of issue as the norm is anchored in the constitution

'Summary of Findings' (Beyer & Hofmann, 2011, p. 302)

While a high degree of norm revision can be seen across all of the 'post-neutral' European states, variations in their approach to membership in the EU and cooperation with NATO and other security actors can be explained by the degree of institutionalization of neutrality in a domestic context. In addition, just as historical, political, and social factors influence the initial construction and establishment of an identity, ongoing processes and developments will continue to influence the evolution of identity over time, meaning that states with similar initial conditions can reach different interpretations and identities and come to play different roles within the international system.

## The Social Construction of Swedish Neutrality

Specifically in the case of Sweden, the norm of neutrality has become deeply imbedded in the Swedish national identity and has played a significant role in shaping foreign policy for centuries. Unlike a number of European neutrals, both the adoption and practice of neutrality was done willingly.<sup>19</sup> Following its decline as a European hegemonic power and substantial loss of territory across the continent during the eighteenth century, Sweden eventually formally adopted neutrality in 1814 as a response to the sharp decline in Swedish military and political power on the international stage. Four years later, King Karl Johan addressed parliament and further illustrated the motivations for adopting neutrality as an official state policy.

“Separated as we are from the rest of Europe, our policy and our interests will always lead us to refrain from involving ourselves in any dispute which does not concern the two Scandinavian peoples [Sweden and Norway]. At the same time, in obedience to the dictates both of our national duty and of our national honour, we shall not permit any other power to intervene in our internal affairs.”<sup>20</sup>

At a basic level, the adoption of neutrality was done to protect independence and reinforce Swedish sovereignty against external influence, particularly from increasingly influential European powers. Instead of seeking alliance with an outside power, the choice to pursue neutrality can be seen to represent a pragmatic approach to remaining outside the influence of the great powers, thereby protecting Swedish interests and isolating Sweden from the interests of others. Along with introducing an official policy of neutrality, Karl Johan can also be credited with adopting an early approach ‘active

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<sup>19</sup> Beyer & Hofmann, 2011

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Barton, 1930, p. 326

internationalism’, which took the form of attempting to act as a mediator between Britain and Russia in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>21</sup>

Most significantly, the adoption of neutrality also made a major contribution to the debate surrounding Sweden’s identity. “The intention of Karl Johan’s neutrality was ‘to be ourselves when we determine our policy, to be ourselves when we assert our independence and to speak our minds clearly.’ However, the problem was that the Swedish ‘self’ was highly contested. Neutrality signified a new path for Sweden, but it also triggered an intense domestic debate about Swedish identity.”<sup>22</sup> Because Sweden’s identity was in a state of flux for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and number of competing visions for both Sweden’s status as a European power as well as its overall national identity existed, the adoption of neutrality came to both frame the debate and form a core around which a more comprehensive identity could be constructed.

Following decades of industrialization and urbanization, a number of political movements emerged in the 1880s and 1890s to challenge the dominance of the Rural Party,<sup>23</sup> many of which would work to further cement the status of neutrality within Sweden’s identity. The most significant political grouping, the *Socialdemokratiska Arbetarepartiet* (SAP),<sup>24</sup> emerged in the 1880s, and would eventually evolve into the most successful political party in the history of Sweden. Along with the Liberal Party, which emerged at around the same time, the SAP supported an official policy of

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<sup>21</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 62

<sup>22</sup> Agius, 2012, pp. 62-63

<sup>23</sup> *Lantmannapartiet* in the original Swedish.

<sup>24</sup> *Social Democratic Workers’ Party* in English, abbreviated as SAP in the original Swedish.

neutrality, and rose to prominence with the support of lower and middle classes, as well as the increasingly influential trade union movement.<sup>25</sup>

Upon the outbreak of the First World War, Sweden maintained a policy of neutrality, which remained consistent with its passive international role in the previous decades. Following the end of the conflict, Sweden emerged with the intention of pursuing a fundamentally idealist and internationalist foreign policy, which led to membership in the League of Nations and set a strong precedent for future Swedish action on the international stage. However, the eventual failure of the League forced Sweden to drastically reconsider its approach to foreign policy and adopt a ‘realist’ tone, which resulted in a decline in willingness to cooperate internationally and a build-up of military forces.<sup>26</sup>

Alongside a reversion to Sweden’s isolationist tendencies of the past, the SAP achieved success by adopting key policies and using existing narratives and conceptions of Swedish identity to frame their implementation as beneficial for the whole of Swedish society, not simply their core voter base. By borrowing metaphors describing Sweden as the *folkhem*,<sup>27</sup> and officially adopting neutrality as a part of the electoral platform, the SAP played a significant role in solidifying Sweden’s identity as a neutral actor.<sup>28</sup> According to Agius, not only did the SAP ideologies and practices become deeply embedded in the within the platforms and ideologies of the major Swedish parties, but

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<sup>25</sup> Agius, 2012, pp. 66-67

<sup>26</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 73

<sup>27</sup> *The People’s Home*, in English. The concept was used to illustrate the government constructing a state that works to protect the nation’s people just as a family home protects the members of a family.

<sup>28</sup> See Johansson & Norman (1992) for further detail on SAP influence of Swedish foreign and security policy.

have significantly affected Swedish society and played a key role in defining the modern Swedish identity.<sup>29</sup> By 1930s, the SAP had emerged as the dominant political party, routinely capturing large shares of the vote in elections and holding power for a majority of the following decades.

The Second World War would serve as significant test for Swedish foreign policy, and serves as an illustrative case study for the shifting understanding of neutrality within Sweden. Over the course of the war, Joesten describes Sweden's position as a progression from "strict neutrality (at the beginning of the war), to non-belligerency (in the case of Finland), to unabashed bias towards Germany, culminating in support for the Allies when the path of the war turned against Germany."<sup>30</sup> While the main intention of Sweden's wartime position was to both maintain sovereignty and remain outside the conflict, it was harshly criticized by international observers for lacking a principled approach and favouring Swedish interests over the requirements of international law.<sup>31</sup> Both the events of the war and criticisms of Sweden's role would come to influence Sweden's post-war identity and approach at the international level, which would entail a new approach of credible neutrality and a return to active internationalism.

### Institutionalization of the 'Swedish Model'

Throughout the Cold War, the Swedish security identity could best be illustrated through what Kjell Goldmann describes as the 'Swedish model of security policy'. The model, which is illustrated in the figure below, contains a number of dimensions which

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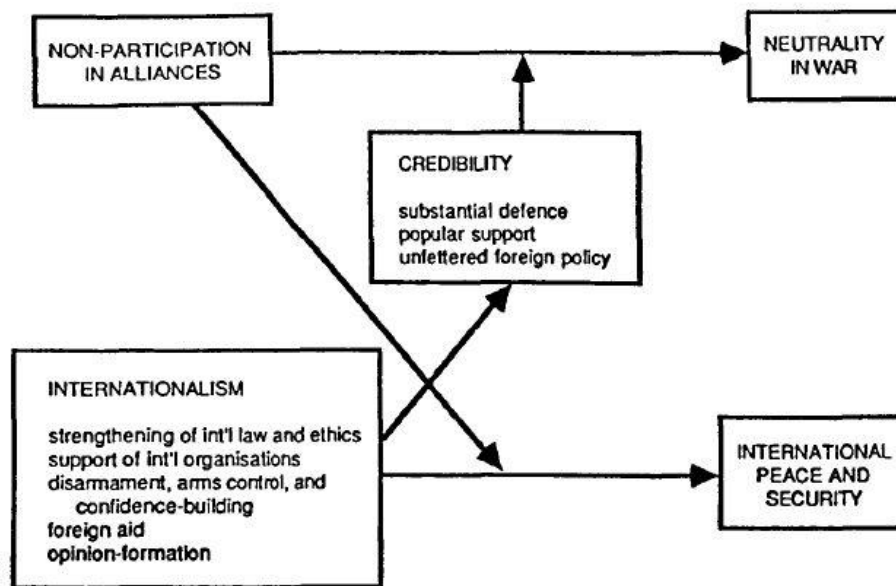
<sup>29</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 75

<sup>30</sup> Cited in Agius, 2012, p. 78

<sup>31</sup> Swedish neutrality in the Second World War is said to have been a 'Pendulum Policy', where initial indirect support for the Axis powers eventually swung towards the Allies as the war progressed.

all highlight the various practices and principles which define the Swedish approach to security and defence policy. The two core dimensions of the model are neutrality and internationalism, both of which are used to maintain a credible international identity and defend Swedish interests at the international level.

Figure 1.2



‘Outline of the Swedish Model of Security Policy’ (Goldmann, 1991, p.130)

Under credibility, Goldmann lists three core factors that each form a pillar of support for a credible policy of neutrality. The first is a significant national defence, which has acted as a deterrent to foreign powers throughout the past century and enables Sweden to protect its territory without the need for external military support or alliance. According to a 1988 report by the Swedish Defence Committee, “the policy of neutrality presupposes a firm and consistent defence policy that even in peacetime makes our resolve and ability to defend ourselves.”<sup>32</sup> While Swedish military power can be seen to

<sup>32</sup> Report by the 1988 Defence Committee, quoted in Goldmann, 1991, p. 123

have declined in relative terms over the course of the Cold War, the ability of Swedish armed forces to deter a potential invasion remains an integral component of the credibility of neutrality.

Alongside a strong physical military infrastructure, strong popular support represents another key contributor to the credibility of Sweden's neutral identity. Goldmann notes that public support for many of the core aspects of Sweden's neutrality, including non-membership in military alliances and maintaining a strong defence capability, remains overwhelmingly high.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, Sweden's foreign policy orientation can be seen to represent the third component of its credible neutrality. While traditional approaches generally stress the importance of neutral actors practicing an 'ideologically neutral' foreign policy, it is clear that Sweden has opted to take another approach. According to Goldmann, the practice of Swedish neutrality has aimed at "neutrality between adversary powers and alliances but not between democracy and dictatorship."<sup>34</sup> This has resulted in Sweden projecting its image as an independent voice, unafraid to take positions contrary to those presented by the great powers and supportive of those outside the two Blocs.

This can be seen to strongly influence the second dimension of the model, the internationalist approach to numerous components of Sweden's foreign relations. Strong support for international law and organizations can be seen to form the fundamental framework for Sweden's global activities, generally with the intention of protecting the security and promoting the interests of small states within the international system.

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<sup>33</sup> Goldmann, 1991, p. 124

<sup>34</sup> Goldmann, 1991, p. 125



Goldmann notes that “The UN is seen in Stockholm as offering opportunities for managing conflict, supporting international law and promoting human rights; it is considered to be of the ‘utmost importance’ that Sweden continues its tradition of active participation in the work of the UN.”<sup>35</sup>

The idea of managing conflict has played a significant role in growing Sweden’s presence within the UN, in particular through a strong commitment to peacekeeping and conflict mediation.<sup>36</sup> Since the late 1940s, Sweden has been a prominent member of various UN peacekeeping forces, and has contributed over 70,000 personnel to various operations around the world.<sup>37</sup> In terms of mediation, Swedes have taken on prominent roles in various conflicts. During his term as UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld worked to introduce the concept of preventative diplomacy in response to the Suez crisis. Prime Minister Olof Palme served as a special representative of the Secretary General and acted as a mediator between Iran and Iraq from 1980-1984. More recently, former Prime Minister Carl Bildt served as High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina crisis.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to contributions within the UN system, the pursuit of global disarmament, the provision of foreign aid, and the promotion of economic cooperation all represent additional components of Sweden’s activities at the international level. Sweden represents one of the most generous providers of overseas development assistance (ODA), and has consistently surpassed UN goals and targets for decades.<sup>39</sup> The strategy

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<sup>35</sup> Goldmann, 1991, p. 127

<sup>36</sup> While Sweden played a prominent role as a mediator at the international level, it also frequently expressed critical opinions of the actions of other states. See Bjereld (1995) for more detail.

<sup>37</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 109

<sup>38</sup> Agius, 2012

<sup>39</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 112

is generally seen as not only a fundamental component of Sweden's foreign activities, but a practice inspired by domestic norms and major components of the modern Swedish welfare state.

While the various components of the Swedish model enabled policymakers to effectively engage with the international system without compromising fundamental aspects of Sweden's identity, namely neutrality, major changes in the global security and political landscape would eventually lead to major changes, both within Sweden and elsewhere around the world. While Sweden had been able to remain separate from the bloc politics that had dominated Europe for decades, the end of the Cold War, when coupled with domestic economic difficulties and political changes, would come to play a significant role in a decisive series of shifts in Swedish foreign and defence policy in the following years.

## Chapter II – Major Evolutions in Sweden’s Security Identity

The beginning of the 1990s can be seen as one of the most critical periods in modern Swedish history, with a fundamentally new approach to foreign policy and national defence being developed simultaneously by Swedish policy makers in reaction to a series of key events at the domestic, European, and international levels. While the end of the Cold War contributed to a number of significant changes across Europe, Sweden can be seen to have been directly impacted by both a renewed commitment to integration within the EU and a redefining of NATO’s role in protecting and promoting European security. This chapter will examine the two most important developments, Sweden’s entry into the EU as well as its cooperation with NATO through the Partnership for Peace, and explore how both effected Swedish foreign and security policies at the time, as well as the long term trends they set in motion, the impacts of which can still be seen today.

### EU Membership and European Integration

Throughout most of the twentieth century, Swedish neutrality was considered to be incompatible with integration within the European political and economic communities. In the early sixties, Prime Minister Tage Erlander dismissed full membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) because it would be incompatible with neutrality, especially with all six of the founding member states being full members of NATO.<sup>40</sup> More generally, membership within the European Community (EC) was seen to be an impossibility for Sweden due to the goals and objectives members

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<sup>40</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 135

presented as the future of the EC. According to Devine, in addition to the domestic concerns within Sweden, other European neutrals had remained outside the block due to the fact that “neutrality was also incompatible with the vision of a future European common foreign policy and identity tied to an eventual common defence, captured in the ‘Declaration on European Identity’ by the nine EEC Foreign Ministers that embodied a political goal to achieve a European Union with common attitudes, actions, and positions in foreign policy.”<sup>41</sup>

In the decades that followed, Swedish policymakers and the public became more open to increased economic cooperation, regardless of the fact that the European project had taken on increasingly political and ideological dimensions that remained a concern for many within the SAP government. Throughout the seventies, public opinion polls strongly supported Sweden’s formal policy of cooperation with the EC while remaining formally outside the bloc. In 1981, in a speech titled ‘Sweden beside the EC’, Prime Minister Olof Palme promoted increased cooperation while defending Sweden’s decision to remain independent, which was reflected in government policy throughout the following decade.<sup>42</sup>

Despite a number of longstanding concerns, the end of the Cold War spurred a renewed debate surrounding Sweden’s neutral status and presented an opportunity for politicians to modify the Swedish approach to European affairs by more openly embracing integration while maintaining neutrality in at least a basic form. Combined with a deep economic recession, Sweden was finally pushed into pursuing an increased

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<sup>41</sup> Devine, 2011, p. 340

<sup>42</sup> Lindahl & Naurin, 2005

level of cooperation at the European level, submitting an application for EC membership in 1991 with the intention both achieving full membership while maintaining a policy of neutrality.<sup>43</sup>

In submitting an application, “Swedish elites effectively reversed the decades-long prioritization of neutrality over economic and political integration.”<sup>44</sup> Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, who had previously expressed scepticism over Sweden’s ability to maintain a policy of credible neutrality, oversaw the most significant shift in Swedish foreign policy in decades and established what would come to represent one of the core components of Sweden’s post-Cold War identity, EC (and later EU) membership. However, despite his acceptance of the importance of integration with the aim to create stronger economic ties across Europe, he continued to express concern over the future of Swedish neutrality in the face of other aspects of increased cooperation, most notably in the field of security and defence. Like his predecessors, Carlsson recognized that defence cooperation would compromise Sweden’s status as a neutral actor, noting that “Sweden cannot take part in a common defence policy or a mutual defence commitment within the EC framework, without foregoing its policy of neutrality” in the days before submitting Sweden’s official application for membership.<sup>45</sup>

Despite his concern, it was clear that Sweden was already on the way to playing a greater role within the EC, a goal which had been presented by the SAP throughout the debate surrounding Sweden’s membership application. In contrast to the SAP and other left-wing parties that were traditionally opposed to closer cooperation with Europe,

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<sup>43</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 146

<sup>44</sup> Devine, 2011, p. 347

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Devine, 2011, p. 348

Sweden's centre-right parties saw membership as both an immediate opportunity to restore economic growth and a long-term strategy to redefine Sweden's international image. By leaving behind the SAP-dominated narratives of the past and embracing an identity built around Sweden's potential role as a cooperative European, the Moderate party saw the application as a step towards a new approach to Swedish foreign policy while simultaneously redefining conceptions about the Swedish welfare state.<sup>46</sup>

Later that year, in September 1991, the Swedish general election saw the centre-right coalition gain enough support to form a government, leading to the first conservative Prime Minister in nearly sixty years, Moderate party leader Carl Bildt. According to Marcussen and Roscher, this can be seen as a "critical juncture – a window of opportunity for party elites to deconstruct, reconstruct and manipulate given nation state identities."<sup>47</sup> In addition to significant domestic reforms aimed at ending economic recession and fundamentally reforming the Swedish welfare state, the Swedish approach to foreign policy can be seen to have shifted significantly during the 'critical juncture' resulting from Bildt's election.<sup>48</sup> In addition to changing specific policies at the European and international levels, Bildt's new approach can also be seen to have made a major contribution to the redefinition of the Swedish identity and decline of the Swedish model of security policy.

In his first speech as Prime Minister, Bildt emphasized a "foreign and security policy with a European identity."<sup>49</sup> As a part of this new policy, "Bildt divested neutrality

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<sup>46</sup> Agius, 2012, pp. 145-146

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Agius, 2012, p. 149

<sup>48</sup> Lawler, 1997, pp. 582-587

<sup>49</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 150

of the Social Democrats' idea of Sweden as a moral actor in international affairs and equated neutrality with isolationism. Under Bildt, Sweden distanced itself from the neutral and non-aligned group in the UN and aligned its UN voting patterns with the EU, at the expense of solidarity with developing states."<sup>50</sup> It's important to note that shifts in Swedish actions within the UN and elsewhere within the international system were not simply the result of a shift to a more assertive foreign policy rooted in the more conservative ideologies in Swedish politics, but need to be understood in the context of the negotiation of Sweden's EC membership. In order to facilitate a smooth entry into the EC, a number of domestic policies would require substantial revision, including foreign policies.

By working to reframe the Swedish security identity and modifying Swedish foreign policy to adhere to more a 'European' model, Bildt can be seen to have actively worked to not only shift Sweden away from a SAP-designed approach to foreign relations, but also prepare for a future of foreign policy pursued through close cooperation at the European level.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, foreign policy under Bildt also illustrated a willingness to enhance security cooperation at the European level, as well as recognize the emergent role of the EU as the core actor in European security, with Bildt proclaiming in a September 1993 speech, "we look upon the European Union... as the hub of the new European security order."<sup>52</sup>

Overall, it is abundantly clear that despite only holding office for a brief period of time, Bildt can be seen to have not only played a critical role in preparing Sweden for EU

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<sup>50</sup> Agius, 2011, pp. 378-379

<sup>51</sup> Preston, 1997, p. 97

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Miles, 2000, p. 183

membership, but also redefining Sweden's international identity and its fundamental understanding of its place in the world. While Bildt was able to fundamentally reform a number of the core components of the Swedish welfare state and economy, he was also able to effectively present a vision of "an alternative avenue through which to conceive of Sweden's place in global politics and what can be achieved within the confines of the nation-state."<sup>53</sup>

### The Europeanization of Swedish Security

Despite not having taken Sweden directly into the EU himself, it is obvious that the impact of Bildt's efforts to redefine the Swedish model of security policy influenced elites across the political spectrum, as well as Swedish society more generally. Three years after losing power to Bildt and the conservative coalition, Carlsson and the SAP returned to form a government in 1994, and maintained an approach to security consistent with the one implemented by Bildt over the course of the previous years. While credible neutrality had been virtually eliminated, "there was no reversal of Bildt's altered security formula, and Sweden announced its acceptance of the CFSP, while defending the right to remain militarily non-aligned."<sup>54</sup> Despite their differing approaches to understanding Sweden's role as an EU member, it is clear that Bildt's new approach to Swedish security, one built around Sweden's willingness to "take our responsibility to protect freedom, peace and prosperity together with other European nations" and to "contribute to the cooperation concerning security policy that is developing in Europe,"<sup>55</sup> had become the core of Sweden's security identity.

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<sup>53</sup> Agius, 2012, p. 160

<sup>54</sup> Agius, 2011, p. 380

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Brommesson, 2010, p. 235



However, the Swedish commitment to non-alignment remained strong, and renewed efforts within the EU to further develop a common defence policy stood in stark opposition to Sweden's interests and ideals. Just before Sweden's entry into the union, the Maastricht Treaty and the establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) represented a major step in further integrating the foreign policies of member states, which had until then been an area of limited inter-state cooperation. In the following years, increasingly integrated foreign and security policies set the scene for the incorporation of a military dimension into the discussion surrounding EU-level security policymaking, leading to the emergence of the first European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).<sup>56</sup>

The ESDP represented a dramatic shift in the EU security identity, and presented a new way forward towards a more cohesive and integrated European defence, which had until then been exclusively within the realm of NATO. Despite the enthusiasm of some members for the prospect of a stronger common defence, the move towards an EU possessing military strength and a stronger security identity posed a problem for a number of members, in particular the post-neutral Europeans, including Sweden. According to Rieker, "while Swedish politicians continued to express their scepticism towards the EU's ambitions for a common defence policy, it was also clear that they did not intend to hinder this development."<sup>57</sup> While Sweden remained committed to working with other European partners in the protection and promotion of security, a common

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<sup>56</sup> Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014

<sup>57</sup> Rieker, 2004, p. 374

defence was clearly not compatible with the Swedish policy of non-alignment, and therefore represented a policy direction that they could not support.

“For Sweden, the future security and defence dimension of the EU was highly problematic, and in the early years the government did not seem entirely convinced of either the desirability or the necessity of such a development. Indeed, the government was reluctant and wanted to stop progress towards an EU security and defence policy. Sweden’s starting point, shared by several other member states, was that crisis management should be clearly distinguishable from a common defence, i.e. understood as territorial defence or mutual defence guarantees.”<sup>58</sup>

Instead of preventing further development of the ESDP, as Lee-Ohlsson describes above, Sweden and a number of equally concerned member states worked to build on the progress made within the EU in integrating aspects of security and defence policy towards goals and objectives which were better aligned with the existing priorities of and practices among member states. By introducing an alternative path for the ESDP, member states were able to both implement an effective strategy for developing a shared European approach to defence policy, but also maintain their existing security identities, which for Sweden meant the continuation of a policy of non-alignment. Specifically in Sweden, this approach was frequently highlighted as support for the ESDP, with a focus on specific practices. This was most notable later on in the process of negotiation, including during “the 1999 declaration on foreign policy, in which the Swedish government explicitly stressed its intention to work for a strengthening of the Union’s international crisis management capacity.”<sup>59</sup>

In the end, the efforts were a success. Particularly due to the efforts of Sweden and Finland, the EU members agreed on an approach that avoided any implication of a

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<sup>58</sup> Lee-Ohlsson, 2009, p. 127

<sup>59</sup> Rieker, 2004, p. 378

collective defence, instead opting for an approach firmly rooted in civilian power. “Not only did the Presidency conclusions state that the ESDP process would ‘not imply the creation of a European army’, the ‘non-military crisis management’ aspects were recognized too. Furthermore, the Swedish government proposal of a committee for civilian crisis management, in parallel with the new military bodies, was agreed to and eventually established in May 2000.”<sup>60</sup>

While the ability of both Sweden and Finland to influence the inclusion of major components of the ESDP were considered a major political victory for the post-neutral European states, it also represented the degree to which their own approaches to security policy had shifted as a result of increased cooperation with European partners. While the Petersberg tasks incorporate a number of major components present in Swedish foreign policy throughout the previous decades, they also represent a major step beyond more traditional peacekeeping operations. Among other things, the ESDP would eventually come to incorporate substantial aspects of more conventional military deployment, indicating a major shift away from the Cold War defence policies of the new EU members, as well as a major integration of Swedish defence capabilities within the emergent European security framework. Because the ESDP avoided guarantees of collective defence and emphasized a number of fundamentally non-military components, leaving key aspects of traditional defence policy within the realm of NATO, Sweden’s original concern can be seen to have diminished as the civilian dimensions became

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<sup>60</sup> Lee-Ohlsson, 2009, p. 129

more easily recognizable, and therefore more in line with existing Swedish policies and priorities.

### The ESDP and Domestic Military Reform

In addition to the shifts in security cooperation and foreign policy, perhaps one of the most major impacts of the ESDP was the effect it had on influencing reform within the Swedish Armed Forces (SAF).<sup>61</sup> According to Rieker, while Bildt worked to reform major components of the Swedish economy, government, and welfare state while negotiating Sweden's entry in the EU, once the country had entered the union a major focus was placed on the future role of the forces defending Sweden, which had undergone minimal changes in the decades since the end of the Second World War.<sup>62</sup> While Sweden had been an active contributor to a number of international missions, a key component of Sweden's active internationalism, the new demands of the ESDP increased pressure on Swedish policymakers to make the reform of both Swedish defence capabilities and other core components of the SAF a priority. According to Lee-Ohlsson, the ESDP can be seen as the most significant factor in Sweden's efforts to transform the SAF throughout the 1990s, suggesting that defence reform was "perhaps the clearest example of the ESDP's impact on Swedish security policy."<sup>63</sup>

Throughout the later period of the Cold War period, defence reform was a controversial subject within Sweden, often facing resistance from across the political spectrum and within the SAF. Before entry into the EU, Swedish military capabilities was still considered to be exclusively for the territorial defence of Sweden, with some

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<sup>61</sup> For more on Swedish defence reform, see Wedin (2008) and Andersson (2007).

<sup>62</sup> Rieker, 2004, p. 374

<sup>63</sup> Lee-Ohlsson, 2009, p. 134

exceptions being made for a number of international peacekeeping missions. Overall, “transformation of the SAF had been difficult, and the objective of increasing the number of troops deployable for international duty was never accomplished. No defence minister had managed to overcome the resistance within the SAF, and the reformist camp thus saw a unique opportunity in the [EU Battlegroup] initiative to make a decisive push for reforms.”<sup>64</sup>

However, following the Swedish contribution to the ESDP framework, which came to place a major focus on armed intervention into conflict zones and conflict prevention more generally, a new opportunity for reform appeared. In the years that followed, a growing acceptance of Sweden’s commitment to a shared responsibility for European security and defence, as well as an increasingly comprehensive and interconnected EU security framework led Sweden to pursue new opportunities for reform in order to capitalize on the chance to take on a leadership role within the field of defence. Throughout the early 2000s, a new commitment to the formation of EU Battlegroups, which would combine forces from member states into military units ready to support military operations in line with the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP, the successor to the ESDP), led Sweden to commit to a leadership role within the Nordic Battlegroup (NBG).

In order to effectively prepare the SAF for inclusion in the NBG, Swedish policymakers presented a defence reform strategy in a defence white paper, which was presented to parliament in May 2004. “The government bill ‘Our Future Defence’

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<sup>64</sup> Lee-Ohlsson, 2009, p. 132

presented further reforms aimed at transforming its military forces from a ‘defence force against invasion’ to a ‘mobile, flexible operational defence’ and involving ‘radical transformation both in terms of size and structure’.<sup>65</sup> The bill also makes it clear that it is in the Swedish interest to contribute to European defence solidarity, especially by making “a tangible contribution to the EU’s capability and making rapid reaction resources available to international crisis management operations.”<sup>66</sup> The themes of solidarity and cooperation have since featured prominently in Swedish defence policy, with the most recent Swedish defence bill noting that “security is built in solidarity with others,”<sup>67</sup> and that Sweden continues to prioritize cooperation with regional partners, as well as within the EU and UN, in order to protect the security situation in both Sweden and elsewhere around the world.

#### Dimensions and Indicators of Europeanization

Overall, it is clear that Swedish defence, security, and foreign policies have all been substantially altered as a result of Sweden’s entry into the EU, and the subsequent developments in security and defence policy at the European level. According to Reuben Wong, the Europeanization of foreign policy can be seen to have occurred across the members states of the EU, with some states experiencing a higher degree than others. Numerous factors can be used to measure the degree to which a state’s foreign policy has been subject to Europeanization, which Wong organizes under the three separate dimensions of foreign policy Europeanization.

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<sup>65</sup> Moller & Bjereld, 2011, p. 366

<sup>66</sup> ‘Our Future Defence’, 2004, p. 8

<sup>67</sup> ‘The Swedish Defence Bill, 2016-2020’, 2015, pp. 1-2

Figure 2.1

Three Dimensions of Europeanization in National Foreign Policies	
Aspects of Europeanization	National Foreign Policy (FP) Indicators
<i>Adaptation and Policy Convergence</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harmonization and transformation of a member state to the needs and requirements of EU membership ('downloading').</li> <li>- For various reasons: historical, instrumental, integrationist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing salience of European political agenda.</li> <li>- Adherence to common objectives.</li> <li>- Common policy obligations taking priority over national <i>domaines réservés</i>.</li> <li>- Internalization of EU membership and its integration process ('EU-ization').</li> <li>- Procedural change in national bureaucracies.</li> </ul>
<i>National Projection</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National foreign policy of a member state affects, and contributes to the development of a common European FP ('uploading').</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State attempts to increase national influence in the world.</li> <li>- State attempts to influence foreign policies of other member states.</li> <li>- State uses the EU as a cover/umbrella.</li> <li>- National FP uses the EU level as an influence multiplier.</li> </ul>
<i>Identity Reconstruction</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Result of the above two dimensions. Harmonization process tending towards middle position; common EU interests are promoted ('crossloading').</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emergence of shared norms/values among policy-making elites in relation to international politics, i.e. 'socialization'.</li> <li>- Shared definitions of European and national interests.</li> <li>- Coordination reflex and 'pendulum effect' where 'extreme' national and EU positions are reconciled over time.</li> </ul>

'Three Dimensions of Europeanization in National Foreign Policies' (Wong, 2011, p. 158)

Specifically in the case of Sweden, a large number of the above indicators can be seen to have played a significant role in Swedish policymaking since entry into the EU, as well as in Sweden's efforts to shape policy at the European level. According to Brommesson, over the course of the past decades, "a strong reorientation within Swedish foreign policy towards having more explicit support of European interests and a more marginalized role for affairs outside Europe can be identified."<sup>68</sup> Not only has Sweden

<sup>68</sup> Brommesson, 2010, p. 235

come to embrace European ideals and interests as a part of Swedish policy at the domestic and international levels, but in the specific case of foreign policy, Sweden has shifted its focus towards Europe and away from the international community at large, in particular away from states within the non-aligned movement, which was a major focus throughout the Cold War period.

In terms of adaptation and policy convergence, despite entering the EU significantly later than a number of Western European states, Sweden can be seen to have wasted little time in adapting to and embracing an array of policies more in line with an emergent European identity.<sup>69</sup> Among the indicators linked to the phenomenon of ‘downloading’ components of a European identity, a significant number are clearly visible within Sweden, and have contributed to a widespread adaptation of both Swedish policy and, more generally, the Swedish identity.<sup>70</sup> “First, there has been growing salience of the European political agenda, as Sweden has embraced the ESDP. Second, there has been an adherence to common objectives, as Sweden first reluctantly recognized in the late 1990s. Third, there has been an internalization of EU norms and policy in terms of both procedure and content.”<sup>71</sup>

While Swedish policymakers approached the ESDP with scepticism upon entry into the EU, it is clear that it has since become not only a core component of the contemporary Swedish security identity, but has also come to form the core of a new approach to Swedish defence policy and renewed commitment to reform within the SAF. Common objectives are now featured prominently in the Swedish political discourse, and

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<sup>69</sup> See Ekengren & Sundelius, 2002

<sup>70</sup> For a case study of the Europeanization of Sweden’s foreign relations with China, see Michalski (2013).

<sup>71</sup> Lee-Ohlsson, 2009, p. 134



have been reflected in Swedish foreign and security policy for decades. Finally, as many observers have suggested, Sweden has been the subject of a ‘normative Europeanization’<sup>72</sup>, one that has seen Sweden internalize numerous aspects of EU membership, and emerge as an active contributor to further European integration.

This active contribution can be seen to have taken the form of Sweden’s increasing influence within the EU, and the success achieved in shaping major aspects of EU foreign and security policy. In the period leading up to Sweden’s negotiation and entry into the EU, the SAP presented an approach to integration that would involve the promotion of Swedish values and policies to the greater European community, which would enable Sweden to both protect its own economic and welfare state models while engaging in increased cooperation with European partners.<sup>73</sup> In the years following Sweden’s entry into the union, a high degree of projection can be seen in the efforts of Sweden to shape the direction of European policy, in particular during the formation of a new post-Cold War European security identity and the establishment of the ESDP as the main framework for coordinating defence policy among European states.

“First, Sweden has attempted to increase its national influence in the world through the ESDP, such as in the case of Artemis. Second, it has attempted to influence the policies of other member states by being one of the most active members in the EDSP, pushing the development of its crisis management capacity. Third, it has used the EU as a cover, as we have seen, with regard to defence reforms. Fourth, it has externalized its national foreign policy positions onto the EU level by pressing for issues that fitted well with traditional Swedish security policy, such as conflict prevention, civilian-military cooperation, and EU-UN relations.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> See Brommesson, 2010

<sup>73</sup> For more on policy ‘uploading’ through norm promotion and agenda setting, see Ingbritsen (2002) and Magnusdottir & Thorhallsson (2011).

<sup>74</sup> Lee-Ohlsson, 2009, pp. 136-137

By not only contributing to the formation of security policy, but also participating in Operation Artemis<sup>75</sup>, the first EU-led military mission outside Europe, it was made explicitly clear that Sweden was a major proponent of the new European security framework, and was willing to play an active role in its ongoing implementation and development, increasing Swedish influence both in Europe and elsewhere around the world. This influence also enabled the establishment of core components of Swedish foreign and defence policy within the European security framework, enabling Sweden to both strengthen domestic policy while establishing a new European security identity. Furthermore, as discussed above, the ESDP was also used by domestic proponents of defence reform to influence significant changes in Swedish defence policy, most notably through an ongoing process of renewing and reorganizing the SAF.

While the ‘downloading’ of EU policies and the adaptation of domestic policy objectives and obligations in order to coordinate outcomes across member states represents a significant outcome of the integration process, it is clear that Sweden has capitalized on the opportunity to ‘upload’ policies and priorities to the European level in order to influence policymakers beyond the domestic scale.<sup>76</sup> According to Brommesson, throughout the debate surrounding Sweden’s future role in a post-Cold War Europe, “the Swedish government saw, and still sees, participation in European institutions as a way to gain and maintain influence over decisions that affect Swedish interests. According to

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<sup>75</sup> Operation Artemis was a UN authorized military mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, led by the EU. The operation featured a significant Swedish contribution, and is generally considered a major milestone in the implementation of the ESDP. For more, see Ulriksen, Gourlay & Mace (2004).

<sup>76</sup> For more on ‘norm advocacy’ in the EU, see Björkdahl (2008).

Carl Bildt, EU membership remains a way to ‘give Sweden and the Swedes a right to vote in the new Europe’.”<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, the decision to enter the EU can also be seen to represent a rational calculation among Swedish political elites, where the loss in sovereign policymaking authority in exchange for the benefits of membership was seen as a net benefit for Sweden. Devine illustrates the exchange as Sweden’s desire to belong to the ‘in group’ of EU members rather than the ‘out group’, based on the ability to enjoy the comparatively greater benefits of membership.<sup>78</sup> Beyond the economic incentives that pushed Sweden into applying for membership in the early 1990s, it’s clear that the ability to influence European security and defence architecture also acted as a significant incentive, as Sweden was able to take on a leadership role in establishing a new European security identity and defence framework in the years following its inclusion in the union.

### NATO and the Partnership for Peace

While many observers suggested that the end of the Cold War would result in the disappearance of NATO, as its primary adversary had ceased to represent a military threat, it became clear that a trend of increasing integration among European states would also apply to the realm of military cooperation. Alongside an increasingly integrated EU, NATO would come to grow rapidly in the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, with a series of expansions to the East and substantial growth in cooperation among a wide array of partner states representing a major evolution of NATO’s identity beyond that of a simple military alliance. Outside of a rise in traditional memberships,

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<sup>77</sup> Brommesson, 2010, p. 236

<sup>78</sup> Devine, 2011, p. 350

NATO states also expanded cooperation with a number of European partners through a number of new programs, including the Partnership for Peace (PfP), which attracted significant attention from a number former neutral and non-aligned states.

The PfP was established in 1994 with the intention of enabling “participants to develop an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation, and the level and pace of progress.”<sup>79</sup> The program has come to involve cooperation in a wide array of fields, including “defence-related work, defence reform, defence policy and planning, civil-military relations, education and training, military-to-military cooperation and exercises, civil emergency planning and disaster response, and cooperation on science and environmental issues.”<sup>80</sup> In some cases, participation in the PfP has led to full membership in the alliance, but in other cases, it has simply served as an enhanced form of cooperation with no intention of application for full membership, which can be seen to be the case with Sweden.

NATO membership has been a significant topic of debate within Sweden since the end of the Cold War and the re-evaluation of Swedish neutrality to better conform with the realities of Swedish security and defence in the post-Cold War era. While the Swedish left<sup>81</sup> has been consistently opposed to NATO membership, other parties are more open to the idea of Sweden’s entry into the alliance. Both the Moderates and the Liberals have openly expressed support for NATO membership, while Moderates have

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<sup>79</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2016

<sup>80</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2016

<sup>81</sup> The Swedish Left includes members within the Left-Green (Rödgröna) alliance, including the SAP, the Greens (Miljöpartiet) and the Left Party (Vänsterpartiet). Outside the left, the Centre Party (Centerpartiet), the Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna), and the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna) are all outspoken opponents of NATO membership. See Lödén (2012) for more.

also made future efforts to apply for membership conditional on SAP support. However, despite not applying for full membership while in the process of joining the EU, Sweden successfully entered into the PfP program in 1994. Since then, Sweden has cooperated extensively with NATO members and other PfP participants.

“Finnish and Swedish soldiers attend on a regular basis PfP exercises, courses, and seminars and also arrange and host them. As a result, Finland and Sweden have reached a high degree of interoperability with NATO. The countries have participated in the NATO-led IFOR, SFOR, and KFOR operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the beginning... Both countries joined the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997, Finland having been an observer of the preceding North Atlantic Cooperation Council since 1992. Finland and Sweden have also established diplomatic missions to NATO and have sent officers and civil servants to work as Partner Staff Elements in NATO’s staff structures.”<sup>82</sup>

While Sweden has come to embrace cooperation with NATO, it remains clear that there are still significant barriers preventing Sweden from integrating completely within the framework of NATO membership. Besides the obvious issues of Sweden’s commitment to its status as a non-aligned state, there is also the disparity between the approaches to security presented by NATO and the EU, which has since become the primary organization through which Sweden has engaged with the European defence and security frameworks. According to Wagnsson, this can be seen as a result of the fact that Sweden can be seen to have better conformed with “the EU’s idealistic ‘normative power’ profile and values than with NATO’s values and image as a ‘realist’ security provider,”<sup>83</sup> which in part explains Sweden’s hesitation in further integrating into the NATO security framework.

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<sup>82</sup> Forsberg & Vaahtoranta, 2001, pp. 74-75

<sup>83</sup> Wagnsson, 2011, p. 586

However, even when taking the significant reservations into consideration, it can also be suggested that, just as with the EU, it would be difficult to justify remaining completely outside the alliance on the basis of its post-neutral security identity. Therefore, Sweden's participation in the PfP can be seen to embrace a fundamentally pragmatic approach to developing domestic capabilities while strengthening the European security framework. This approach also accomplishes a number of additional goals and objectives, which together with a stronger commitment to increased European integration more generally, seeks to advance Sweden's interests across Europe.

Moller and Bjereld have suggested that Sweden's participation in the PfP can be seen as a step intended to avoid criticism that Swedes are able to take advantage of the security provided by NATO without making any major contributions in return. "Sweden is demonstrating a willingness to work for the common good by actively engaging in strengthening the European security community and in showing continuous readiness to make international military contributions."<sup>84</sup> This approach can be seen to complement Sweden's commitments within the EU, including its new role as a leader within the Nordic Battle Group, and efforts to both shape and promote shared approach to European defence and security. While Swedish defence capabilities had in the past been identified as exclusively for protecting Swedish territory from foreign threats, such an approach can be seen to clash with both the new security identity presented by Swedish elites and subsequent expectations from international partners, meaning a new commitment to cooperation would have to support Sweden's new security approach.

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<sup>84</sup> Moller & Bjereld, 2010, p. 377

In addition to seeking to avoid criticism, Sweden's cooperation with NATO can also be viewed as an effort to maintain an international identity as "a reliable state with an able military that the EU, the UN, and the US can count on."<sup>85</sup> While Sweden's approach to international politics was fundamentally centred around a desire to maintain sovereignty and independence from major powers throughout most of the twentieth century, it is clear that a significant shift towards integration within the EU and enhanced cooperation on the international stage has significantly influenced the Swedish identity and approach to international politics.

In order to expand Swedish influence beyond that of a non-aligned and post-neutral European, Sweden's participation in the PfP can be seen to complement efforts to further develop an identity as a willing contributor to international security through enhanced military cooperation. According to Wagnsson, "the pursuit of international recognition and trust is readily observable in the discourse in the framing of Sweden as an engaged, responsible, nation that displays international solidarity and can be counted upon by the international community."<sup>86</sup> While Sweden has worked to frame itself as an engaged international partner, capable of supporting partners in both Europe and elsewhere around the world, it is clear that participation in the PfP serves as both a demonstration of Sweden's military capabilities, as well as their willingness to contribute to international security in a meaningful way.

Furthermore, this strategy can also be seen as an approach that focused on building up Sweden's defence capabilities and strengthening ties to major European and

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<sup>85</sup> Wagnsson, 2011, p. 594

<sup>86</sup> Wagnsson, 2011, p. 594

global military powers without committing to formal agreements and arrangements. This arrangement aims to preserve Swedish non-alignment and protect the autonomy of Swedish policymakers to work exclusively in the interest of Swedish security and avoid the excessive influence of foreign powers, which has been core component of Swedish defence for decades. According to Österdahl, “Sweden seems intent on compensating for the lack of formally binding defence guarantees with an intense military cooperation which will enclose Sweden within a web – or cocoon – of security equal in reality to the one resulting from a veritable agreement.”<sup>87</sup>

While there are no formal guarantees of security through the PfP, when considered as a component of the overall approach to integrating Sweden into the European security and defence frameworks, it is easy to see that an increasingly close relationship among NATO members and key European partners contributes to an increasing level of security for Sweden. More importantly, Swedish policymakers have made it clear that it is now their understanding that not only would Sweden not remain neutral in the case of a major conflict involving a close partner or EU member were to occur, but that they also have similar expectations were the opposite to occur.<sup>88</sup>

This understanding is not only due to the fact that Sweden’s defence forces have reached a high degree of interoperability with those of NATO states, but can also be seen to have come about as a result of a series of significant ideological shifts in both the Swedish and NATO approach to security. While NATO placed a primary focus on territorial defence throughout the Cold War, it is clear that more recent military

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<sup>87</sup> Österdahl, 2009, p. 102

<sup>88</sup> See Bildt, 2010, p. 3



operations have been undertaken for a variety of reasons that serve to support global security more generally. In much the same way, Swedish defence policy has shifted away from a focus on territorial defence to an approach built around international cooperation in pursuit of enhancing security and preventing conflict.

During a 2011 speech in Stockholm, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen noted the increasingly value-based relationship that unites both NATO members and their global network of partners. “We share the same geography – and that is important. But we share something much more important. We share the same values – freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. We share the same desire for peace and security. And we share the determination to act and defend our values and to preserve peace, when they are threatened.”<sup>89</sup>

While Sweden remains firmly committed to remaining outside the alliance, it is also clear that a significant relationship based on shared goals, objectives, and values has come to unite Sweden with other European security actors, inside both the EU and NATO, as well various other components of the European security architecture. While the impact of increased cooperation with NATO may not be as significant as Sweden’s integration into the EU when measuring its continued evolution as a security actor and its security identity, it remains a forum for Sweden to make a meaningful contribution to global security, and solidify its new identity as a willing contributor to the protection and promotion of global security.

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<sup>89</sup> Rasmussen, quoted in Wagnsson, 2011, p. 596

## Chapter III – Assessing Recent Developments

### Russia and Ukraine

Sweden's relations with Russia have consistently been a major focus of attention in official government publications and activities over the course of recent years. Following his appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2006, Carl Bildt noted in his first statement on government foreign policy that along with an increasingly integrated Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s was responsible for creating a new security situation in Europe, leading to a fundamental shift in Swedish approach to European security. In the same statement, he went on to add that Sweden would continue to seek "a stronger relationship between Russia and the European Union, based both on respect for European values, including respect for human rights, and on common interests."<sup>90</sup> In the subsequent annual update, Bildt continued to frame the Swedish approach to developing relations with Russia as pursuing a number of shared interests. In many cases, Sweden also expressed concern regarding the state of democracy, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights across Russia.

Russia was generally recognized as an important partner of both Sweden and the EU, and concerns were framed in a context of foreign affairs, not as a threat to national or international security. However, following the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, the Swedish approach to Russia can be seen to have shifted significantly, with the 2009 Foreign Policy Update describing Russia's actions as a "blow to the international law that is the very basis of peaceful and stable relations between states."<sup>91</sup> In 2014, Bildt also

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<sup>90</sup> Bildt, 2007

<sup>91</sup> Bildt, 2009

recognized the increasingly influential role Russia was playing in states along the EU's Eastern border, specifically calling attention to "unacceptable Russian pressure and threats, based on the faulty logic of the zero-sum game, being brought to bear on those who seek closer cooperation with the EU."<sup>92</sup> A year later, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström opened her statement of government policy by calling attention to Russian aggression in Ukraine, specifically calling the actions "the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War."<sup>93</sup> Since then, Wallström has continued to present a Swedish position that remains highly critical of Russia's international actions, both in eastern Ukraine and more recently as an international presence in the Syrian Civil War.

While the government has maintained a relatively stable approach to criticizing the actions of Russia while remaining officially open to cooperation in order to develop a closer relationship between the two states, the impacts of an increasingly assertive Russian presence in Sweden's immediate vicinity has contributed to a significant shift in public perceptions of Swedish security. Over the course of just a few years, public support for Swedish membership in NATO has jumped significantly over the course of the recent past, with figures nearly doubling from 2012 to 2015. According to public surveys, 17 percent of the Swedish population considered joining NATO to be a good idea in 2012, which subsequently grew to 29 percent in 2013 and 31 percent in 2014.<sup>94</sup> In early 2015, the number had once again risen to 33 percent, while the percentage of Swedes against membership had fallen from 56 percent to 47 percent over the same

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<sup>92</sup> Bildt, 2014

<sup>93</sup> Wallström, 2015

<sup>94</sup> The Local, May 20 2015

period.<sup>95</sup> A few months later, for the first time in modern Swedish history, support for joining NATO was higher than opposition to membership in the alliance, with 41 percent in support and 39 percent in opposition.<sup>96</sup>

The dramatic rise in support for NATO membership, which many experts contribute directly to the rise of Russian influence in the Baltic region and other areas across Eastern Europe, can be seen to have resonated with the highest levels of policymakers in Sweden. Bildt, now out of office, went so far as to predict that Sweden would become a full NATO member within the next decade.<sup>97</sup> More recently, with public support for membership declining from an all-time high,<sup>98</sup> Wallström reiterated that the current government has no immediate plans to pursue any significant shifts in Swedish security, stating that “Sweden’s security policy line is well known and remains unchanged. Security policy should be long-term, stable, and protected from sharp fluctuations,” adding that “the answer is not Swedish NATO membership. Freedom from military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in Northern Europe.”<sup>99</sup>

Outside of the debate surrounding Sweden’s participation in NATO military activities, it is clear that Sweden remains actively committed to protecting Swedish interests, both at home and elsewhere around the world. While the SAF have generally been employed primarily as a national defence force throughout modern history, their new role as contributors to international missions and international security more

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<sup>95</sup> The Local, January 9 2015

<sup>96</sup> The Local, September 14 2015

<sup>97</sup> The Local, July 6 2016

<sup>98</sup> The Local, July 7 2016

<sup>99</sup> The Local, September 2 2016

generally can be seen to fit in with Sweden's increasingly comprehensive understanding of security. Swedish policymakers have acknowledged the necessity of a proactively addressing a wide variety of security concerns in collaboration with other security actors in Europe and around the world, but have also taken steps to ensure that Swedish security begins with the defence of Sweden, a theme which has become more prominent in light of the emergence of a more assertive Russia.

While Swedish defence policy had initially shifted away from territorial defence to focus primarily on threats to global security,<sup>100</sup> the discussion of Swedish self-defence capabilities has once again become the focus of Swedish military policy and spending. Sweden's 2015 defence white paper, which outlines Sweden's military planning and policies until 2020, makes it clear that "Sweden's defence and security policy ultimately aims at preserving Swedish independence and autonomy. Swedish sovereignty, rights, interests and our fundamental values shall be protected."<sup>101</sup>

Alongside fears of potential Russian aggression, which has increasingly targeted Sweden<sup>102</sup>, a concern over the future stability of the Trans-Atlantic alliance has pushed Sweden to expand military spending and reinstate mandatory military service, a move that will see thousands of additional Swedes serve in the SAF in coming years.<sup>103</sup> Overall, with Swedish security and defence communities looking towards an increasingly uncertain future, it is clear that the need to reassert Sweden's self-defence capacities have once again become a top priority for policymakers at the highest levels, a position shared

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<sup>100</sup> See *Our Future Defence* (2004).

<sup>101</sup> Swedish Ministry of Defence, 2015, p. 1

<sup>102</sup> Since 2014, Russian diplomatic and military efforts to influence European security policy have increasingly targeted Sweden. See Kragh & Åsberg (2017).

<sup>103</sup> Sorenson, 2017

among a number of Swedish defence partners in both the Nordic and Baltic regions, as well as Europe as a whole.

### Syrian Civil War and Refugee Crisis

Alongside the return to self-defence in Swedish defence policy, the Syrian Civil War and subsequent refugee crisis has been a major focus of Swedish diplomats and policymakers since the conflict first evolved out of the 2011 Arab Spring protests. Early on in the conflict, Swedish foreign policy can be seen to have generally aligned with other EU members, calling for the conflict to end and government authorities to step aside. In the 2012 foreign policy statement to parliament, Bildt stated that “Our position is clear: the violence must be stopped, President Assad must step aside, and a process of democratic transition, representing all parts of Syrian society, must begin immediately.”<sup>104</sup> In the years that followed, Bildt continued to echo international calls to bring the conflict to an end, frequently highlighting Sweden’s efforts to address the humanitarian crisis facing millions affected by the conflict, which amounted to over SEK 400 million in funding in 2012.<sup>105</sup> Support was also consistently expressed for UN-led efforts to resolve the conflict, which featured significant participation by the EU.

In 2015, while Swedish leaders continued to express their concerns over the nature of the conflict, review Swedish humanitarian contributions, and offer support for international negotiations to bring an end to the conflict, the emergence of the Islamic State (IS) and the subsequent impact it had on the Syrian conflict became the primary focus of Swedish policy towards the region.

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<sup>104</sup> Bildt, 2012, p. 7

<sup>105</sup> Bildt, 2013, p. 6

“Sweden, like the rest of the EU, is part of the broad coalition against ISIL. We are one of the largest humanitarian donors. The Government is looking into the possibility of sending Swedish military personnel to Iraq to help train troops fighting ISIL. Atrocities must be recognised for what they are. ISIL’s violence and terrorism are of the most pervasive and heinous kind. There must be consequences for such crimes. Those guilty must be held to account and punished, be it for genocide, crimes against humanity or other mass atrocities. The Government, together with the other EU countries, has urged the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.”<sup>106</sup>

In light of increased international involvement in the conflict and the continued humanitarian crisis, Sweden has placed an increasing focus on the destabilizing effects of the conflict on the surrounding Middle East region. In February 2016, Wallström explicitly criticized the actions of Russia, stating “the bombing raids on the opposition by the Assad regime and Russia are unacceptable and threaten the fragile peace process. They must cease. All parties must now accept the agreement on cessation of hostilities that has been reached.”<sup>107</sup> Sweden has also contributed additional humanitarian resources to areas affected by IS activity, and has provided 35 military personnel to assist with the Global Coalition Against Daesh training mission in Northern Iraq, which can be seen as an extension of the already close working relationship developed with NATO partners.<sup>108</sup> Sweden has also actively supported work aiming at enforcing a ceasefire agreement and ensuring “humanitarian access, a return to peace negotiations, and accountability for war crimes, serious violations and the use of chemical weapons”<sup>109</sup> as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a position which it has held since January 2017.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Wallström, 2015, pp. 5-6

<sup>107</sup> Wallström, 2016, p. 3

<sup>108</sup> The Global Coalition Against Daesh, 2016

<sup>109</sup> Wallström, 2017, p. 5

<sup>110</sup> Government Offices of Sweden, 2017

In addition to supporting humanitarian operations in areas directly impacted by the conflict, Sweden has also played a major role in accepting refugees and asylum seekers fleeing from Syria. Thousands have been resettled in Sweden since the conflict began, making Sweden one of the largest destinations for Syrian refugees in Europe. Alongside calls to protect individuals caught in conflict areas, Swedish authorities have repeatedly urged both the EU and its constituent members to take a more active role in both protecting migrants and welcoming refugees fleeing conflict. In 2014, Bildt defended migrants arriving in Europe, and worked to combat opponents of migration within the EU. He stated that “we want an EU that looks to the positive effects of migration and is generous in its reception of asylum seekers. Sweden is one of the countries that take in the most refugees. We are working to ensure that more countries do more.”<sup>111</sup>

In 2016, with many EU member states continuing to face increasing numbers of migrants arriving from conflict zones in the Middle East, efforts to share the burden have become prominent features of Sweden’s foreign policy declarations. Like in many other policy areas, Sweden has stressed cooperation and solidarity in addressing the flow of refugees into Europe as a part of a wider commitment to EU values and objectives.

“The EU needs a new migration system based on shared responsibility and international commitments, with respect for the right of asylum. This is possible if all 28 Member States take their share of responsibility, and if cooperation is improved. With 60 million displaced people, we cannot countenance a situation in which some countries buy blankets while others invest in barbed wire. Our EU policy and foreign policy have an important role to play in resolving these difficult issues.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Bildt, 2014, p. 2

<sup>112</sup> Wallström, 2016, p. 2



In many ways, Sweden's efforts to increase cooperation in managing the arrival of refugees can be seen as an effort to magnify its own policy objectives through the EU, just as it has done in the past in the context of influencing the EU's approach to international conflict prevention. While success in influencing other EU and international partners to more actively contribute to efforts to manage the refugee crisis appears to have been limited in many respects, it can still be seen to have contributed to a debate within the EU over the nature of the Union's approach to assisting those affected by the conflict, both within Syria and elsewhere around the world.

## Conclusion

With a more complete understanding of the recent developments in Swedish history, it is obvious that Sweden has undergone a significant political transformation, a process which has included entry into the EU, as well as a wide variety of closer political, economic, and security partnerships, most notably within the NATO PfP program. Throughout the process of integrating into the EU and further developing a cooperative relationship with NATO, Sweden has actively shifted its security identity away from what would be considered a traditionally neutral identity and towards a more 'European' identity. Most notably, this has included the replacement of a rigid policy of neutrality anchored in self-defence with a collective approach to regional and global security based on an extensive network of partnerships. This process can be seen to have begun with the 'critical juncture' opened with the election of Prime Minister Carl Bildt and the Swedish Moderate Party in the early 1990s, therefore opening the door to a fundamental reformation of the Swedish approach to security.

In response to the core questions posed in the introduction of this paper, which asked how Sweden interprets its own neutrality in the context of membership within the EU and close cooperation with NATO, it is clear that both factors have forced Sweden to adopt a progressively narrower definition of neutrality to better suit the realities of European security in the twenty-first century. In order to effectively contribute to the establishment and protection of an increasingly complex and fragile international security order, it is also clear that Sweden needed to be more open to cooperation beyond its own borders. Through the narrowing of the definition of Swedish neutrality, Swedish policymakers have progressively expanded the number of opportunities for Sweden to

play an active role in the arena of international security while retaining the fundamental position of remaining outside of formal military alliances, a position which Swedish leaders continue to assert their commitment. This identity as an internationally engaged yet non-aligned state, while a relatively recent adoption, can be seen as the result of over two hundred years of identity construction and reconstruction, resulting in the emergence of a modern Swedish identity combining aspects of traditional Swedish credible neutrality and increasing integration within European security framework.

While the adoption of neutrality in Sweden in 1814 represented a pragmatic approach to defending Swedish territory and interests from foreign threats and interference, an aim shared with contemporary Swedish security policy, it is clear that the threats to Swedish, European, and global security are far more varied and complex than ever before. Recent developments, including an increasingly aggressive Russian presence in a number conflict zones around the world, a series of Civil Wars and refugee crises across the Middle East, as well as far-right political turmoil across Europe and the United States, all stand as examples of both the fragility of contemporary global security, as well as the necessity of multilateral cooperation in confronting shared threats. Specifically in the case of Sweden, increased cooperation with NATO and EU partners with a focus on collaborative defence and the active prevention of conflict has been to primary response to a declining global security situation, with Sweden taking an active role in defining the European security identity and contributing to European defence.

More recently, a deteriorating security across Europe has caused Sweden to renew its commitment to strengthening its self-defence capabilities, as well as to explore additional options to once again defend Swedish interests from foreign interference. At

the same time, Sweden has remained committed to the values that have united European states in the past, and has expressed unwavering support for the European project and the values upon which it has been built, suggesting that while Swedish confidence in the European security framework has been shaken, it has yet to abandon its pledge to work towards an ever closer union.

Overall, it is obvious that the continuing evolution of contemporary security identities, including the identity of neutral and non-aligned state actors, play a significant role in adding a degree of complexity to understanding existing security and defence frameworks, both at the European and international level. Just as Sweden has done in past decades, and is likely to continue to do into the future, states will both establish and reform their own security identities to better align with domestic priorities, interests, and policies, while incorporating influences from an expanding array of international partners. Particularly in the case of neutral and post-neutral actors, which have come to exist through the varying evolutions in security identity across European states, shifts in identity have often come about as a result of both internal and external events with major repercussions for global security. In order to better understand the drivers of state identity change, it is therefore critical to explore the conditions that continue to both support and challenge identity, and the subsequent effects these trends will have on security at the national and international levels.

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