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The Concept of Swedish Neutrality in the Context of European Integration

Master's thesis

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I hereby declare that this Master's Thesis on the topic of The concept of Swedish neutrality in the context of European integration is my original work and I have acknowledged all sources used. I further declare that the text of this thesis including footnotes has 96 731 characters with spaces.

In Olomouc, March 27, 2022

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'I don't know why you're talking about Sweden. They're the neutral one. They don't have an army.' – **George W. Bush**

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List of Abbreviations

EC – European Communities

EEA – European Economic Area

EEC – European Economic Community

EFTA – European Free Trade Association

EU – European Union

GB – Great Britain

ISAF - International Security Assistance Force

LO – The Swedish Trade Union Confederation

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

SAP – Swedish Social Democratic Party

UK – The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

US – United States of America

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WWI – World War I

WWII – World War II

Introduction

Swedish neutrality is constantly attracting the attention of the public and experts, even though it has been more than 200 years since it was adopted. Discussions about Swedish neutrality often focus on the current and past challenges. They mostly analyze the nature and characteristics of the concept including its flexibility and possible violations. Lately, the debate on Swedish neutrality has intensified even more in connection with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and in this context with Sweden's possible further approach to NATO. The choice of this topic was influenced by many factors. Mainly, it was the long-term tendency to maintain neutrality, the changes in interpretation, the reflection of neutrality in international relations, and, above all, the topicality of the issue that led to this choice.

The subject of this research is therefore Swedish neutrality and the development of the nature and the perception of the concept from its adoption to the present. The thesis is based on the assumption that Swedish neutrality has been formed and affected by various factors. Therefore, the research question is which factors had a major impact on the concept of Swedish neutrality and how they affected this concept. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to determine which influences played a crucial role in the development of the concept of Swedish neutrality into the current model. This research examines Swedish neutrality from its adoption in 1814 to the present. It does not include the current discussion about the war in Ukraine. The reason is the lack of available data in terms of the timing of this thesis.

The research found that Swedish neutrality is a very flexible concept that is constantly evolving in the light of current challenges. The long-term tendency to maintain neutrality can be seen as a tradition that is supported by public opinion. For this reason, a possible conflict with neutrality was previously resolved by changing the interpretation of neutrality, not by debating its abandonment.

For this research, it was necessary to review primary and secondary sources. These included the major works of Swedish and non-Swedish academics, official documents published by the Swedish government and international organisations, party manifestos, review of the media, etc. On this basis, the fundamental axis of the development of Swedish neutrality was determined. Subsequently, the factors were identified and then divided into two categories – internal and external. These factors were then evaluated concerning their impact on Swedish neutrality.

As already mentioned, the issue of Swedish neutrality is relatively widely discussed. However, there are not many publications that comprehensively address the development of the concept of Swedish neutrality. On the contrary, the issue is often examined in comparison with other neutrals, or is focused only on the historical development of Sweden with marginal references to neutrality, or examines the neutrality in a short period. The exception is monographs, specifically *Sweden: From Neutrality to International Solidarity* by Richard Czarny¹ and *Neutrality and State-Building in Sweden* by Mikael Af Malmborg.² Both authors describe the historical development of Sweden and its neutrality in great detail. Their publications also contain the authors' view of Swedish neutrality in various periods of history and its evaluation, which was helpful for this research. Another source of information was articles in periodicals and contributions in an edited book. The advantage of this type of sources is that articles or contributions focus only on a specific period or specific issue of Swedish neutrality. This allows a deeper and more detailed insight into the concrete problem. For example, the authors analysed Swedish neutrality during the Cold War,³ neutrality and membership in NATO,⁴ EU⁵ and international relations,⁶ neutrality and arms trade,⁷ neutrality and its connection with realists' approach⁸ but also Sweden's own perception of neutrality.⁹

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter addresses the theoretical concept of neutrality and scientific approaches to state neutrality as such. This chapter is important especially with regard to understanding the differences between the various forms of neutrality. This part represents the theoretical basis of the whole research. The second chapter deals with the development of Swedish neutrality in individual periods concerning

¹ CZARNY, R. M. *Sweden: From Neutrality to International Solidarity*. Cham: Springer, 2018, 310 p.

² AF MALMBORG, M. *Neutrality and State-Building in Sweden*. New York: Palgrave, 2001, 237 p.

³ DALSJÖ, R. The hidden rationality of Sweden's policy of neutrality during the Cold War. *Cold War History*, 2014, 14(2), pp. 175-194.

⁴ AGIUS, Ch. Transformed beyond recognition? The politics of post-neutrality. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 2011, 46(3), pp. 370-395.

⁵ BRÖMMESSON, D. Normative Europeanization: The case of Swedish foreign policy reorientation. *Cooperation and conflict*, 2010, 45(2), pp. 224-244.

⁶ TEPE, F. F. Swedish neutrality and its abandonment. *Istanbul Commerce University Journal of Social Sciences*, 2007, 6(11), pp. 183-201.

⁷ Gerome, R. *The Swedish Arms Trade and Risk Assessments: Does a Feminist Foreign Policy Make a Difference?* [online]. Geneva: Reaching Critical Will, 2016 [viewed 4 January 2022]. Available from: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/publications/11010-the-swedish-arms-trade-and-risk-assessments-does-a-feminist-foreign-policy-make-a-difference>

⁸ SIMPSON, A. W. Realism, Small States and Neutrality. In ORSI, D., J. T. AVGUSTIN and M. NURSUS (eds). *Realism in Practice: An Appraisal*. Bristol: E-International Relations, 2018, pp. 119-130. ISBN 978-1-910814-37-6.

⁹ SIMONS, G. and A. MANOILLO. Sweden's self-perceived global role: Promises and contradictions. *sciencedirect.com* [online]. 21 November 2019 [viewed 4 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590051X19300085>

such events important for the formation of the concept. The development is examined in individual periods, which are defined by historical events. For clarity, this chapter is divided into the period of the 19th century, the First World War, the Second World War, the Cold War and the development after the Cold War. The data contained in this chapter form the subject of research in the following chapter. The last chapter analyses the data given in the previous chapters. At the beginning of this chapter, a list of factors that have played a major role in shaping Swedish neutrality is presented. These factors were selected on the basis of their frequency during the various periods of development. The chapter further analyses the individual factors and refers to their specific influence. The aim of this chapter is to identify, on the basis of the information from the previous chapter, those influences that were fundamental to the concept of Swedish neutrality.

1 Theoretical Delimitation of State Neutrality

There is no unified definition of state neutrality that clearly defines this position/policy of the state. Although the definitions vary, in most cases all of them define neutrality very narrowly. Those definitions correspond rather to the state neutrality of past centuries. Many of them are based on the premise that there is no neutrality without war or armed conflict. As Leos Müller claims, ‘strictly speaking, neutrality does not exist in peacetime.’¹⁰ General and narrower definitions all point to the position/status of a state during the ongoing war, armed conflict, or dispute. This status is often referred to as impartial, uninvolved, non-partisanship, or non-aligned. Modzelewski’s explanation of the concept of neutrality can be also given as an example of such understanding of the term. In his concept, neutrality is the ‘denotation of an impartial attitude of a state towards an ongoing military conflict and a status embraced by a state faced with war.’¹¹ Neutrality in this sense presupposes war or armed conflict between two sovereign powers, while a third party is not involved – neutral. An impartial attitude or at least the same approach to both warring parties is therefore assumed. However, the reality is often very far from this. An example is the trade of Sweden and Switzerland with Nazi Germany during WWII.¹²

It is clear that state neutrality has been largely associated with wars and armed conflicts over the past centuries. At present, however, it is necessary to approach state neutrality differently. These narrow definitions of neutrality during wars will no longer be sufficient. The reason is that, apart from Switzerland, which is not an EU member state, five member states are currently neutral. These countries – Austria, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Malta, and Switzerland, maintained their neutral position even after the end of the Cold War.¹³ It is therefore more than 30 years of neutrality of these states even in peacetime. Therefore, the concept of neutrality as a status of a state in time of war is not enough for current research. In modern times, neutrality can be defined as a ‘long-term non-alignment, a pledge that one state makes to not ally itself with any part in a future war.’¹⁴

¹⁰ MÜLLER, L. *Neutrality in world history*. New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 4.

¹¹ MODZELEWSKI, W. T. The Breaking Down of Contemporary State Neutrality: The Case of Sweden’s Non-alliance. *The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies* 2019, 2019, (1), p. 100.

¹² MÜLLER: *Neutrality...*, p. 5.

¹³ SLOAN, S. R. NATO’s ‘neutral’ European partners: valuable contributors or free riders? *nato.int* [online]. 23 April 2013 [viewed 10 October 2021]. Available from: <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2013/04/23/natos-neutral-european-partners-valuable-contributors-or-free-riders/index.html>

¹⁴ MÜLLER: *Neutrality...*, p. 4.

Af Malmborg is more cautious in finding a definition of the term. According to his approach, it is not possible or desirable to find such a definition, as no cases of neutrality are identical. Concepts of neutrality vary from state to state. As a result, a conceptual approach should focus on two basic spheres of neutrality of each state. First is how the meaning of a concept has changed over time in a given state. And the second is the context in which it occurs.¹⁵ Differences in these areas will be key to the resulting concept of neutrality in each state. Nevertheless, all neutral states must have at least some common features. These features are adapted to the type of neutrality involved. For this purpose, it is appropriate to point out the different types of neutrality. This distinction will help to understand the specifics of neutrality in individual states. For this thesis, it will show the specifics of Swedish neutrality, which will be elaborated on in more detail in the following chapters. The differentiation of individual types of neutrality is not uniform among authors. The differences lie rather in the nonidentical categorization of the individual types, while the theoretical definition of individual kinds is the same.

The basic distinction of neutrality relates to the time range in which the state wants to be neutral. First, a state may announce neutrality in case of war, during a war. This form of neutrality is usually called temporary neutrality¹⁶ or ad hoc¹⁷ neutrality. It is therefore a determination of the position of the state only during the war. This kind of neutrality expresses the idea of military neutrality.¹⁸ An example is Spanish neutrality during world wars. Realists consider this form of neutrality ‘as an expression of national interests and foreign policy.’¹⁹ In the case of Spain in WWI it was ‘lack of material resources, absence of treaties with the belligerent powers, and the hope to one day preside over a mediation process.’²⁰ As Manuel Azaña described the Spanish situation in 1917, ‘neutrality was not a policy freely chosen but imposed by reality.’²¹ In the same way, Spain declared neutrality after the outbreak of WWII.²²

¹⁵ AF MALMBORG, M. *Neutrality and State-Building in Sweden*. New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 7.

¹⁶ MODZELEWSKI, W. T. The Breaking Down of Contemporary State Neutrality: The Case of Sweden’s Non-alliance. *The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies* 2019, 2019, (1), p. 101.

¹⁷ SIMPSON, A. W. Realism, Small States and Neutrality. In ORSI, D., J. T. AVGUSTIN and M. NURSUS (eds). *Realism in Practice: An Appraisal*. Bristol: E-International Relations, 2018, p. 124.

¹⁸ MODZELEWSKI: The breaking down..., p. 101.

¹⁹ SIMPSON: Realism, small states..., p. 124.

²⁰ ROMERO SALVADÓ, F. J. Spain and the First World War: The Logic of Neutrality. *War in History*, 2019, 26(1), p. 46.

²¹ Ibid.

²² MARQUINA, A. The Spanish Neutrality during the Second World War. *American University International Law Review*, 1998, 14(1), p. 171.

The above-mentioned kind of neutrality is opposed to permanent neutrality, whereas permanent neutrality (constant, eternal, neutrality during peace) defines a situation in which a state obliges itself never to participate in any war between other states, never to make any commitments which could push it into war, never to agree to host military bases and foreign armies on its territory, as well as not to allow such armies to march through its territory (or by air or water).²³

So, while temporary neutrality is characterized by the non-participation of the state in a specific military conflict, permanent neutrality means not participating in any future conflict. Therefore, the state has responsibilities not only during the conflict but also in peacetime.²⁴ Permanent neutrality is essentially long-term non-alignment. The state hereby declares that it will not ally with anyone in the event of war in the future.²⁵ Both temporary and permanent neutrality is associated with the nineteenth century and with a strong tradition of Swiss neutrality. Therefore, the most common example of permanent neutrality is the neutrality of Switzerland.²⁶

Another approach²⁷ classifies permanent neutrality as a subcategory of de jure neutrality, together with so-called neutralization. Neutralization means the establishment of neutrality of the state by international agreement²⁸ or by ‘an imposition from outside by the great powers.’²⁹ The main difference is that permanent neutrality is declared voluntarily by the state itself.³⁰ An example of neutralization is the Soviet proposal to neutralize Austria at the Berlin conference in 1954. Although this neutralization was rejected by both Austria and the Western powers, Austria offered a declaration of neutrality a year later, in 1955.³¹

In addition to de jure neutrality, it is necessary to distinguish so-called neutrality de facto. This kind of neutrality is adopted by the state regardless of international law, without signing international treaties. De facto neutral states are, for example, Sweden or Ireland. The neutrality of these states is broadly accepted by the international community.³²

²³ MODZELEWSKI: *The breaking down...*, p. 102.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ MÜLLER: *Neutrality...*, p. 4.

²⁶ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, pp. 89-90.

²⁷ Identical approach of Simpson and Af Malmberg.

²⁸ SIMPSON: *Realism, small states...*, p. 124.

²⁹ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 89.

³⁰ SIMPSON: *Realism, small states...*, p. 124.

³¹ RENDL, A. Neutrality and the EU: An Austrian View. In: GOETSCHHEL, L. (ed). *Small States inside and outside the European Union: Interests and Policies*. Boston: Springer, 1998, pp. 161-162.

³² SIMPSON: *Realism, small states...*, p. 124.

Simpson presents another form of neutrality – non-alignment. Within his explanation it is a form of neutrality that arose during the Cold War. Non-alignment is not directly related to military neutrality. According to this approach, during the Cold War, these neutral states did not want to align with the Soviets or Americans.³³ Af Malmborg explains neutrality in the same context, but more generally, as ‘denotation the peacetime policy which opens the way to neutrality in wartime.’³⁴ The timing of the use of the term coincides, as Malmborg claims that the term began to be used and practised in the 1950s.³⁵ The meaning of this concept and its relation to permanent neutrality is well captured by Müller: ‘The legal or political status of non-alignment or declarations of permanent neutrality vary, but in principle, they both imply that the neutral state will stay neutral in an upcoming armed conflict.’³⁶

The term non-alignment is, therefore, a part of the policy for permanent neutral states. On the contrary, this concept of neutral policy could be considered as important for those states that became neutral as a result of the Cold War. This is the case of Austria and Finland.³⁷ Both countries declared neutrality after WWII. In both cases, the USSR feared that the countries would become part of the so-called Western bloc, so USSR insisted on their neutrality. In the case of Finland, however, the influence of the USSR was much stronger, due to the immediate geographical proximity.³⁸ The neutrality of these states was essentially non-alignment. The explanation is that according to the original concept of neutrality, in essence, Cold War was not a war or an armed conflict indeed. The concept and also the content of non-alignment is crucial for this thesis especially because of its connection and similarity to today’s perception of state neutrality.

In connection with the definition of neutrality and its forms, it is necessary to point out its expression, respectively the principles that are followed by neutrals. These principles are ‘non-participation in wars involving others, not starting any wars, defending neutrality, and abstaining from any policies or actions that might lead to war’.³⁹ These principles must be followed by neutrals de jure and also by neutrals de facto.⁴⁰

³³ Ibid., p. 125.

³⁴ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building*..., p. 3.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ MÜLLER: *Neutrality*..., p. 4.

³⁷ SIMPSON: *Realism, small states*..., p. 125.

³⁸ MAŤÁTKOVÁ, K. Change of neutrality: The case of Finland and Austria. An approach to foreign security cooperation within the EU and NATO. *Obrana a Strategie*, 2016, 16(2), p. 21.

³⁹ SIMPSON: *Realism, small states*..., p. 125.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Regarding non-participation in wars, neutrals are obliged since the beginning of the war to adopt an impartial position. Moreover, belligerents are obliged to respect the neutrality of the states and their territories and thus refrain from attacking neutrals and their territories.⁴¹ These rights and obligations were regulated mainly by customary law until their codification in 1907 by the Hague Congress in Convention V. Latter Convention established that in the event of an outbreak of war, states wishing to be neutral should issue a declaration of neutrality whereas ‘during the course of hostilities, however, a neutral state might repeal, change, or modify its position of neutrality, provided that such alterations were in accordance with international law and were applied without bias to all belligerents.’⁴² The second principle states that neutrals should not instigate wars. Regarding this principle, it is argued that neutrals are mostly small states with limited military capabilities. Therefore, it is improbable that such a state would instigate war.⁴³ The concept of a small neutral state, which is sometimes in terms of neutrality referred to as ‘small-state realism,’⁴⁴ is considered by many authors to be a key factor in adopting neutrality. The third principle expresses the right of neutrals to defend their neutrality. The neutral states are not supposed to be unarmed states without military capabilities. On the contrary, it is assumed that neutral states are capable of military defence. It is supposed that the neutrals will defend their neutrality by all possible means. The last principle is to abstain from any policies or actions that might lead to war. Neutrality is therefore also linked to a neutral policy in peacetime and to the establishment of diplomatic relations. The fulfilment of these principles then increases the credibility of the neutrality of individual states.⁴⁵

Regarding the forms of neutrality, as was already mentioned, various forms of neutrality are adopted by states concerning many factors. For the purposes of this thesis, these factors are understood as the influences that shape state neutrality into a concrete form, such as both domestic and foreign policy, public opinion, geographic position/geopolitical reasons, or security needs.⁴⁶ Some authors also perceive the size of the state as crucial. As already mentioned, there is a presumed tendency of small states to adopt neutrality.⁴⁷ Neutrality influenced by these factors can be perceived by the neutral state itself, for example

⁴¹ SIMPSON: Realism, small states..., p. 125.

⁴² AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building*..., p. 90.

⁴³ SIMPSON: Realism, small states..., p. 125.

⁴⁴ DALSJÖ, R. The hidden rationality of Sweden’s policy of neutrality during the Cold War. *Cold War History*, 2014, 14(2), p. 179.

⁴⁵ SIMPSON: Realism, small states..., p. 125.

⁴⁶ SIMPSON: Realism, small states..., p. 125.

⁴⁷ Realist approach, identical approach e.g., Goetschel, Simpson.

as an expression of sovereignty,⁴⁸ national identity,⁴⁹ solidarity,⁵⁰ as a way of maintaining world peace,⁵¹ or as a way of maintaining national security.⁵² In addition to the self-perception of neutrality, it is also important how are neutrals perceived by others. Many theories addressing neutrality answer this question. Some of them consider neutral states to be weak, amoral, isolated, or benefiting from the war,⁵³ while other theories perceive these states as mediators, peacekeepers and attribute a balancing function to them.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ RENDL: Neutrality and the EU..., p. 161.

⁴⁹ AUNESLUOMA, J. and J. RAINIO-NIEMI. Neutrality as Identity? Finland's Quest for Security in the Cold War. *Journal of Cold War*, 2016, 18(4), p. 51.

⁵⁰ AGIUS, Ch. Transformed beyond recognition? The politics of post-neutrality. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 2011, 46(3), p. 379.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

⁵² TIILIKAINEN, T. Finish Neutrality – Its New Forms and Future. In: GOETSCHER, L. (ed). *Small States inside and outside the European Union: Interests and Policies*. Boston: Springer, 1998, p. 178.

⁵³ AGIUS: Transformed beyond..., p. 373.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

2 Swedish Neutrality in the Context of Historical Development

The origin of Swedish neutrality dates back to 1814. Its roots are connected with the end of the Napoleonic Wars and also with the end of the active participation of Swedish soldiers in combat operations.⁵⁵ To fully understand the current concept of Swedish neutrality, it is necessary to examine its development in individual periods. It is necessary to focus on the original concept, its changes, but also the features, some of which have survived until today. This chapter assumes that the basic features of Swedish neutrality have been shaped by key factors over decades. The data of this chapter will serve as the basis for the analysis in the following chapter.

For easier orientation, this chapter is divided into 5 periods (subchapters): the period from the beginning of Swedish neutrality to WWI, the period of WWI and the interwar period, the period of WWII and accession to the UN, the period from the beginning to the end of the Cold War, and the post-Cold War era to the present, which focuses on EU accession and cooperation with NATO. In each period, Swedish neutrality is examined in the light of the domestic and foreign circumstances by which it was influenced.

2.1 Shaping the Concept of Neutrality During the 19th Century

At the beginning of the 19th century, it was not common for states (with a few exceptions such as Belgium and Switzerland) to proclaim the nation's foreign policy as neutral. As a result, Swedish neutrality was not established as *de jure* neutrality – by an international act, but by the real behaviour of the state in domestic and foreign affairs.⁵⁶

The beginning of Swedish *de facto* neutrality was shaped by king Karl XIV Johan, 'who pursued consistently a peaceful foreign policy and was the first ruler in Swedish history whose reign marked no wars'.⁵⁷ His reign was focused on national peace, security, and stability, as well as on maintaining independence and autonomy. In shaping neutrality, attention was paid both on the internal as well as external level. At the internal level, measures have been taken to protect the neutrality of the state in the event of an attack. On the external level, there was a tendency to participate in creating balance in international relations. Already in this period, the king offered that Sweden could act as a mediator in the settlement of relations between Russia and England.⁵⁸ It was one of the fundamental aspects in the light of which Swedish neutral policy continued to develop in the coming decades. This concept

⁵⁵ CZARNY, R. M. *Sweden: From Neutrality to International Solidarity*. Cham: Springer, 2018, p. 23.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁷ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 23.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

of the neutral policy was not an expression of a passive attitude towards international relations. Vice versa, from the beginning there was a tendency to play an active role in international disputes and influence the development of international relations from the position of adviser, mediator of consensus between the great powers.⁵⁹

Already in this period, the economic dimension of neutrality needs to be emphasized. Regarding relations between Russia and England, in 1834 Stockholm declared its desire to remain outside of the conflict and at the same time proclaimed the country's right to trade with warring parties.⁶⁰ Among other reasons, this approach allowed this period to be characterized by 'robust economic growth,'⁶¹ new business ties but also by an increasing dependence of industry on the situation on world markets – which was crucial also for the coming periods.⁶²

Moreover, 'as domestic peace and stability ensued, and industrialization brought rising living standards, support for neutrality grew.'⁶³ At the end of the 19th century, the Social Democrats party was founded, which brought about political changes. This party, its social reforms and government also shaped the concept of neutrality in the coming decades. There were also geopolitical reasons for maintaining neutrality. Proximity to Russia, Baltic Sea, need for cooperation within Nordic countries as well as with the Western powers – all this created the preconditions for maintaining the neutrality of the country.⁶⁴ In conclusion, during the 19th century, neutrality was consolidated as part of Swedish modern policies,⁶⁵ Af Malmborg even says that during this period, during the years 1814-1914, neutrality developed into the Swedish national tradition.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁰ ENGELBREKT, K. From Neutrality to Solidarity: Swedish Security Policy after EU Accession. *researchgate.net* [online]. 30 April 2015 [viewed 22 March 2021]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256041749_From_Neutrality_to_Solidarity_Swedish_Security_Policy_after_EU_Accession

⁶¹ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 26.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ ELIASSON, J. Traditions, Identity and Security: The Legacy of Neutrality in Finnish and Swedish Security Policies in Light of European Integration. *European Integration online Journal (EIoP)* [online]. 2004, 8(6) [viewed 27 April 2021], p. 10. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5014999_Traditions_Identity_and_Security_The_Legacy_of_Neutrality_in_Finnish_and_Swedish_Security_Policies_in_Light_of_European_Integration

⁶⁴ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 25.

⁶⁵ ELIASSON: *Traditions, Identity...*, p. 10.

⁶⁶ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 91.

2.2 Concept of Swedish Neutrality During the WWI

When WWI broke out, the Swedish government issued a declaration of neutrality. This declaration was fully supported by Parliament.⁶⁷ Later, the Swedish declaration was accompanied by a joint declaration of neutrality issued together by Scandinavian states – Sweden, Norway and Denmark.⁶⁸ These states were geopolitically important for both warring sides because of fairways and access to ports. In the case of Sweden, neutrality during WWI was strongly influenced by the geographical location, which allowed to maintain trade ties with both warring parties. It must be repeated that Sweden, as an open economy, was highly dependent on foreign trade during this period.⁶⁹ As a result of these factors, Swedish neutrality during WWI used to be considered as a ‘benevolent’⁷⁰ or as a ‘tilt neutrality in Germany’s favour.’⁷¹ The main reason was the desire to maintain trade relations with Germany as well as maintain neutrality.⁷² Some authors add that this approach was a ‘concession made of fear for a German ultimatum that would force Sweden to side with Germany.’⁷³ Although the Hammarskjöld’s⁷⁴ government continued to pursue a neutral policy during the war, the legal aspects of neutral trade were not clear at all. The problem arose when Allied Powers wanted to weaken Germany by restricting trade on the North Sea. It was clear that this step would negatively affect the Swedish economy. Despite the Swedish government’s opposition, Great Britain closed the North Sea for trade. Sweden sought help regarding the neutral trade from the US government – unsuccessfully.⁷⁵ The Hammarskjöld’s government has been supported by public opinion. Despite this, the approach to this issue caused an internal dispute in the government. Along with the economic crisis, it led to its resignation in 1917.

This can be understood as an expression of the importance of the economic dimension within Swedish neutrality which allowed trade with the belligerents in a specific period of WWI. In conclusion, there may be stated that Sweden used to balance between warring parties during this war to maintain foreign trade and the country’s neutrality. In sum, Swedish neutrality in this period can be expressed by the following quotation: ‘There are at least two

⁶⁷ ELIASSON: *Traditions, Identity...*, p. 10.

⁶⁸ TEPE, F. F. Swedish neutrality and its abandonment. *Istanbul Commerce University Journal of Social Sciences*, 2007, 6(11), p. 184.

⁶⁹ QVARNSTRÖM, S. Sweden. *1914-1918-online.net* [online]. 8 October 2014 [viewed 28 February 2021]. Available from: <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/sweden?version=1.0>

⁷⁰ TEPE: Swedish neutrality..., p. 184.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 31.

⁷³ QVARNSTRÖM, S. Sweden. *1914-1918-online.net* [online]. 8 October 2014 [viewed 28 February 2021]. Available from: <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/sweden?version=1.0>

⁷⁴ Hjalmar Hammarskjöld was Prime Minister of Sweden during the period 1914-1917.

⁷⁵ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 31.

sides of Swedish neutrality during the war: the official image and a more internal and pragmatic one.⁷⁶

After WWI, Swedish neutrality was adapting to a new order in international relations. With the belief in long-term peace, changes were taking place in domestic and foreign policy. First, there were military changes in Sweden, which led to disarmament and shortened military service. These changes caused serious political disputes. Second, Sweden joined the League of Nations. During the interwar period, neutrality disappeared from the concept of foreign policy.⁷⁷ Swedish government as well as parliamentary foreign policy committee ‘cited cultural and ideological reasons for membership.’⁷⁸ This is an extremely important change in foreign policy in the examination of Swedish neutrality. Sweden joined the League of Nations even though the obligations of membership were not compatible with a neutral state. Therefore, Swedish membership can be considered as an expression of the faith in lasting peaceful international relations⁷⁹ as well as in the hope of a functioning system of collective security.⁸⁰ These reasons prevailed over the need for national neutrality. It is necessary to emphasize the connection between Swedish neutrality, resp. its abandonment, and collective security. Sweden’s entry into the League of Nations was perceived as a departure from neutrality.⁸¹ When the League of Nations failed to function, Sweden returned to its traditional neutrality, which was declared later. At the same time, Sweden sought to create a common defence within the Nordic states – but unsuccessfully. Subsequently, in the context of the deteriorating international situation, Swedish political parties agreed on the need for strong and armed neutrality.⁸² Due to the abandonment of neutrality after WWI and its subsequent declaration as a result of increasing tensions in international relations, Sweden was criticized (as well as other surviving neutrals) ‘as hypocritical, aiding the stronger belligerent (thereby violating neutrality) and profiting from war’ and this approach was condemned as immoral.⁸³

⁷⁶ QVARNSTRÖM, S. Sweden. *1914-1918-online.net* [online]. 8 October 2014 [viewed 28 February 2021]. Available from: <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/sweden?version=1.0>

⁷⁷ CZARNY: *Sweden: From neutrality...*, p. 34.

⁷⁸ ELIASSON: *Traditions, Identity...*, p. 10.

⁷⁹ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 34.

⁸⁰ TEPE: *Swedish neutrality...*, p. 185.

⁸¹ ELIASSON: *Traditions, Identity...*, p. 10.

⁸² TEPE: *Swedish neutrality...*, p. 185.

⁸³ AGIUS: *Transformed beyond...*, p. 373.

2.3 Concept of Swedish Neutrality During the WWII

When WWII broke out, the Swedish government issued a declaration of neutrality. In 1939, neutrality was highly supported by public opinion in Sweden. As Af Malmberg said, the support was much greater than in 1914. Since the beginning of the war, Sweden's priority has been to maintain trade with belligerents and keep the country out of the war. These government ambitions were strongly supported by monarch Gustav V.⁸⁴ Keeping the country out of the war required many compromises and concessions to Nazi Germany. In connection with Germany, Sweden's position was similar to that of WWI, but instead of the term 'benevolent', which was used to express Sweden's attitude towards Germany in WWI, the term non-belligerency was used during WWII. 'A non-belligerent was a state that supported a belligerent with political, economic or even military means, but refrained from direct involvement in actions of war.'⁸⁵ Sweden was important to Nazi Germany during the war, both geopolitically and economically. In addition to trade and supplies of military equipment, one of the biggest deviations from neutrality may be mentioned – the permission to transfer 15,000 German soldiers through Sweden.⁸⁶ Malmberg states that 'the demands were presented in such a way that a reply in the negative would be regarded as a hostile act.'⁸⁷ Therefore, deviations from neutrality and balancing between powers allowed Sweden to remain militarily uninvolved during WWII.

There was a reorientation of the Swedish foreign policy in the second half of 1943 as a result of the growing pressure of the Allies. Moreover, the Americans threatened to bomb the SKF factory in Gothenburg in the event of an unchanged attitude towards Germany. This can be considered as further evidence when considering the importance of Sweden for Germany. For these reasons, but also because Germany no longer posed a threat to Sweden, since the second half of 1944 'Sweden tilted towards the Allies in much the same way as it had been pro-German during the first half of the war.'⁸⁸

During this period, the reorientation was undoubtedly a key factor that shaped the Swedish neutrality, including security issues, pressure from Germany as well as from the Allies, balancing their conflicting interests concerning trade, adaption to the development of international relations, but above all, a strong desire to remain military out of war. It turned out that Swedish neutrality had always been very flexible and 'clearly prag-

⁸⁴ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 137.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁸⁸ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, pp. 142-143.

matic in nature.’⁸⁹ According to Malmborg, so much that it was possible to assume during WWII that Sweden would ‘deliberately abandon its neutrality unless directly attacked by Nazi Germany.’⁹⁰ Nevertheless, this approach is used to be explained as a ‘realpolitik’⁹¹, as pragmatic neutrality rather than an ‘ideological affinity.’⁹² It must be added that there is a strong link between Swedish neutrality and a prosperous economy. Moreover, neutrality was perceived as a tool ‘for safeguarding the Swedish welfare system in the future.’⁹³

In clarifying Swedish neutrality during WWII, it is necessary to point out the concept of neutrality by the Swedish government during the war. The attitude towards neutrality was more focused on rules in international law rather than on moral and economic consequences towards the outside world. Since the end of WWII, neutrality has been perceived as a national ideology that saved the country from suffering during both world wars. Moreover, from the perspective of the Swedish public and government, neutrality is associated with material well-being, but also with moral superiority and justice, which stem from non-participation in war.⁹⁴ On this basis, Sweden continued to maintain its neutrality even after the war.⁹⁵

Swedish neutrality was also widely discussed before Sweden decided to join the United Nations in 1946. In particular, discussions took place both in the Riksdag and among UN members. Attention was focused mainly on the compatibility of Swedish neutrality with UN membership. Regarding the perception of Sweden’s role in the UN, it is appropriate to mention the statement of General Helge Jung, commander-in-chief of the Swedish defence forces. He said that Sweden could play a role as a ‘bridge-builder.’⁹⁶ This is undoubtedly one of the basic features of Swedish neutrality which has manifested itself also in other approaches in the past. As for the very concept of neutrality, Czarny concludes regarding membership in the UN that Sweden perceived the scope of its neutral policy much more widely than other neutral states. He adds that ‘the Swedish Government seems to have reserved for itself the right and the ability to interpret the content of neutrality depending

⁸⁹ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 304.

⁹⁰ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 143.

⁹¹ Within a realistic approach to neutrality, neutrality is associated with small states and their practical approach in foreign policy rather than to ideological, moral or ethical considerations. In the case of Sweden, neutrality is equally recognized as a realpolitik, e.g., Malmborg, Czarny, Aqius.

⁹² AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 143.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁹⁴ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 146.

⁹⁵ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 304.

⁹⁶ GÖTZ, N. From Neutrality to Membership: Sweden and the United Nations, 1941 to 1946. *Contemporary European History*, 2016, 25(1), p. 91.

on the changing international situation.⁹⁷ During the negotiations of the Swedish approach to the UN with regard to the Swedish-German relations during WWII, the states that supported Swedish membership pointed to democratic values and humanitarian aid to refugees.⁹⁸ This may be perceived as a manifestation of solidarity which also used to be associated with Swedish neutrality in the following periods. Moreover, in the context of WWII, this served as evidence that cooperation with Germany was not linked to ideological issues.

2.4 Swedish Neutrality During the Cold War

After the world wars, Sweden has continued to maintain its neutrality. Military non-participation in wars, as well as trade with warring parties, played a significant role in the country's prosperity during the previous periods. It was, therefore, no surprise that neutrality was strongly supported by public opinion. Moreover, in the years 1948-1949, there was a consensus on neutrality across political parties, too. The consensus between the government and the public became a determining element of Swedish foreign policy. As in previous periods, Swedish neutrality responded to the external political situation. During the Cold War, neutrality was influenced mainly by the constant tension between the two blocks, the preparations for a possible outbreak of war, the threat posed by the Soviets, Nordic cooperation, NATO issues, but also by the attitude towards Swedish neutrality from the USSR and the US. During this period Swedish neutrality could also be characterized by an emphasis on Western democratic values and generally referred to as Western-oriented neutrality.⁹⁹

Although Malmborg claims that neutrality took a new form in the Cold War – 'combination of national neutrality, Nordic cooperation, and a commitment to UN collective security,'¹⁰⁰ it can be argued that this form was a result of the long-term development of neutrality rather than the consequence of the Cold War. This conclusion is based on Sweden's tendency to establish closer cooperation within the Nordic countries repeatedly in previous periods, but also on the support for the ideas of collective security after WWI. But there are other similarities and features in neutral policy that repeatedly manifested themselves during the Cold War. Although Sweden has always refused direct military participation, the country was again militarily prepared for defence. Even in this period, it

⁹⁷ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 304.

⁹⁸ GÖTZ: *From Neutrality...*, p. 21.

⁹⁹ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 153.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

was, therefore, armed neutrality.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Sweden has been creating a balance in the Nordic region as well as in the whole of Europe. Keeping Sweden neutral was important regarding both the Finnish-Soviet relationship and Norwegian and Danish NATO membership – also because of its geographical location. The importance of maintaining good relations between Sweden and Finland in this period was also recognized by Americans, who changed their approach and began to accept Swedish neutrality¹⁰² (the Americans have opposed Sweden's neutrality in the past).¹⁰³ The Soviets also began to accept that Sweden had been a western-oriented country and sought to use neutrality in their favour.¹⁰⁴ Regarding US-Swedish relations, 'the USA partly accepted the Swedish argument that international security was better served by Sweden's remaining neutral than by its joining NATO.'¹⁰⁵ Therefore, it was concluded that relations would be a kind of 'silent partnership'¹⁰⁶ and that Sweden would not be forced to join NATO. Relations between the United States and Sweden continued to improve during the 1950s, confirming the United States' commitment to helping Sweden militarily in the event of Soviet aggression.¹⁰⁷ Another similarity can be seen regarding neutral policy. Sweden officially maintained a neutral status but cooperated with NATO members.

During the 1960s, there occurred a change in Sweden's approach to international relations. For the first time in this period, Sweden openly criticized superpowers, specifically the US actions in Vietnam. Moreover, the Kingdom of Sweden provided financial support to North Viet Nam.¹⁰⁸ The Swedish government also sharply criticized and condemned the intervention of Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The subject of criticism was often the communist regime, too.¹⁰⁹

In the 1960s, the UK twice applied for EEC membership. Sweden was concerned about these steps, as 1/3 of Swedish exports went to the EEC and mainly due to the ongoing cooperation within EFTA. In the case of membership of Great Britain, Norway, Denmark and Ireland export to the EEC would be 2/3. Trade with the same countries, which would be in the EEC, would be disadvantageous for Sweden. Therefore, this scenario was evaluated

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁰² AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 155.

¹⁰³ The Americans had reservations about Swedish neutrality in both the First and Second World Wars, as aforementioned.

¹⁰⁴ TEPE: *Swedish neutrality...*, p. 190.

¹⁰⁵ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 156.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁰⁸ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 305.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

as ‘devastating for the Swedish economy.’¹¹⁰ As a result, Sweden in both cases followed the UK and applied for EEC but the whole issue was interpreted as ‘how to secure core Swedish interests.’¹¹¹ The first Swedish application to the EEC membership was submitted in 1961. However, it was supposed to be a restricted association limited to access to the common market (which EEC was sceptical of, Sweden would have no obligations, only benefits). Issues of EEC membership had to be considered in light of the country’s neutrality, which caused disagreements across political parties. The problems were seen mainly in the fact that EEC would undermine Sweden’s security policy, connect foreign policy with other members and that Sweden would lose its self-sufficiency during wars. Because of this, the governing SAP along with the Centre Party and the LO rejected full membership. On the contrary, Conservatives and Liberals wanted a full membership. However,

in August 1961, [Prime Minister] Tage Erlander declared that membership would be incompatible with non-alignment, since the EEC was a defence organization against communism intended to strengthen NATO. ... Erlander also argued that membership would undermine the Swedish welfare state, and that it would contribute to raising tariff walls against poorer countries. Finally, he concluded, the Swedish economy was, after all, strong enough to allow the country find another solution.¹¹²

In 1963 Charles de Gaulle vetoed the UK membership. As a result, EFTA has once again become an important trading bloc alongside EEC.¹¹³

In 1966, the UK was again applying for EEC membership. In response to that, one year later, Sweden submitted so-called ‘open application.’¹¹⁴ This application was very vaguely formulated and, by its nature, was more of a negotiation request. However, Charles de Gaulle again vetoed GB’s membership which led to the postponement of Swedish negotiations. After his resignation, Great Britain together with Denmark and Ireland joined EC in 1973.¹¹⁵ The governing SAP continues to seek a path to the EC. This change in attitude towards integration was widely criticized by the media. The political parties nor the governing SAP were not united on this issue which is why the Centre’s party won the election in 1976.¹¹⁶ In the second half of the 1970s, the EC faced political and economic problems. Moreover, tensions between the Eastern and Western blocs intensified and therefore a policy

¹¹⁰ GUSSARSSON, M. Combining dependence with distance – Sweden. In: KAISER, W. and J. ELVERT (eds). *European Union Enlargement: A Comparative History*. London: Routledge, 2004, p. 175.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ GUSSARSSON: Combining dependence..., p. 175.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 176.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 177.

of neutrality became increasingly important. In the following years, Sweden focused mainly on developing and deepening economic cooperation with the EC. Membership began to be debated again in the 1980s due to Sweden's domestic problems (high inflation, high unemployment, declining incomes, declining living standards).¹¹⁷ At the end of the 1980s, SAP rhetoric was even strongly pro-European.¹¹⁸

The country's neutral policy began to be associated with the Social Democrats.¹¹⁹ This party ruled continuously for 30 years – from 1946 to 1976. This period is associated with a relatively stable economy, social reforms and maintaining neutrality. The beginnings of the Swedish welfare state are dated to this period, too. Social democrats remained neutrality of the country after WWII and determined its scope and direction at crucial times.¹²⁰ Therefore, although SAP was not the ruling party for some time,¹²¹ the concept of their neutral foreign policy did not change, there was general agreement on it. Neutrality in this period became a basic element of foreign policy, security policy, but in connection with previous experience also national identity.¹²²

2.5 Development of the Concept of Neutrality After 1990

After the end of the Cold War, there occurred a fundamental change in the interpretation of Swedish neutrality and in the concept itself within foreign policy and international relations. The necessity of this change was based on many circumstances. It was primarily a change of the international system from bipolar to multipolar one which brought new security challenges. The Warsaw Pact dissolved and NATO has become the only military alliance – which naturally led to structural changes in this organization. Moreover, some former members of the Warsaw Pact joined NATO.¹²³ As a result of these changes, the possibility of war in Europe has been significantly reduced.¹²⁴ If there was a constant threat of conflict between states/superpowers during the Cold War, the level of conflict has been shifted into individual states in the last decade of the 20th century, especially to the states of the former Eastern bloc and Russia.¹²⁵

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 178.

¹¹⁹ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 164.

¹²⁰ SANDVIK, G. The welfare state. *britannica.com* [online]. 2021 [viewed 10 October 2021]. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sweden/The-welfare-state>

¹²¹ Between 1976 and 1982, the Central Party was governing party in Sweden. Then, from 1982 to 1991, the Social Democrats was governing again.

¹²² CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 164.

¹²³ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 172.

¹²⁴ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 89.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 90.

This new world order has significantly affected the position of Sweden. Above all, Sweden lost its special role which it had as a neutral state. The new international situation no longer required a mediator or a bridge builder, there was no need for balancing, too.¹²⁶ New international threats such as terrorism, organized crime, environmental pollution,¹²⁷ poverty, the violation of human rights, or human trafficking (later also cyber threats and disinformation) have come to the fore.¹²⁸ It was obvious that European Community and NATO became the main actors in changing Europe.¹²⁹ In this context, Sweden had to adapt, otherwise, it would be marginalized. As Malmborg emphasized: ‘without political poles to be neutral between, smaller states accustomed to being bridge-builders face the prospect of marginalisation unless they are integrated within the emerging security architecture’.¹³⁰ For Sweden, in addition to the decline of its role in the international arena, this would mean less possibility of influencing world events, which would run counter to the concept of its active foreign policy.

2.5.1 Accession to the EU

In response to the afore mentioned, Sweden has been trying since the 1990s to find an interpretation of its neutrality that would allow the country to join the EC while maintaining a neutral status. Issues of joining the EC as well as discussion on the extent of neutrality have caused considerable controversy between political parties. Contradictions also arose in the Social Democratic Party itself, which has long determined the development of Swedish neutrality. In May 1990, the government of the Social Democracy headed by Prime minister Ingvar Carlsson stated that ‘the membership of Sweden in the European Community was not going to be possible should the organization turn into a political union.’¹³¹ This relatively strict interpretation of neutrality was criticized by the opposition as well as by experts.¹³² It should be added that in December 1990, 67% of Swedes were in favour of membership in the EC.¹³³ As a result of that, the Prime Minister later adjusted this approach and did not deny the possibility of future Swedish membership while emphasizing the value of the EC for maintaining peace in Europe. In this context, the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy began to interpret the Swedish Security

¹²⁶ TEPE: Swedish neutrality..., p. 191.

¹²⁷ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 171.

¹²⁸ BJURNER, A. Sweden. In: OJANEN, H. (ed). *Neutrality and non-alignment in Europe today*. Espoo: Otamedia Oy, 2003, p. 42.

¹²⁹ TEPE: Swedish neutrality..., p. 191.

¹³⁰ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 171.

¹³¹ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 93.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ GUSSARSSON: *Combining dependence...*, p. 179.

Doctrine as ‘non-engagement in alliances in order to remain neutral at the time of war.’¹³⁴ At the same time, this Committee ‘did not exclude a possibility of cooperation in foreign and security policy with other countries.’¹³⁵ Some members of the SAP were in favour of joining the EC because they saw it as a possible way out of the economic crisis. There should be emphasized that exports fell sharply in the 1990s while the situation was exacerbated by the ‘concurrent American recession.’¹³⁶

On July 1 1991, Social Democrat Prime Minister Carlsson submitted an application for full EC membership. This used to be evaluated as a response to the deteriorating economic situation in Sweden, as in previous years Sweden has always requested exemptions from full membership. The content of the Treaties has been fully accepted in 1991. In September 1991, the conservative-liberal government of Carl Bildt assumed power while both Liberals and Conservatives were pro-European. This is often referred to as the reaction of the Swedish public to the change in the direction of SAP towards EC because SAP has been rather sceptical about full EC membership most of the time.¹³⁷ Bildt emphasized as a government priority the accession of Sweden to the EC. His speeches were focusing on European identity and neutrality has been interpreted more broadly than before – as a ‘non-engagement in military alliances,’¹³⁸ but changes in the interpretation of neutrality and security policy, in general, could not have been too radical since neutrality has been perceived as a part of Swedish identity.¹³⁹ However, the membership application submitted by the Carlsson government in 1991, contained an addendum ‘while retaining our policy of neutrality.’¹⁴⁰ Paradoxically, the term neutrality did not appear in public debates. Swedish sovereignty and the possibility to make independent decisions were much more discussed.¹⁴¹ However, it can be considered that although not verbally, neutrality was present in these discussions. In the referendum in 1994, only 52,3% of Swedes voted in favour of joining the EU. This is, among other things, an expression of the conviction of many Swedes that Sweden will lose its uniqueness because of EU membership.¹⁴² Therefore, the ‘pragmatic’ side of Swedish neutrality prevailed. According to Huldt, in the referendum ‘economic concerns probably

¹³⁴ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 93.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ GUSSARSSON: *Combining dependence...*, p. 179.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 95.

¹³⁹ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 98.

¹⁴⁰ TEPE: *Swedish neutrality...*, p. 191.

¹⁴¹ HULDT, B. Comments on the Swedish positions. In: OJANEN, H. (ed). *Neutrality and non-alignment in Europe today*. Espoo: Otamedia Oy, 2003, p. 47.

¹⁴² GUSSARSSON: *Combining dependence...*, p. 179.

secured the yes-vote'.¹⁴³ In conclusion, although the country confirmed the continuation of its policy of non-alignment, there was no formal regulation.¹⁴⁴ The explanation is that the EU is not a military alliance, and therefore there occurred no violation of the 'military alliance-free' concept.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, Sweden's accession to the EU on 1 January 1995 cannot be considered as abandonment but rather as modifying Swedish neutrality, respectively extension of the scope.¹⁴⁶

2.5.2 Cooperation with NATO

In connection with Swedish neutrality and the development of its concept, the country's relations with NATO cannot be overlooked. In the 1990s, the importance of the ties between NATO and Sweden during the Cold War, the so-called silent partnership, was emphasized. This is evidenced by a speech by Carl Bildt in 1993 in which he stated that '...it has to be recognised that our policy would never have been possible without the strength and cohesion of NATO.'¹⁴⁷ Discussions on NATO membership took place at the political level in the early 1990s, but public opinion strongly supported maintaining neutrality.¹⁴⁸ Although Sweden did not join the alliance, cooperation began to grow during the 1990s. In 1994, Sweden was the first neutral state to join the Partnership for Peace program and Swedish troops also participated in various peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.¹⁴⁹ The participation of Swedish troops in military operations in connection with neutrality represents an expression of a new concept of neutrality after the Cold War, so-called non-alignment. Moreover, in 2002, the reference to neutrality was removed from security policy and neutrality has been replaced by the term non-alliance.¹⁵⁰ In other words, this concept is based on the military freedom of alliance. That means that Sweden does not conclude agreements on guarantees of mutual defence and is itself responsible for its own. On the other hand, the military freedom of the alliance does not constitute an obstacle to participation in international defence cooperation. As the EU is not a military alliance and has no common

¹⁴³ HULDT: Comments on the Swedish..., p. 47.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁴⁵ Militär alliansfrihet. *sakerhetspolitik.se*, [online]. 5 October 2015 [viewed 4 April 2021]. Available from: <http://www.sakerhetspolitik.se/Forsvar/internationellt-forsvar/Militar-alliansfrihet/>

¹⁴⁶ TEPE: Swedish neutrality..., p. 193.

¹⁴⁷ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building*..., p. 176.

¹⁴⁸ SIMONS, G. and A. MANOULO. Sweden's self-perceived global role: Promises and contradictions. *sciencedirect.com* [online]. 21 November 2019 [viewed 4 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590051X19300085>

¹⁴⁹ MODZELEWSKI, W. T. The Breaking Down of Contemporary State Neutrality: The Case of Sweden's Non-alliance. *The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies* 2019, 2019, (1), p. 105.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 106.

defence, EU membership is not considered a conflict with freedom of alliance, on the other hand, NATO membership would be a conflict with this concept of neutrality.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Militär alliansfrihet. *säkerhetspolitik.se*, [online]. 5 October 2015 [viewed 4 April 2021]. Available from: <http://www.sakerhetspolitik.se/Forsvar/internationellt-forsvar/Militar-alliansfrihet/>

3 Analysis of the Factors Influencing Swedish Neutrality

The previous chapter showed that Swedish neutrality is a ‘living structure’ that changes itself and adapts to current circumstances. In other words, factors shape neutrality into the form in which it manifests itself. This chapter aims to identify the specific factors that influenced the concepts of Swedish neutrality.

These *factors* represent internal and external influences that form the model of Swedish neutrality in individual periods including its extent, interpretation but also a perception by other states. All the influences by which Sweden itself forms the concept of its neutrality will be considered as internal factors including the nature of the political system, public opinion and foreign trade preferences. In contrast, the influences that affect the concept of Swedish neutrality outside the country are external factors. These are geopolitics, multilateralism and global challenges. The given factors may overlap or complement each other in individual periods and together shape the resulting model of neutrality.

Table 1. – Overview of Factor Division

Internal factors	Nature of the political system
	Public opinion
	Foreign trade preferences
External factors	Geopolitics
	Multilateralism
	Global challenges

3.1 Internal Factors

Internal factors were selected on the basis of the evaluation of the data of the second chapter with regard to their importance for the resulting concept and also with regard to their long-term effect. These factors are understood as influences that come from within the country. The nature of the political system was chosen as the first and most important factor. This factor will primarily examine the influence of political parties and governments on Swedish neutrality, as governments have maintained a similar discourse in foreign relations over the years focused on the country’s neutrality. Continuity of foreign policy with an emphasis on peace-keeping actions, negotiations and cooperation with Western countries for more than 200 years co-creates the perception of Swedish neutrality. In addition, individual political parties also play an important role. Specifically, it is a long-term consensus across the political parties on maintaining neutrality, but also their impact

on foreign relations and the Swedish public. The third factor that was chosen is public opinion. This factor was and still is very important because there is a consensus on neutrality between the government and the political parties, as well as between the general public. Public opinion is crucial with regard to the interpretation of neutrality in matters of membership in an international organization. The last factor that was chosen is Sweden's foreign trade preferences. The maintenance of trade ties during the wars and the arms trade significantly affected the resulting concept of neutrality. A detailed justification of the choice of factors and their influence is given below.

3.1.1 Nature of the Political System

The beginnings of Swedish neutrality are inextricably linked with an intention to keep Sweden out of the armed conflict. For this purpose, Sweden has begun to pursue peaceful foreign relations since the beginning of the 18th century. During more than 200 years of neutrality development, individual governments have followed the previous government's foreign policy concept. To maintain the neutrality of the country, Sweden played an active role in international relations as a mediator or a bridge-builder between superpowers and also participated in international disputes.¹⁵² Governments often supported peacekeeping and humanitarian activities. In addition, the cooperation with the Western powers used to be also typical for the Swedish governments in all periods.

The very intention not to take part in the wars led to the adoption of neutrality at the beginning of the 18th century. During development, Sweden feared that it would be drawn into the war or that its neutrality will not be respected. Therefore, internal security measures have been taken. This has had a major effect on Swedish defence. Sweden was militarily prepared for defence in every period, which led to the development of the military industry. Moreover, this intention led to concessions to the warring parties. These concessions can be considered as deviations from neutrality in some cases, particularly with regard to Germany's demands in the world wars. There was a fear that if Germany was not complied with, Sweden would be dragged into the war. It can be therefore concluded that this factor influenced the formation of the concept of neutrality because in many periods of the development contributed to a more flexible interpretation of neutrality. For this reason, Sweden's position in the world wars is also referred to as neutrality in favour of Germany.

Since the 19th century, Sweden had an interest in peace-building and wanted to participate in it. An example is the offer of the king to act as a mediator in the dispute

¹⁵² Sweden's active participation in international disputes does not include military participation.

between England and Russia. At the end of the 19th century, an active foreign policy can lead to a perception of neutrality only in the form of non-participation in the war – as so-called non-alignment. In the following periods, the main features of the foreign policy included the emphasis on democratic values within the foreign policy, Sweden's accession to the League of Nations and then into the UN, supporting UN-led peace-keeping actions, promoting collective security, balancing during the Cold War, supporting developing countries, humanitarian actions or participating in NATO peacekeeping operations. However, an open critique of the actions of superpowers can also be added to this concept. The longevity of the above-mentioned activities in international relations has undoubtedly affected Swedish neutrality. Moreover, it can be considered as a typical feature of the concept of Swedish neutrality.

From the beginning of the 19th century until the present day, Swedish foreign policy is characterized by cooperation with the Western powers. This means in particular orientation towards values such as freedom, democracy and human rights, but also cooperation with Western states during the wars, a silent partnership with NATO during the Cold War, and shared concerns from Russia. This is confirmed by the current cooperation with NATO, EU membership, as well as the values of feminist foreign policy.¹⁵³ This foreign policy concept was introduced by the Swedish government in 2015. The policy is focused on several areas and interests on a global scale, including 'strengthening the human rights of women and girls in humanitarian setting; promoting the economic empowerment of women and girls and their access to economic resources; and strengthening the sexual and reproductive rights of girls and young people.'¹⁵⁴ Sweden's orientation to the West is undoubtedly one of the factors that had an impact on the current concept of Swedish neutrality.

In connection with the government, the influence of political parties on neutrality cannot be overlooked. Above all, it is necessary to mention the influence of the Social Democrats and their *Folkhemmet*,¹⁵⁵ which is associated with the growing prosperity in Sweden and thus with public support. This is evidenced by the decades-long government of the Social Democrats. The SAP governed continuously from 1936 to 1976, and then from

¹⁵³ Gerome, R. *The Swedish Arms Trade and Risk Assessments: Does a Feminist Foreign Policy Make a Difference?* [online]. Geneva: Reaching Critical Will, 2016 [viewed 4 January 2022]. Available from: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/publications/11010-the-swedish-arms-trade-and-risk-assessments-does-a-feminist-foreign-policy-make-a-difference>

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ The term first used by the Social Democrats, which literally means People's home, is a term for the concept of Swedish welfare state.

1982 to 1991.¹⁵⁶ The influence of this party was essential with regard to European integration. It was mainly an interpretation of neutrality in individual periods, especially in the years when SAP was the governing party. It was a question of membership in the EEC/EC in connection with Sweden's economic interests, which predetermined the interpretation of neutrality. While in Sweden's economic prosperity, membership of a political organization was incompatible with the country's neutrality. At a time of economic decrease (especially in the 1980s and early 1990s),¹⁵⁷ rhetoric was pro-European and membership was interpreted as non-opposing neutrality. Especially after WWII until the 1980s, the neutrality of the state was interpreted by the SAP as something exceptional, admirable. SAP rhetoric remains sceptical about the European integration until economic problems in Sweden in the 1980s. This demonstrates SAP's focus on economic integration in particular. It is necessary to add that SAP rhetoric has undoubtedly been reflected in public opinion.

Regardless of the governing party in individual periods, in most cases there was a consensus on maintaining neutrality across the political parties. The influence of other political parties must be emphasized in connection with European integration. The Social Democrats, along with the Centre Party, were sceptical regarding integration after WWII. It was during the development mainly the opposition that inclined to closer cooperation between states and did not perceive neutrality as an obstacle. In the 1960s, for example, the Conservatives and Liberals were in favour of full membership in the EEC.¹⁵⁸ Likewise, in the 1980s, the opposition called for closer cooperation with the EC. In the early 1990s, it was primarily Prime Minister Carl Bildt's Conservative-Liberal government in 1991-1994 that, unlike the Social Democrats, fully supported European integration.¹⁵⁹ The Social Democrats were not united on this issue. Many of them perceived the EU membership more as a solution to economic problems.¹⁶⁰ Promoting closer European integration while maintaining neutrality in individual periods led to a broader interpretation of the country's neutrality.

Except for matters relating to European cooperation and integration, Sweden has been focusing on the developing world outside Europe.¹⁶¹ The long-term influence of Social Democrats is very visible in the area of the foreign policy, as Sweden has been ideologically

¹⁵⁶ Swedish Social Democratic Party. *britannica.com*, [online]. 2022 [viewed 31 January 2022]. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hjalmar-Branting>

¹⁵⁷ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 207-208.

¹⁵⁸ GUSSARSSON: *Combining dependence...*, p. 175.

¹⁵⁹ GUSSARSSON: *Combining dependence...*, p. 181.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁶¹ BROMMESSON, D. Normative Europeanization: The case of Swedish foreign policy reorientation. *Cooperation and conflict*, 2010, 45(2), p. 230.

focusing on ‘progressive, socialist-oriented regimes,’¹⁶² especially in Southern Africa¹⁶³ while emphasizing values and ideas such as ‘terror redistribution, a robust international legal order and international cooperation.’¹⁶⁴ Ideology in foreign policy is also reflected in the missions in which Swedish troops participate, i.e., especially in the regions characterized by ‘ongoing political and ethnic tensions.’¹⁶⁵ This characteristic element of Swedish foreign policy, which has been evident also in the past, is sometimes referred to as the solidarity tradition. Solidarity is also used as an explanation of the participation of Sweden in military missions, e.g., ‘Swedish officials characterize their participation in ISAF as an expression of solidarity.’¹⁶⁶ In this context, it must be added that Sweden used to be called a humanitarian superpower. This is evidenced, for example, by the events of recent years, in particular Sweden’s attitude towards the reception of refugees.¹⁶⁷ These actions and values are closely linked to Social Democrats. It can therefore be concluded that political parties, their leaders and activities are the ones who, over the years, have determined the extent of Swedish neutrality and its final interpretation.

3.1.2 Public Opinion

It is typical of the Swedish neutral policy that most Swedes have long supported it. This is largely due to historical developments and, above all, the prosperity and security of the state, which neutrality has ensured. Along with the volume of foreign trade, living standards in Sweden also rose since the beginning of the 19th century. In the following periods, Sweden could trade even during wars with warring parties, and therefore neutrality was considered one of the reasons for the country’s prosperity. Moreover, because of state neutrality, Sweden has not been involved in armed conflicts. For these reasons, maintaining neutrality was supported by public opinion in individual periods.

Public opinion has also been greatly influenced by the rhetoric of the Social Democrats. Economic prosperity and security during the world wars together with the welfare

¹⁶² SCHRAEDER, P. J., S. W. HOOK and B. TAYLOR. Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle: A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows. *World Politics*, 1998, 50(2), p. 315.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ BROMMESSON: Normative Europeanization..., p. 230.

¹⁶⁵ ENGELBREKT, K. From Neutrality to Solidarity: Swedish Security Policy after EU Accession. *researchgate.net* [online]. 30 April 2015 [viewed 22 March 2021]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256041749_From_Neutrality_to_Solidarity_Swedish_Security_Policy_after_EU_Accession

¹⁶⁶ MICHEL, L. G. Finland, Sweden, and NATO: From “Virtual” to Formal Allies? *National Defense University Press*, 2011, (265), p. 13.

¹⁶⁷ SIMONS, G. and A. MANOULO. Sweden’s self-perceived global role: Promises and contradictions. *sciencedirect.com* [online]. 21 November 2019 [viewed 4 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590051X19300085>

state concept meant support for the Social Democrats. The public opinion, therefore, followed the SAP rhetoric, which was focused until the 1980s on the incompatibility of state neutrality with European integration. A change in approach to the EC occurred in the 1980s. SAP party elite began to support moving closer to the EC. At those times, Sweden was facing economic problems. By the end of the 1980s, the party's rhetoric was already pro-European.¹⁶⁸

Public opinion was especially important in the 1990s. With the end of the Cold War, the long-standing threat of world conflict disappeared. It was therefore possible to interpret the security doctrine more flexibly, which was reflected in the Swedish attitude towards European integration. In 1990, 67% of Swedes were in favour of joining the EC.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, support for maintaining neutrality by public opinion was also important. With the end of the Cold War and the threat of conflict, neutrality could be considered superfluous or unjustifiable. For this reason, Swedish neutrality is sometimes referred to as a tradition.

For the above reasons, public support for maintaining neutrality is essential to its concept. Maintaining neutrality in a strict form would be incompatible with some government's activities, such as membership in international organizations. However, due to public opinion, it would not be politically desirable to abandon it completely. Therefore, such interpretations of neutrality and such a concept are chosen, the scope of which allows the given activity.

3.1.3 Swedish Foreign Trade Preferences

The concept of neutrality was in all periods affected by foreign trade. Maintaining trade ties even during the wars was repeatedly perceived as a priority in all periods. The issue of foreign trade in the context of neutrality needs to be considered, especially concerning the export of arms and military equipment as well as war raw materials such as steel and iron. It was the country's neutrality that allowed a distinction to be made between the conduct of the state and private individuals and companies throughout the twentieth century. In practice, this meant supplies of war material to belligerents by private individuals, which de facto supported them, but did not disrupt the neutrality of the state. So, while the private sector traded with the warring parties, foreign policy was focused on peacekeeping, mediations and disarmament, and the country's status remained neutral.¹⁷⁰ This approach has often been criticized in the past. For example, trade with Germany during the world wars was

¹⁶⁸ GUSSARSSON: *Combining dependence...*, p. 179.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ AF MALMBORG: *Neutrality and State-Building...*, p. 124.

considered an alliance with Germany. In this context, deviations from the neutral concept are also most often mentioned during these periods. Trading with belligerents has shown the flexibility of Swedish neutrality, as well as the government's willingness to adapt its interpretation to current needs.

Foreign trade was crucial for Sweden even after World War II. The volume of exports to the United Kingdom was even the reason why Sweden applied for EEC twice during the 1960s (due to concerns about its economic situation in case GB enters EEC). Since the 1970s, trade relations have been one of the most important elements of Sweden-EEC relations.

As for the export of arms and military equipment, there is a similarity that has lasted since the First World War to the present day, namely the contradiction between the ideology of foreign policy, and the export of arms and war raw commodities. Sweden has been emphasising the need for collective disarmament in foreign relations, while it maintained a strong military industry and continued to trade. Sweden, although a neutral state, had a strong army in individual periods and was militarily prepared for defence, which allowed the establishment of a solid industrial base with military equipment.¹⁷¹ Despite the peaceful rhetoric, Sweden still has a developed arms industry and is the 15th largest arms exporter in the world, 'in 2017 its arms industry had a turnover of € 3.5bn, 65% from exports.'¹⁷² In the last decade, weapons have been exported, in addition to the EU and EEA states, mainly to the USA, Canada, India, Thailand, South Korea, but also to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁷³ Arms exports are economically important for Sweden. Therefore, the government is trying to limit it as little as possible.¹⁷⁴ This has been criticized in recent years, especially concerning arms exports to countries with undemocratic regimes, especially to Saudi Arabia (but also to Pakistan, Oman, Malaysia, or Thailand).¹⁷⁵ The export of weapons to these countries in all respects denies the principles of current Swedish feminist

¹⁷¹ CZARNY: *Sweden: From Neutrality...*, p. 173.

¹⁷² MIELCAREK, R. Arms sales: the Swedish model. *mondediplo.com* [online]. 7 September 2019 [viewed 14 April 2021]. Available from: <https://mondediplo.com/2019/09/07arms-sweden>

¹⁷³ NORDSTRÖM, L. Swedish arms exports topped 11 billion kronor last year. *thelocal.se* [online]. 26 February 2018 [viewed 14 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.thelocal.se/20180226/swedish-arms-exports-topped-11-billion-kronor-last-year/>

¹⁷⁴ Jerome, R. *The Swedish Arms Trade and Risk Assessments: Does a Feminist Foreign Policy Make a Difference?* [online]. Geneva: Reaching Critical Will, 2016 [viewed 4 January 2022]. Available from: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/publications/11010-the-swedish-arms-trade-and-risk-assessments-does-a-feminist-foreign-policy-make-a-difference>

¹⁷⁵ MIELCAREK, R. Arms sales: the Swedish model. *mondediplo.com* [online]. 7 September 2019 [viewed 14 April 2021]. Available from: <https://mondediplo.com/2019/09/07arms-sweden>

foreign policy, so it is a subject of criticism by the previous and current Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹⁷⁶

Contradictions between rhetoric and practice are still visible today. On the one hand, feminist foreign policy globally promotes the strengthening of women's and girls' rights. On the other hand, arms exports can undermine or violate these goals.¹⁷⁷ It can be concluded that trade policy has had a significant long-term effect on the concept of Swedish neutrality, and if the resulting concept can be considered flexible, foreign trade practices play a large part in this.

3.2 External Factors

To define the term external factors, it is suggested to use a negative definition. Those external factors are all influences that are not determined by internal actors within the country (monarchs, government, public, etc.) and whose influence does not arise within the country. As well as in the consideration of internal factors, the most important ones were selected with regard to the long-term effect and the importance by which they influenced the resulting concept of neutrality. According to the data from the previous chapter, geopolitics was chosen as the first factor. Sweden's geographical location as well as relations with the major powers have proven to be crucial during the development of neutrality. Within this factor was selected as the most important proximity to Russia, access to the Baltic Sea and the region of northern Europe as such. In addition to relations with Russia, there were also fundamental relations with the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom. The second factor that has been chosen is multilateralism, in particular, active involvement in many international organizations. The last factor, which is global challenges, has affected Swedish neutrality the most in recent decades. With the end of the Cold War, fears of an armed conflict between the great powers vanished and new security threats have come to the fore. The purpose of the following text is to clarify their choice and explain their exact meaning.

3.2.1 Geopolitics

Russia's geographical proximity played an important role in the development of neutrality. The effects of this factor can be traced long before Swedish neutrality was

¹⁷⁶ NORDSTRÖM, L. Swedish arms exports topped 11 billion kronor last year. *thelocal.se* [online]. 26 February 2018 [viewed 14 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.thelocal.se/20180226/swedish-arms-exports-topped-11-billion-kronor-last-year/>

¹⁷⁷ Gerome, R. *The Swedish Arms Trade and Risk Assessments: Does a Feminist Foreign Policy Make a Difference?* [online]. Geneva: Reaching Critical Will, 2016 [viewed 4 January 2022]. Available from: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/publications/11010-the-swedish-arms-trade-and-risk-assessments-does-a-feminist-foreign-policy-make-a-difference>

adopted. It can be argued that the adoption of neutrality was to some extent influenced by the wars with Russia, in which the Kingdom of Sweden lost Finland in 1809. After adopting neutrality in 1814 to this day, Sweden avoids further armed conflicts with Russia.¹⁷⁸ However, although not explicitly stated in the previous chapter, relations with Russia have never been friendly. Russia has repeatedly criticized Sweden's pro-Western orientation and, above all, its cooperation with NATO during the Cold War, but also today. The neighbourhood with Finland and the proximity of Russia was also the reason why the US did not push Sweden into NATO membership during the Cold War. Eva Hagström Frisell aptly describes Swedish-Russian relations as a 'Cool Neighbours.'¹⁷⁹ Moreover, Russia has always been considered a potential threat, which has had a significant impact on the country's security policy, especially armaments and military preparedness. Sweden's location at the same time as its neutral status played an important role during the Cold War. Maintaining good relations with Finland, which bordered the Soviet Union, was essential. This was also confirmed by the United States, which for this reason respected Sweden's neutrality and its non-involvement in NATO. At this time, neutrality made it possible to maintain a balance between East and West. The reason was that, on the one hand, Sweden maintained good relations with Finland, which was important for the Soviet Union, and, on the other, borders NATO member states, which was important for the United States. Sweden's importance lay in the role of the so-called buffer state. This has given Sweden a significant position in international relations.

Russia is increasingly perceived as a threat even today. As early as 2015, Swedish Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist called Russia's armaments and increasingly aggressive behaviour a threat.¹⁸⁰ The above-mentioned is also supported by the fact that Sweden restored compulsory military service in 2017¹⁸¹ and due to Russia's growing aggression, Sweden will increase its annual military spending by 40% between 2021-2025. Further, the government plans to increase the number of troops. Moreover, the military cooperation with Finland,

¹⁷⁸ HAGSTRÖM FISSEL E. and I. OLDENBERG. "Cool Neighbors": Sweden's EU presidency and Russia. *Russie.Nei. Visions*, 2009, (42), p. 7.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ DUCHOSLAV, P. Švédsko se připravuje na válku s Ruskem. Razantně zvyšuje vojenské výdaje. *securitymagazin.cz* [online]. 20 November 2020 [viewed 18 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.securitymagazin.cz/defence/svedsko-se-pripravuje-na-valku-s-ruskem-razantne-zvysuje-vojenske-vydaje-1404066083.html>

¹⁸¹ ERDBRINK, T. and A. E. KRAMER. Sweden Raises Alarm over Russian Military Exercises. *nytimes.com* [online]. 26 August 2020 [viewed 18 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/26/world/europe/sweden-russia-NATO-Baltic-Sea.html>

Norway and Denmark have even been resumed.¹⁸² In February 2022, the Swedish government decided to strengthen Gotland's defences in the Baltic Sea. The reason is a fear of a Russian build-up of troops at the western borders. Sweden remilitarized the island two years after the Kremlin's first aggression against Ukraine.¹⁸³

Apart from the proximity of Russia, Swedish neutrality was influenced by cooperation with other Nordic countries. Sweden has long sought closer cooperation with the Nordic countries in both trade and defence. Cooperation with the Nordic countries was preferred to cooperation with other European countries.

Sweden's neutrality during its development was largely influenced by relations with the United States. As far as the United States is concerned, this was mainly the attitude of US governments towards a neutral state. During the world wars, Swedish neutrality was criticized by the United States, especially concerning cooperation with Germany. As mentioned above, regarding cooperation with Germany during World War II, the Americans even threatened Sweden by bombing factories in case the cooperation did not stop. This led Sweden to cooperate with the Allies. Moreover, the influence of the USA can be explained also by the pro-western orientation of the country during the Cold war. The USA appeared to Sweden as a key partner, when Sweden, as a de facto Western state close to Russia, faced fears of attack. Moreover, there was a so-called silent partnership with NATO during the Cold War. The United States also played an important role in Sweden's approach to the EU, as it 'pushed' for European integration. It is, therefore, possible to observe the influence on the pro-western orientation, but especially on the extent of neutrality.

The influence of Germany is indispensable, especially during the world wars. During both world wars, Sweden was interested in having good relations with Germany. One reason was the effort to maintain business ties with Germany, another reason was the fear of an attack on Sweden by Germany. This forced Sweden to comply with German requirements. Swedish neutrality during the world wars is often referred to as neutrality in favour of Germany, and there is often talk of violating the country's neutrality. Sweden's conduct during this period demonstrates, although the country's neutrality is declared,

¹⁸² KRATOCHVÍL, M. Celá Skandinávie zbrojí. Obavy z Ruska každým dnem rostou. *denik.cz* [online]. 17 April 2021 [viewed 18 April 2021]. Available from: https://www.denik.cz/ze_sveta/skandinavie-armada-rusko-zbrojeni-20210416.html

¹⁸³ Švédsko kvůli nervozitě z Ruska posiluje obranu donedávno demilitarizovaného ostrova. *ct24.ceskatelevize.cz*, [online]. 5 February 2022 [viewed 8 February 2022]. Available from: <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/svet/3437102-svedsko-kvuli-nervozite-z-ruska-posiluje-obranu-donedavna-demilitarizovaneho-ostrova>

the actual conduct of the state adapts flexibly to the conditions of the international environment.

During the 60s and 70s, it was possible to perceive a significant influence of Great Britain. As mentioned above, exports to the UK were key to the Swedish economy. The applications for UK membership in the EC have sparked debates on how Swedish neutrality can be interpreted.

3.2.2 Multilateralism

Another factor to be considered in terms of external influences is membership in international organizations. The importance of this factor lies mainly in two facts. Firstly, when considering membership in an international organization, it was always necessary to take into account a possible conflict with neutrality. It is worth recalling again that when Sweden joined the League of Nations after the First World War, neutrality disappeared from neutral speeches for a while. Secondly, the interpretation of neutrality has been bent and adjusted at different times so that neutrality does not constitute an obstacle to membership. This is evidenced by the debates before joining the EU in 1990. Joining the EU while maintaining neutrality has led to a much broader interpretation of neutral status than before. In recent years, there has been a debate in Sweden about joining NATO.¹⁸⁴ It is, therefore, possible that Sweden will join NATO in future. In such a case, it cannot be ruled out that Sweden would reformulate its neutrality. It can therefore be concluded that the concept of Swedish neutrality is influenced by the need for membership in international organizations while maintaining neutral status. In particular, this factor mainly affects the official interpretation of neutrality.

3.2.3 Global Challenges

The last factor that will be considered in the context of influencing the concept of Swedish neutrality will be global threats. The threat of Sweden's involvement in the global conflict has persisted for the past century. Sweden remained neutral during WWI, WWII and the Cold War. After the end of the Cold War, when the risk of armed conflict between states waned, new threats related to globalization came to the fore. As mentioned above, the current global threats include terrorism, organized crime, environmental pollution, poverty, the violation of human rights or human trafficking, and later also cyber threats

¹⁸⁴ DUXBURY, Ch. Sweden edges closer to NATO membership. Parliament voted in favor of the NATO option – allowing the country to join the alliance in future. *politico.eu* [online]. 20 December 2020 [viewed 10 November 2021]. Available from: <https://www.politico.eu/article/sweden-nato-membership-dilemma/>

and disinformation. New threats clearly affect the concept of Swedish neutrality. There is a need for deeper international cooperation in finding solutions to current security challenges nowadays. It can be argued that the internal factor is partly reflected in this area, and thus the will of Sweden to actively participate in current events with the possibility of influencing them. The need for closer cooperation, like other factors, leads to flexibility in the interpretation of neutrality. An example is Sweden's participation in the military mission in Libya in cooperation with NATO.

3.3 Evaluation of the Impacts of Selected Factors on Swedish Neutrality

The previous text offers a list of factors that have been selected as key in assessing their impact on state neutrality. It is obvious that the individual factors cannot be strictly separated from each other, because in many cases they intersect. The need for a separate examination of their influence lies in the fact that individually each influences the resulting concept. Based on the available data, it is necessary to evaluate how this unique 'interplay' of factors has affected the concept of Swedish neutrality. In other words, it is appropriate to consider what the examination of internal and external factors has brought.

When assessing the influence of individual factors, it can be argued that the above factors to a greater or lesser extent influenced the resulting concept primarily in terms of its flexibility, adaptation to the circumstances and needs of the country (economic, political, security). The concept of neutrality was extended and modified during individual periods either by an official interpretation of Sweden's neutrality or by action – de facto. As for the perception of Swedish neutrality by other states, it can be argued that attention has been paid to its flexibility for many decades. Therefore, even after many years, Swedish neutrality in WWII is repeatedly questioned by many authors. Attention is usually paid to the so-called deviations, i.e., actions that would not be expected from a neutral state. These deviations are only another indication of the flexibility of the whole concept, so it can be argued that the concept of Swedish neutrality has been flexible in the long run. Even now, there are more and more debates about the compatibility of Swedish neutrality with NATO membership. This is another evidence of the alleged flexibility.

Conclusion

This thesis dealt with the development of the concept of Swedish neutrality from its adoption to the present. The main aim of this thesis was to identify those factors that had the greatest influence on the current model of Swedish neutrality. To identify these factors, it was first necessary to select key moments in Swedish history and modern history that influenced the nature of Swedish neutrality. Therefore, the first part of this thesis was devoted to a theoretical overview of historical development. Further, on this basis, it was subsequently examined which influences had the greatest impact on the resulting concept. The analysis of the influences of individual factors constituted a practical part of this thesis. For easier orientation, these factors were divided into two groups. The first group of factors represents internal influences, namely the nature of the political system, public opinion and foreign trade preferences. The second group consists of external influences, namely geopolitics, multilateralism and global challenges. The importance of the influence of individual factors was assessed with regard to its longevity, recurring nature or rough intervention in the concept of neutrality in individual periods. During the research, it turned out that many factors affect neutrality continuously from its adoption to the present.

Selected factors confirmed the hypothesis of this thesis, i.e., that the neutrality of each of the neutral states is completely specific and unique. The justification provides an overview of the factors themselves while no factor can be exactly the same in two neutral states. For example, if geopolitics is chosen as a factor, it is clear that the impact on each state will be completely different due to its location. Likewise, if we consider the influence of political parties, it is impossible for this influence to be the same in two states.

However, more attention is paid in this thesis to the influence of selected factors as a whole on the concept of neutrality. Research shows that all factors have one thing in common. Their influence in most cases reflected mainly on the scope of neutrality. Research has shown that Swedish neutrality is a very “flexible structure” that can adapt to all influences. In other words, there is such national interest in its maintaining that everything that could disturb it in any way is officially interpreted so that neutrality is not endangered. In many historical moments, Sweden has faced challenges that offered to abandon neutrality. But the government have so far always found a way to address this challenge while maintaining neutrality. The EU membership and cooperation with NATO have been among the most significant challenges of recent years.

Based on this research, it is probably not possible to say unequivocally what extent Swedish neutrality may have in future. Based on the results of this work, however, it can be predicted that Sweden, in a situation that would conflict with state neutrality, would only seek a new interpretation and strive to maintain neutrality. Such situations may include, for example, the establishment of a common European army or the need for Sweden to join NATO for security reasons. This opens up space for further possible research on this topic. It is necessary to emphasize that Sweden may reconsider its current approach to its neutrality as a result of the security threats of the war in Ukraine. Swedish neutrality has lost some of its significance with this conflict. In the past, compared to the Cold War, Sweden was one of the possible negotiators and the territory of Sweden presented the so-called buffer zone. At present, however, Russia is openly described as a threat and an enemy, and Sweden, although neutral, is clearly on the side of the Western states. The Russian invasion has confirmed the importance of NATO membership. This importance may outweigh the need to maintain a neutral status in the future, which is, after all, an official statement rather than a real action. Future research could therefore focus on a completely new chapter in Swedish neutrality, which is beginning to be written along with the outbreak of war in Ukraine. In this context, it would be possible to focus further research on Sweden's rapprochement with NATO concerning state neutrality. In addition, there is also the possibility of comparing the factors affecting the neutrality of Sweden and Finland, or other European countries.

In conclusion, as regards the contribution of this thesis, this research can to some extent serve for understanding current events in Sweden as well as Swedish foreign policy. A comprehensive overview of the factors affecting neutrality can be seen as a basic explanation for the longevity of Swedish neutrality and the tendency to maintain it.

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Abstract

This thesis deals with key factors that had a major impact on the resulting concept of Swedish neutrality during its development. The main aim is to identify these factors and point out how they have influenced the concept of Swedish neutrality. Thesis first theoretically defines the concept of neutrality in general, then focuses on the development of the concept of neutrality in Sweden. Based on these data, thesis then analyses which influences were fundamental and refers to the possible perception of the current concept of Swedish neutrality. The result is an overview of key factors and a reference to the resulting flexible concept of Swedish neutrality.

Key Words

Sweden, neutrality, European integration, European Union, NATO, Swedish foreign policy, analysis, international relations, Cold War, WWII., security, solidarity

Abstrakt

Tato práce se zabývá klíčovými faktory, které měly zásadní vliv na výsledný koncept švédské neutrality během jejího vývoje. Hlavním cílem této práce je tyto faktory identifikovat a poukázat na to, jak ovlivnily koncept švédské neutrality. Práce nejprve obecně teoreticky vymezuje pojem neutrality, a poté se zaměřuje na vývoj konceptu neutrality ve Švédsku. Na základě těchto údajů pak práce analyzuje, které vlivy byly zásadní, a odkazuje na možné vnímání současného konceptu švédské neutrality. Výsledkem je přehled klíčových faktorů a odkaz na výsledný flexibilní koncept švédské neutrality.

Klíčová slova

Švédsko, neutralita, evropská integrace, Evropská Unie, NATO, švédská zahraniční politika, analýza, mezinárodní vztahy, Studená válka, 2. světová válka, bezpečnost, solidarita