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5 Liquid neutrality

Paradoxes of democracy in Finnish and Swedish NATO discussions?

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Fluids travel easily. They ‘flow’, ‘spill’, ‘run out’, ‘splash’, ‘pour over’, ‘leak’, ‘flood’, ‘spray’, ‘drip’, ‘seep’, ‘ooze’; unlike solids they are not easily stopped – they pass around some obstacles, dissolve some others and bore or soak their way through others still.¹

Zygmunt Bauman’s famous conception of the modern condition as liquid modernity is in fact an apt description of Finland’s and Sweden’s security strategies during and after the Cold War. In order to understand the ways the Finnish and Swedish relationship to NATO has evolved since the end of the Cold War, we conceptualise Finland’s and Sweden’s security orientation as *liquid neutrality*.

Rather than the typical and publicly dominant ‘solid’ conceptualisations such as ‘small-state realism’² and ‘Finlandization’, which put Finnish and Swedish foreign policy in a passive and reactive mode, ‘liquid neutrality’ implies an active, participatory, daring and deliberate policy orientation that – following Bauman – is able to pass around obstacles. Further, *liquid neutrality* nuances Finnish and Swedish foreign policy to show how small powers took advantage of cracks along the fault lines of superpower competition.

One area in which liquid neutrality becomes visible is the Finnish and Swedish post-Cold War policy formation regarding their relationship with NATO – the subject of this chapter. Typically, the Swedish and Finnish parliamentary democracies, often seen as a part of a wide and uniform Nordic model of democracy,³ have enjoyed a solid reputation regarding the ideals of democracy.⁴ However, during the recent crisis of democracy,⁵ the Nordic democracies also, including Sweden and Finland, have been facing a crisis of legitimacy, efficiency and transparency, as discussed elsewhere in this volume.

An often overlooked aspect of the crisis of democracy is foreign and security policy. However, the matter was brought up already in 1975 by Samuel Huntington, Michel Crozier and Joji Watanuki as one of the contributing factors in the US crisis of democracy. The high costs of the war and unearthing of the US schemes that escalated the Vietnam conflict into a full-scale war meant a crucial loss of legitimacy for the US regime.⁶ Foreign and especially security policy also pose a particular kind of challenge for the Nordic democracies. In this

chapter, we address this challenge with a historical analysis of the paradoxes in Finnish and Swedish policies vis-à-vis NATO.

Due to its double-faced nature, this side of politics is often overlooked. While issues such as budgets are debated in public, others – for example, the technological alignment of weapon systems or channels of information sharing – are kept hidden in the name of ‘national interest’. Some fundamentals of the foreign and security policy are presented in the open in order to create identification and anchor points for politics, interests, values and ideas. Yet other issues are prepared in secrecy – more so in the phases of preparation as leaks can threaten the various national interests. However, a comprehensive analysis remains elusive, since many policy documents are still classified. Thus, we rely on public documents and other available sources and existing literature.

As ascribed to the archetypical realist Otto von Bismarck: ‘laws, like sausages, cease to inspire respect in proportion as we know how they are made’. Although the quote was uttered by John Godfrey Saxe in 1869 and was only attributed to Bismarck in the 1930s,⁷ it highlights a paradox of democracy, particularly in the realm of security policies. Paradoxically, the more transparent policy formulation and execution seem, the less creation of these policies seems to comply with democratic ideals. That holds true also in the case of Swedish and Finnish foreign and security policy, and even more so vis-à-vis their respective NATO relations and membership debates. Critics suggest that the two states have gradually aligned with NATO, to the brink of full membership, by various undemocratic double-dealings and technical arrangements.

On the one hand, those who study foreign and security policy are well aware of this great game of double-dealing. On the other, scholarship based on publicly available parliamentary sources tends to view foreign policy formation through the lenses of increased parliamentarisation and finds that to some degree, a certain constitutional role is often reserved for parliaments also in foreign policy.⁸ These works have illustrated that certain parliamentary momentums have existed from time to time, even if the professionalisation of mass politics and the exponential increase in matters to be covered have shifted much of the parliamentary dealings behind closed doors.⁹

In 21st-century Sweden and Finland, the question of their cooperation with NATO has been one such challenge to democracy. Andrew Cottey has stated, referring to other scholars, that non-alignment has become a part of the identity of the European neutrals, and therefore it is rather unlikely that they would abandon this policy. Moreover, the neutrality policy has greatly affected European neutrals, including Sweden and Finland, to ‘maintain their national integrity and political independence, while avoiding war, during and after the Cold War and can therefore be viewed as successful national security policy’. According to Cottey (and many others for that matter), the end of the Cold War triggered NATO expansion and cooperation outside the actual alliance, which is something Cottey describes as a quiet revolution.¹⁰

Indeed, the age-old discourse on neutrality and non-alignment has given way to a new discourse that goes against the grain of public opinion – or so

the grand narrative of the two states inclining more and more towards NATO cooperation would suggest. This illustrates how liquid neutrality permeates Finland's and Sweden's foreign and security policy formulation. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, the long-lasting, outspoken political imperatives of neutrality and non-alignment, which have been true only in part, have been altered in response to the greater paradigm shifts in international relations. First, Finland and Sweden established much-coveted formal positions within the West by joining the European Union (EU) integration process.¹¹ Since then, they have also approached NATO, to the point that the two might become members rather rapidly.

However, even if this seems a novel situation in the two nations' foreign policy, that is not the case in historical perspective. The two formally non-aligned, neutral Nordic states had conducted a realist and 'liquid' security policy for nearly a century and quite successfully, if judged by the ultimate realist criterion: survival of the state.¹² The alleged neutrality (oriented to the West in Sweden and considerate towards the East in Finland) was a shield under which a pragmatic, active stance for the best possible security outcomes could be devised. Due to the geopolitical set-piece situation, the antagonistic Cold War blocs accepted their neutrality for the sake of stability. In other words, neither Sweden nor Finland was as neutral or non-aligned as they branded themselves as. Thus, the recent inclination towards NATO is building on a long-established tradition.

However, the state of interregnum in post-Cold War international relations has made these processes visible, which has shocked some observers. By 'interregnum' we mean a transformative phase in the international system during which the old conventions have lost their utility and new ones have not emerged.¹³ The end of the Cold War – even if it was not the 'end of history' nor triumph of multipolarity¹⁴ – and 'the return of geopolitics'¹⁵ in the aftermath of the Russian annexation of Crimea were key events that heralded interregnums. The highlighting of the paradox between practice and policy declarations has contributed to the current challenges of Nordic democracy. The pursuit of vested national interests has become manifest, and the preparation for the worst is for the first time revealed and evident. Previously hidden information is now transmitted through constant media reporting. Security and foreign policy is subject to lobbying, despite the fact that most decisions are still made behind closed doors. From the point of view of democratic ideals, this might resemble a clandestine push towards NATO, despite the NATO-sceptic popular sentiment in both states. In Finland, the support for NATO membership would rise slightly if Sweden were to join.¹⁶ As no major political decisions about membership application have been made, but a certain trajectory of alignment has been pursued, a sort of 'paradox of democracy' appears to exist. This provides a strong resonance board for various kinds of politicking and information operations, and might also foster a sentiment of alarm. Moreover, it might dissolve trust in political processes and culture.

Historical context: the Cold War era

Typically, the Nordic countries have been lumped together regarding welfare, economy, culture or foreign and security policy therefore obscuring diversity and dissimilarities that also exist within the Nordic nations. True, they share similar policies of progressive taxation and welfare, and an emphasis on what has been described as the ‘Nordic model(s)’ of democracy. Politics and policy are defined in a similar vein in all of the respective states, and the strategies of small-state realism they use to achieve this are very much alike.¹⁷ Historically, this stems from a long trajectory of shared pasts that has affected the democratisation of both countries in political, economic and geopolitical terms.¹⁸ Yet there are manifold differences, reported extensively in scholarly works published in the Nordic languages. These differences are particularly sharp regarding their foreign policy choices.¹⁹

With the outbreak of the First World War, the kings of Sweden, Norway and Denmark committed publicly to a joint policy of neutrality.²⁰ Likewise, due to geopolitical factors, a degree of small-state realism was practised in the Baltic region. Russia had for a long time been seen as a potential adversary. However, some differences were present then also.²¹ During the 1920s and the 1930s, as a self-proclaimed regional leader Sweden promoted various forms of Nordic cooperation that never materialised. Other states opted for other solutions, which are rather well known, including the so-called border-states policy.²² Since the Second World War, the Nordic line of neutrality or non-alignment has drastically changed and the ‘Nordic model’ has diversified even more. In the post-war situation, some of the Nordic states were more inclined to search security options from the West. Having been occupied in the war, Denmark and Norway opted for a NATO-backed security solution along with Iceland, instead of the ‘Nordic cooperation’ instigated by Sweden.²³ However, in much of the contemporary analysis, this difference between the countries has been overlooked and the Nordic countries have been lumped together to represent a ‘third way’ in post-war foreign policy between the major blocs. This has also been considered a typically pragmatic small-state realist approach.²⁴

During the Cold War, both Sweden and Finland relied by necessity on publicly proclaimed neutrality and non-alignment.²⁵ In order to attain this status in the international system, while simultaneously keeping pace with Western trajectories, both countries, albeit sceptically at first, focused on international cooperation, mostly under the auspices of the United Nations (UN).²⁶ However, even in this multilateral form of internationalism, their experiences differed: Sweden joined the UN in 1945, while Finland, after a number of Soviet vetoes, was able to join only in 1956. Despite the multilateral orientation and small-state politics, both countries also had contingency plans, backed up by independent and strong armed forces.²⁷

Although practically all states have several security policy options, generally only a few of them are publicly discussed or accessible.²⁸ Typically, one option is pursued as the preferred policy. In Sweden, this has, since the late 1950s,

taken the form of a semi-clandestine partnership with the United States and NATO, while simultaneously branding neutrality as the core value of Swedish foreign and security policy.²⁹ Finland balanced between meeting the expectations of the USSR and identifying with the West through other means – especially through trade and culture. A number of scholars have pointed out that these Nordic double-dealings (*dubbelspel*) are already rather familiar.³⁰ Still, most scholars have studied them as part of individual national histories rather than using a comparative approach, with the notable exception of Johanna Rainio-Niemi.³¹

Finland, in particular, performed a high-wire balancing act between the East and the West, agreeing to a certain amount of Soviet influence in Finnish affairs in return for some freedoms. Sweden, in turn, continued to polish her defensive shield with declarations of non-alignment and neutrality – backed up by the most formidable armed forces among the Nordic states.³² Behind the scenes, plans related to NATO and Western defence had been made since the 1950s. The Social Democrats dominated Swedish politics at this time, and because it was in the national interest, their *dubbelspel* was rarely challenged, only being used as minor leverage in domestic affairs by the political opposition.³³ This all changed drastically, however, with the fall of communist regimes. The Baltic States independence relieved some of the pressure on the Swedish shores of the Baltic Sea. While Finland in particular and Sweden to some extent were cautious to offer unequivocal support to the newly emerging Baltic States, they keenly supported the establishment of the armed forces of these states.³⁴

Liquid neutrality and the alignment with the European community and NATO

The collapse of the USSR briefly brought about the advent of ‘the unipolar world order’ or ‘unipolar moment’. In the Nordic countries, this shift in the early 1990s was not only perceived but also seized. In terms of security landscape, the question was not only primarily about NATO but also about the European Community (EC, later European Union, EU), which also included the element of common security. Finland was more careful but followed Sweden partially out of fear of being left behind or isolated. In 1991, after having followed Norwegian EC debate closely, Sweden opted to apply for membership of the EC. Sweden did this without notifying Finland first, much to the latter’s surprise. In 1992, the Finnish–Soviet Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Assistance from 1948 – which had been the defining feature of Finnish foreign policy throughout the Cold War – ceased to be in effect, and there was more room for general foreign policy deliberation. Not to be isolated and left out when the pieces of the geopolitical puzzle were shifting, Finland was forced to apply for EC membership as well in 1992.³⁵

The Swedish non-notification traumatised Finland. Recognising this, the US Department of State and Defense noted that the intertwined defence and foreign policies of the two states meant that affecting one state would also affect

the other and thus shaped US policies in the region.³⁶ If Sweden would align itself directly with NATO, it would demolish the core of the 'neutral buffer zone' in the region. For Finland, this would have been catastrophic, as the neutral zone was a prerequisite for Finland's attempts to pursue liquid neutrality and practise small-state realism.

In both countries, joining the EC/EU in 1995 was not directly related to security policy – or at least that dimension was toned down in the rhetoric. In foreign policy terms, the integration was part of a wider attempt to position formally within the West. To some extent the EU, to use the current acronym, was also seen as a possible 'third force' between the Soviet Union/Russia and the United States.³⁷ Already in 1992, Jaakko Iloniemi commented that in 'Finland it is still widely believed that joining the EC will not affect our security or defence policy. Such a thought is misleading.'³⁸ While the public remained ambivalent, Finland's positioning nevertheless acted as a signal for a willingness to align more deeply with NATO structures, which were seen as the backbone of the European defence landscape. By applying to the EU, both states also accepted shared responsibility for defending Europe. In 1994 – before the EU membership was agreed upon – both Sweden and Finland joined the NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, and they immediately began to enhance their NATO compatibility.³⁹ This can be seen as opening more options while staying aloof from binding commitments.

With increasing integration with the West, Cold War era contingency plans became less hidden – particularly in Sweden, but also in Finland. Changes in the geopolitical situation of the Baltic, underwritten by Russian weakness, meant that the limitations that had formerly prevented Nordic countries from having a more public alignment with NATO were now removed. As the leading Finnish weekly put it in 2001, 'Finland is already close to NATO's core' and was 'engaged with the Western security community that formed around NATO'.⁴⁰ This alignment was not a complete novelty, but already existing and well-developed ties could be strengthened.⁴¹ The language of 'engagement' is in itself axiomatic about the ways Finland identified with the West.

Thus, for Finland, EU membership essentially meant claiming a much-coveted and clear identity within the West while simultaneously seeking to keep a strong national defence. For Sweden, the emergence of new independent Baltic buffer states meant that it opted for cost-effectiveness, meaning heavy disarmament, the closing of various military bases, and later abolishing national service. The decisions made in 1996 emphasised that Sweden remained non-aligned, while the defence decision in 2000 led to one of the greatest changes in the Swedish armed forces organisation, including disbanding numerous bases and forces.⁴² This pattern was further developed in the defence decision of 2004, which was the last of the decisions oriented from territorial defence towards reactionary defence and crisis management.⁴³ In general, the new security paradigm entailed establishing professional military forces and reorienting its activities towards international crisis- and conflict-resolution projects under the auspices of NATO.⁴⁴ Liquid neutrality was massaged into the formulation

of the policy, allowing Sweden to retain its neutral image while being fully integrated to NATO's structures.

While military-oriented NATO alignment was mainly conducted in the background, the public relations exercise opted to rebrand the Swedish military as a force for international crisis management and for preserving or projecting Western identity.⁴⁵ This shift was also a response to the detailed accounts of the Swedish clandestine cooperation plans with NATO during the Cold War – a topic of debate that emerged in public during the 1990s. Thus, amid public questioning of Sweden's Cold War militarisation, the next logical step to take was securing and strengthening the 'special relationship' while universally branding it as international crisis management.⁴⁶ To a lesser degree, Finland dovetailed Sweden but did not give up military conscription. In addition, Finland adopted the former Swedish policy of balancing between semi-formal non-alignment and enhancing NATO compatibility. Yet the sheer number of gradual changes and technical arrangements in this respect speaks for the policy of liquid neutrality once again. Through these measures, Finland and Sweden have become more NATO-compatible than most of those European states that have joined NATO since 1999.⁴⁷

The Baltic area's security environment changed once again when Finland's and Sweden's smaller neighbours – the Baltic States – opted for full NATO membership in 2004. They followed the logic of alliances presented by Stephen M. Walt in 1987. Instead of bandwagoning with the great adversary, they allied against it.⁴⁸ Historically, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been cooperating and coordinating on security and defence issues (or matters related to security and defence). This cooperation is an example of pragmatic small-state realism (implicitly all of these states have practised pragmatic small-state realism). For the Soviet Union, and in recent times for Russia, this has caused annoyance at least. Until 2004, Swedish and Finnish support for developing the Baltic States' defences had been crucially important. This Baltic aspect is rarely addressed in analyses of Nordic defence cooperation.⁴⁹ The motives were essentially based on national interests: militarised Baltic States offered breathing space for Sweden and Finland, although it is a matter of debate whether the Baltic States' NATO memberships have a stabilising effect on regional security. Be that as it may, after 2004, Finland and Sweden continued their own NATO alignment – to the point that the option for joining NATO was solely dependent on political will, not military harmonisation. Yet thus far most of the Finnish political parties have not explicitly stated their opinion on Finland's NATO membership, save the conservative National Coalition Party that advocates membership. Subsequently, public considerations of potential NATO membership became a staple feature, especially in the multifaceted media debates, but are noticeable also in official policy documentation.

NATO's development took a crucial turn after the 9/11 attacks, which transformed its role from that of international police and peace enforcer to a military and security organisation. Before the terrorist attacks, NATO had accepted most former Warsaw Pact States as its members, replaying the 1940s–1950s strategy

of containment. The last members, including the Baltic States, were accepted in 2004. Some criticism, for instance about overreach, was voiced throughout the 'open door policy', but this did not change the decision.⁵⁰ At that point, Russia–NATO relations were still more amenable. Soon, however, Russia and NATO began to drift apart. Georgia's pro-Western developments since 2003 and an open willingness to join NATO finally forced Russia to act according to its historical fear of encirclement by hostile powers.⁵¹ Even international cooperation against terrorism, also important for Russia, could not prevent a further divergence between the two. If the former Soviet satellites were clearly in the Russian sphere of interests, Georgia was part of the Russian backyard.

The Baltic Sea region sphere of interest contributes to the Finnish and Swedish defence dilemmas. To avoid having this natural maritime choke-point used against it, Russia might attempt to take over, occupy or at least incapacitate the Baltic States. The Åland Islands, Gotland and the Danish straits are also important in such a scenario.⁵² By linking up with the enclave around Kaliningrad, Russia could also better secure sea access for St. Petersburg and would also have a further vantage point for the whole region. In many ways, the Baltic States offer an extension to the exclusion area protecting the important city and strategic base of St. Petersburg. This would also take some of the pressure off the Arctic region where Russia has its other important sea route to the west. As part of a larger Arctic strategy, which stated in 2008 that the Arctic would be its primary resource base, Russia has already improved its network of military bases in that region and has increased settlement in the region as well.⁵³ In the Kola Peninsula, for instance, there has been considerable military build-up and Russia has been seen to exert indirect pressure towards Norway, for instance.⁵⁴

Russia's drive to reassert its position as a great power evidently conflicted with NATO's rapid enlargement to its borders in Northern Europe. The matter of security policy became more acute than it had been since the end of the Cold War. The first sign was the Georgian war in 2008, which was part of a stern Russian response to considerations of additional NATO members along its borders.⁵⁵ Later on, and due to numerous political, economic and strategic reasons, the same applied to Ukraine. These familiar events need not be repeated here. However, the NATO debate in Finland and Sweden now had a new urgency. From a Russian perspective, Nordic neutrality, in its liquid form, threatened to 'splash' from its fairly contained space into the quickly cracking security landscape.

In Finland, public opinion was against joining NATO, as were President Tarja Halonen and Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja. The official position was articulated in the government's security and defence policy statement to parliament in September 2004. Finland would continue its policy of military non-alignment until 2012; the main task would be the defence of the national territory and over 95 per cent of the defence budget would be devoted to it. The 2008 defence white paper, however, was due to include consideration of the pros and cons of NATO membership.⁵⁶

As a response to the cracking security landscape, Nordic countries acted according to their own regional interests by tightening Nordic military cooperation. According to Malena Britz, after the rift caused by the Iraq conflict, political focus regarding Nordic cooperation in security politics has increased since 2007. The Nordic Battlegroup (NBG) was established in 2008. At the same time, Swedish and Norwegian military leaders co-authored an article discussing whether the Swedish and Norwegian armed forces should be organised regionally so that they could support each other. Another key theme in the article was the co-organising of defence material acquisitions. In June 2009, Sweden issued a declaration of solidarity for its Nordic neighbours: it would not stand aside if any of the neighbouring states faced an attack or catastrophe.⁵⁷ The Nordic Council covered defence cooperation in 2009 in line with a report from former Norwegian foreign secretary Jens Stoltenberg (current NATO Secretary General) and followed up with the Reykjavik Declaration in the summer of 2009. This was a new historical development, as during the 1970s and the 1980s security and foreign policy was not allowed on the joint Nordic agenda and only started to emerge during the first decade of the 2000s. Further discussions on security cooperation were pursued by the Nordic foreign secretaries in 2010. Subsequently, a statement on the idea of cooperation, ‘the declaration of solidarity’, was issued by the Nordic Council in Helsinki in 2011.⁵⁸

Finland, Sweden, and the problem of EU-based security

In 2007, Finland’s former Minister of Defence Jyri Häkämies said at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington:

In general, Finland is privileged to be located in one of the safest corners of the world. However, given our geographical location, the three main security challenges for Finland today are Russia, Russia and Russia. And not only for Finland, but for all of us.⁵⁹

Such a statement was striking because it was so untypical. It not only raised eyebrows but also stirred up a storm in the ‘teacup’ of Finnish security policy. Criticisms came from various Finnish politicians, including the president and Ilkka Kanerva, the National Coalition Party’s foreign minister; and it continued for some time in spite of Häkämies’s assurances that the statement was based on formal policy documents and security estimates. Yet equally striking was the fact that it was only those three words that the media noted. After that line, Häkämies claimed that Russia nevertheless is not a direct threat to Finnish security; it posed not only a challenge but also an opportunity. However, this more nuanced contextualisation fell on deaf ears. According to the most nervous responses, Finland had three real security challenges: ‘Häkämies, Häkämies, Häkämies’.⁶⁰

Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, the security challenge that the Soviet Union/Russia posed for Finland has been treated with kid

gloves – clearly evident in the response to the Håkämies incident. The other side of the coin is the question of security; if there is a potential threat, there must be also a potential security arrangement. In general, security discourse in Finland as well as in Sweden is dominated by attempts to obfuscate the extent to which Nordic countries are already thoroughly connected with NATO. This is related to the idea that publicly committing to one camp and giving up on the formally acknowledged, even if questionable, neutral or non-aligned status could push Russia into action that would require a direct answer or counter-move. Disregarding this paradox of saying one thing and doing the opposite in public debate can be seen, if not as a democratic deficit, at least as contributing to the scepticism towards defence debates in the parliaments – especially when what is actually happening has become more obvious. Thus, the security debate in the 2010s is ‘smoke and mirrors’ in which the truth of the situation – *de facto* (technical) NATO alignment – is obscured with reference to old and no-longer stable rhetoric, the key component being the question of a collective European security system through EU institutions.⁶¹

Since the initial attempts in the 1940s and the 1950s and up to today, the West European Union (WEU) that forms the security and military component of the Common Security and Foreign Policy (CSFP) has not come to fruition.⁶² Cost efficiency has been among the main factors along with political will. The Maastricht Treaty and the ‘pillar policy’ that followed were existing factors, but in terms of collective security, they offered very little in terms of concrete means despite various attempts and promises.⁶³ Furthermore, as in the 1950s, NATO quickly emerged as the leading institution to guarantee European security. Establishing overlapping European schemes, organisations and plans would have increased overall defence costs, hampered organisation and perhaps even reduced the effectiveness of NATO.

The collapse of the USSR changed the European-level calculus. Not only did the main threat disappear – Russia was noticeably weak at the time – but the world-wide economic recession meant that there were fewer resources to allocate to European defence planning and capabilities, which remained modest. Further, after a brief period of intensified planning in the 2000s, the issue of broadening the Union took over at the expense of deepening and strengthening European security arrangements. For Finland, this development meant that although it had integrated itself deeply into the EU since the mid-1990s to the point that re-estimating the benefits of possible alliances within the European framework was brought up,⁶⁴ the European dimension of security was (and is) not a viable defence solution. Simply, it lacks the necessary military muscle. For Sweden, the situation was similar but even more troublesome, because it had abandoned its long-lasting security doctrine of total defence, driving down the level of society’s militarisation.⁶⁵

Since most EU countries are also members of NATO, their need for EU-based security is not acute, which is reflected in a lack of interest in developing a joint European defence and foreign policy. Further, doctrinal changes in the 1990s and the 2000s clouded the core function of NATO. Since the Balkan

crises in the late 1990s, both NATO and the EU oriented themselves towards conflict resolution, peace-keeping and interventions in limited conflicts. Forces and capabilities utilised in these operations are very much the same, though the matter of which hats (or helmets in this case) – the EU or NATO – to wear is still present to some degree. As focus shifted to conflict resolution and peace-keeping, territorial defence and training in Europe were neglected. Neither experience from asymmetrical warfare nor evidence that victory through air power alone is not plausible has led to significant changes in NATO's European approach. Plans for changes exist on paper, but both within NATO and the EU, the will and funds have been lacking, and therefore more 'cost-effective' planning has been encouraged. In this respect, the organisations have lacked teeth. The EU's initial responses to the Georgian war and the events in Ukraine and Crimea were neither rapid nor stern.⁶⁶ Also, the EU member states' different economic and energy relationships with Russia hamper a unified security policy.

This lacklustre European defence system has led Finland and Sweden to evaluate the costs and benefits of their security policy. For instance, although the EU, especially the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its imaginary framework of structures, was repeatedly mentioned in Finnish security and foreign policy reviews, especially in 1995, as essential elements of Finnish policy, these mentions totally disappeared by 2016.⁶⁷ NATO's European members (and EU-members in general) have long been criticised for their low defence spending and 'freeloading' on the heels of the United States in 2020 by former US Vice President Mike Pence in Munich.⁶⁸ At the moment, the European states' capabilities for territorial defence are rather limited, even within NATO's own territory. Although Pence's utterances were no doubt related to arms trade efforts and the domestic pressure of Donald Trump's administration, statistics show that the decrease in defence costs in Europe has been remarkable until recently. From a Finnish and Swedish perspective, this does not portray a pretty picture of organised collective defence – a matter at the heart of the Nordic vision of collective security. Therefore, the possible gains from NATO membership would depend on US forces, while the European defence and security orientation of the late 1990s and the early 2000s has practically disappeared from public discourse, illustrating the total dismissal of a European security system independent of US influence. For example, the more recent Finnish defence and security policy documentation hardly mentions EU-based security, at least in comparison to the late 1990s and the early 2000s. The same applies to Sweden.⁶⁹ Moreover, although the Lisbon Treaty of 2007 provides certain theoretical guarantees of assistance from other members in the case of crisis, besides limited political will, capability is *de facto* lacking.

In addition, the NATO Charter gives some leeway of interpretation regarding the military commitments under Article 5. Even if (European) NATO members would spend more than the nominal 2 per cent of their GDP on defence, it is debatable what would actually be supplied by each member state in the event of a conflict.⁷⁰ Furthermore, even this deployment would require

unanimous agreement, which might take some time.⁷¹ Existing research actually reports that Denmark's and Norway's disarmament and development of a professional army is geared for rapid deployment in crisis and conflict management against lower-tier and asymmetrical adversaries and in counter-terrorism operations. Magnus Petersson, for instance, has estimated that Denmark and Norway have decreased their level of defence.⁷² Instead, in the immediate pre-Crimean era, they heavily oriented their forces towards NATO's global role to such a degree that they might have difficulty defending their own territory, let alone intervene on behalf of the Baltic States. For instance, Denmark has given up her submarine fleet, affecting the ability to defend the Danish straits and therefore the Baltic Sea. Similarly, both countries have faced difficulties in providing aerial units for international operations.⁷³ For Sweden, this might decrease the interest in full NATO membership as it could cause more volatility and offer very little payback.

All this raises the question of how committed NATO is to the Nordic/Baltic region. European defence planning is in a state of flux for a number of reasons, such as Brexit, the rise of nationalism, internal power struggles and resource allocation towards climate change. Finding a joint political will is hard enough, let alone the relevant resources. NATO's 'Very High Readiness Joint Task Force' (VJTF) might, in spite of its name, not actually be as readily available or deployable as politicians would like. The NATO Response Force (NRF) is also still very much a work in progress and exists mainly on paper, as many member states have no troops or weaponry available for it. Additionally, maintaining the readiness of VJTF and NRF troops is also costly.⁷⁴ From the Swedish and Finnish point of view, this might mean that they would be gaining less in joining NATO to solve their security situation. By being a member, they would be considered a potential foe by Russia (and to a large extent by China), without necessarily securing the backup that was sought after. Thus, in the current state of affairs, it hardly serves Finland or Sweden's interests to join NATO. However, before any such conflict arose, the membership of the two countries would serve NATO's interests by adding to the security of the Baltic States. These conflicting considerations have not surfaced much in recent public membership debates, though they most certainly have been considered.

Liquid neutrality and developments since 2014

As stated earlier, since the end of the Cold War, both Sweden and Finland have altered their respective foreign and security policies. While becoming more interconnected with international security and foreign policy systems, they have also become more entangled with the global challenges. This, in turn, has affected their possibilities for pursuing new security policy options and coping with their shared security dilemmas.

The Russian occupation of Crimea in 2014 made the return of geopolitics imminent also in the Baltic Sea region, as previously distant problems were

now at Finland's and Sweden's doorstep.⁷⁵ Unipolar use of strength to attain national interests was back on the agenda, backed up by the rising tide of information operations. Western hegemony was challenged globally by China and regionally in the Baltic Sea region, although not only there, by Russia. A state of flux, or interregnum, was evident in the international relations and a re-evaluation of existing policies was required. Finland's and Sweden's main response was a revision of the policies that they had been building since the 1990s. Liquid neutrality was very much back on the agenda.

Re-establishing national military capability returned to the political agenda. Sweden opted for returning to national conscription and scrapped its heavy disarmament program coined at FMI2020 (which could be translated loosely as "Ideas for Future Defence") in 1996.⁷⁶ Sweden also reversed the various downshifting processes that narrowed the whole command structure into a single command force. The doctrine of total defence was re-established. Heavy emphasis was given to the capabilities of the air force and the navy. The vulnerability of Gotland Island, a strategic base of operations aimed against the heartland of Sweden or for controlling the Baltic Sea, was duly noted. Russia's Baltic vantage point could also increase pressure directly on Finland and Sweden.⁷⁷ Moreover, the Baltic area would also be useful for Russia as a way to increase the anti-access, area denial (A2/AD) range to prevent an attack on St. Petersburg. Another point of consideration would be the recently resurfaced question of Russian intermediate range missiles situated in Kaliningrad and Russia abandoning the IMF treaty. Subsequently, in 2017, Sweden also announced its intentions to purchase Patriot missile systems, usually only sold to close US allies or NATO members.⁷⁸ The purchase of the antiballistic missile system is somewhat perplexing at first: Patriot missile systems have been reported to have serious flaws since the 1991 Gulf War, where the efficiency of the system appeared to be very limited. Although some of the data available have been classified, some of these evaluations are publicly available.⁷⁹ The system since has been improved, but this also raises considerations about what the actual purpose of the system is. It does provide the idea or feeling of security, something to be done to counter the reported Russian missile allocation. In the case of Sweden, this was no doubt a show of (political) will (and readiness) on several levels. As a response to Russia moving new, nuclear-capable medium-range Iskander ballistic missiles to Kaliningrad and supplementing them with heavy SAM protection since 2013 (and re-reported in 2018), it also signalled Sweden aligning with the United States and, to some extent, NATO. In turn, Finland was allowed to purchase air-to-ground cruise missiles in order to cope with various threats such as A2/AD or ballistic missiles. These have been hard to come by even for NATO members.

Sweden continued gearing up. Stationing a permanent garrison of troops in Gotland was put back on the agenda for 2016–2018.⁸⁰ The experiences from various international operations such as IFOR/SFOR, KFOR, ISAF, OUP, RSM and Iraq were also put to use. Although technical, organisational and other interoperability and compatibility with NATO had already been achieved, the capability to use military forces together with NATO was

practised in the Swedish air operations over Libya in 2011 and in Afghanistan since 2014.⁸¹

While structural and operational alignment with the United States intensified, more emphasis was placed on Nordic cooperation. Above all, cooperation with Finland was considered a crucial way to strengthen the first line of Swedish defence, while the Swedes were rebuilding their own capability.⁸²

However, these operational solutions were not considered sufficient. Despite potential Russian opposition, Sweden (like Finland) sped up its NATO alignment process. In the public sphere, NATO membership became a hotly debated option, even if public opinion was still against it. Like Finland, Sweden ordered a review of the questions related to a potential alliance. In 2014, Sweden, like Finland, participated in the NATO Summit in Wales for the Enhanced Opportunities Program, which allowed friendly states to deepen their cooperation with NATO, for instance through participation in operation planning, military exercises and consultations. The drafting of the NATO-host agreement was initiated in 2014. Thus, by this time, neutrality had become very fluid. This is exemplified more by the Finnish white paper on defence (2017), which stated that the Finnish defence system is developed in such ways that there would not be any practical obstacles for a potential military alliance (in the future).⁸³

Yet, despite increasing alignment with NATO, the state of total, societal preparedness in Sweden was found wanting and could not be solved by either the means of potential defence and security cooperation or by alliances, as Björn von Sydow, the Chairman of the Swedish Defence Commission, pointed out. Although Article 3 of the NATO Charter recognises the importance of general societal resilience, this remains mainly a national responsibility. That Sweden is heavily reliant on imports of energy, food and other supplies and the whole economic structure is based on a 'just-in-time' model with limited storage constitute a considerable challenge for the doctrine of total defence and preparedness. This tendency is particularly illustrative in the case of Gotland – an exposed yet key strategic island in need of extensive logistical lines of supply. Gaining help or support might take weeks or months, were it be provided at all.⁸⁴

It is against this backdrop that NATO's host-nation agreement sets in, as it focuses on enhancing capability to receive military supply, aid and assistance. Despite some public reservations, Sweden ratified the Host Agreement Treaty in 2016. Yet even if Sweden and Finland (which also signed) are not full NATO members through the agreement, in practice they are sucked into the vortex of NATO operations – a state of affairs that puts them in a pickle. Although the treaty has a reserve clause of NATO troops requiring governmental request from the host to utilise the reserved host areas, Sweden and Finland are indirectly almost totally committed to the defence of the Baltic States through NATO. The reason for this is that in a crisis NATO would use the host option and saying no might be difficult. The cold logic of *realpolitik* is that a superpower would take the necessary steps to fulfil its own security needs,

irrespective of the views of Finnish or Swedish parliaments, as without Finland and Sweden, NATO would have a hard time defending the Baltic States.⁸⁵

Even with higher military preparedness than Sweden, Finland also sped up its NATO alignment. Finland took part in various Western war games and trainings. In 1992, Finland selected US-made F-18s as the core of its air force, thus phasing out the old practise of making equal purchases from the East and the West alike (or from non-aligned states as an alternative to Western purchases).⁸⁶ These planes are estimated to end their service life in 2030, thus requiring somewhat rapid replacement plans (HX-project).⁸⁷ As of this writing, the consideration, bidding and evaluation are going on and lobbying on behalf of various respective candidates is somewhat heavy. Besides the actual cost of price per unit, the operating costs need to be assessed carefully or the chosen solution might become too costly. Moreover, also technical tactical, strategic, and above all, political consideration costs need to be assessed. Former Finnish Minister of Defence Elisabeth Rehn has, for instance, revealed that the decisions for the acquisition of F-18s were conducted behind closed doors by three key ministers, not the full government, and furthermore, without informing the parliament or engaging in parliamentary debate.⁸⁸

In 2014, Jarmo Lindberg, the commander of the Finnish Armed Forces signed a host nation memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Finland's behalf. Mandate for this was given by the President of Finland Sauli Niinistö and the Ministerial Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, which operates under the Finnish Government.⁸⁹ In public, and as a response to the criticism of the agreement, the MOU was stated to be about receiving military assistance. Adhering to the idea of liquid neutrality, the Finnish Ministry of Defence's announcement of the agreement was as blunt as possible and revealed no details about the contents. A non-classified agreement was, however, attached to the issued statement – in English.⁹⁰ Sweden signed a similar host-nation agreement at the same time, thus underlining the intertwined policies of the two Nordic states. The most important features of the MOU were:

- 2.1 The purpose of this MOU is to establish policy and procedures for the establishment of operational sites and the provision of H[ost] N[at]ion] S[atement] to NATO forces in, or supported from the HN, during NATO military activities.
- 2.2 This MOU and its follow-on documents are intended to serve as the basis for planning by the appropriate HN authority and by NATO Commanders anticipating HNS arrangements for a variety of NATO military activities. *These missions include those for which deploying forces have been identified and those for which forces are yet to be identified.*⁹¹

In other words, it appears that the agreement allows for any type of missions to be deployed on the host nation's soil. Moreover, the sites established for these missions are de facto under NATO command, and this is agreed to by the host nation, which will provide its fullest possible support for these missions.

Importantly, this agreement is in effect during peacetime and during conflicts, and it allows NATO forces to use the host's national airspace and territorial waters. A recent development is the setting up of a permanent communications cable network on Finnish soil, which was installed as a part of the secret 'Bold Quest' manoeuvres.⁹² The aforementioned HX-fighter might also add to this series of technical arrangements, which can also serve as political security signalling. Furthermore, besides actual NATO alignment, other, bi- and trilateral arrangements and statements of intent have been prepared, the latest being the statement of intent of trilateral cooperation between Sweden, Finland and the United States.⁹³ This attests to the idea of liquid neutrality enhancing various capabilities and options without full commitment.

Public opinion in both states had been adamantly opposed to applying for NATO membership. This notion was further enhanced by fears that a membership in one of the newly emerging blocs might jeopardise the two states' national interests as well as their ability to conduct an independent and liquid foreign policy, acting as brokers between the two conflicting blocs. However, the change also brought forward heavy criticism of semi-clandestinely and deliberately moving to full NATO membership – a path taken gradually in previous years and decades.⁹⁴ Re-estimations of the possible effects of NATO membership was ordered by both states. The Swedish report by Krister Bringéus was much more detailed, feels more like a formal policy paper, and contains detailed estimates with sources mentioned, whereas the Finnish version, although commissioned by parliament and government and crafted by experts, was more like an executive summary and resembles an informal briefing paper.⁹⁵

If Finland and Sweden were to exchange their current liquid resilience for joining NATO formally, it might provide a formal deterrent and add to the region's defence. It would not, however, remove the fact that even the tiniest change in the regional security puzzle would require some sort of response. This is clearly one of the reasons why the publicly promoted organisation of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) has once more become a viable (or at least stop-gap) solution, while also being a way to circumvent the question of full NATO membership. It has become much more than a practical and flexible attempt to cut back on costs and to complement wider arrangements on the EU and NATO level, as Håkon Lunde Saxi has proposed. Saxi has also mentioned that cooperation within the Nordic area itself has become a tool for bringing the Nordic states closer to NATO.⁹⁶ Wider Nordic cooperation includes two NATO members, thus enhancing the NATO compatibility of Sweden and Finland further. Subsequently, while the NATO alignment is under constant review, enhancing bilateral cooperation between Finland and Sweden appears to be at least the intermediate solution.⁹⁷

Yet, there is one more point to bear in mind: potential membership is not guaranteed. President Donald Trump's view and policies vis-à-vis the future of NATO and even more traditional bilateral approaches are ambivalent to say the least. NATO is undergoing challenges related to: (i) the grand US strategy now

emphasising the foreign policy importance of Asia; (ii) quarrels about members' defence budgets; and (iii) the conflicting political interests of its members noted by Finns and Swedes.⁹⁸ Interest in defending the Baltic States is ambivalent, and the capability to do so quickly enough is uncertain, even for those members who have committed to Article 5. This is even more the case, as while Finland and Sweden are not NATO members, they are obliged to take part in defending the Baltic States through the Lisbon Treaty.⁹⁹ Some analysts add that they are not obliged to provide this kind of assistance, but overlook the clauses of the NATO–host agreement that the two have signed.

That being said, an efficient defence of the Baltic States is important to the grand strategies of Finland and Sweden. As NATO members, the commitment to their defence would be even greater. In either case, the 'neutrality' of both states would be negotiable, risking involvement in a conflict between the great powers. In that respect, it might be more attractive to become full members to attain the umbrella of collective defence as deterrent. However, Russia would be expected to react negatively. Finland joining NATO could be interpreted by Russia as a containment or encirclement that would require reaction. Russia today is in a much stronger military position than in the late 1990s or early 2000s when it had to accept the rapid advancement of NATO and was more inclined to cooperate with it.

Conclusion

Sweden's partnership with NATO is now rather generally accepted to be a continuation of a secret arrangement established in the early 1950s. This has been dubbed a 'flexible foreign and security policy'¹⁰⁰ and is not so far removed from the small-state realism that had previously dominated Nordic foreign policies. However, as we have demonstrated throughout this chapter, 'flexible' can be taken even further, as flexible foreign policy denotes a degree of reactivity in the face of security challenges. Our neologism of liquid neutrality seeks to push the argument from reactivity to proactivity. Like liquid, Nordic security thinking flowed into the cracks in a deliberately active manner. For Finland, the partnership took shape when the country joined the EU. In practice, it meant that Finland copied the Swedish security solution that has two obvious advantages: the informal security guarantees received from NATO, and the possibility to stay aloof in case a potential conflict with Russia would turn into open war in the Baltic region. This double standard has been noticed by the official member states of NATO and the Russians are also well aware of it.¹⁰¹ According to some Swedish commentators, Sweden's informal NATO guarantees, presented in detail, for instance by investigate journalist Mikael Holmström in 2015, are not in effect anymore.¹⁰²

If we read the Swedish and Finnish NATO alignment policy in light of liquid neutrality and the proper historical context of the two states' respective foreign and security policies, the decisions regarding NATO alignment appear to be contingent on the older policies, albeit with more nuances. Against the

backdrop of navigating between the interests of great powers in the realm of geopolitics, the alignment with NATO can be seen as a pragmatic approach of enhancing security capability and negotiating more room to manoeuvre. Moreover, it is security and foreign policy in its own right: signalling that the two states are not passive pawns of great power politics. Instead, they are active, proactive, and subjects on their own merit, acting according to their own national interests. The most important of these interests is securing sovereignty and national survival by the means available and necessary. Therefore, the NATO policy of the two states continues the past politics in new surroundings with other means and therefore ought not raise the level of apprehension currently appearing in the public discussion.

If we, however, understand the shocks caused by the changes in the international system, namely Russian assertiveness, and consider this from the point of view of vested national interests and increased 'path dependency' on NATO, the formulation of Nordic security policies appear to be different. The current state of interregnum has revealed the gradual alterations to the age-old doctrine of non-alignment and neutrality. The revelation of changes that have taken place since the 1990s have occasionally caused shock effects in the population, leading to fading trust in political institutions. As the Cold War paradigm kept the more pragmatic foreign and security policy firmly outside public purview, relying on high-level official liturgy, it is all the more understandable that public reactions have varied widely.

The publicly presented estimates of the potential outcomes, plans and risk analysis of these plans appear as a clandestine inching towards NATO. As the majority of the population in both states are still against full membership, this causes alarm. This is not helped at all by the vast and multifaceted media coverage¹⁰³ on the matter, which includes all forms of information activity ranging from amateur pundits to scholarly analyses, outright lobbying, politicking and informal policy reviews often void of any deep insight. Finnish media has covered the NATO debate rather intensively. In his doctoral dissertation concerning the Finnish-NATO media coverage, Juho Rahkonen collected, in addition to radio and TV material, over 1,300 pieces of NATO-related print media pieces from 2003 to 2004 alone. Rahkonen stated that the membership debate started immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and media has been mostly marching to the beat of pro-NATO drum, stating membership is inevitable. One of the overlooked aspects Rahkonen mentions has been the logic within the media, which has enhanced the reporting due to requirements of gaining 'news wins' and dramatic headlines. These have been put together in various news pieces stating that Finland has been pushed towards full NATO membership against the will of the people and by clandestine and backroom deals. Another important feature Rahkonen mentions has been the lack of actual communication and exchange of views. Instead, the media coverage and political discussions have been talking past each other. In Finland, the recent mainstream NATO debate on the media has revolved mainly around the opinion polls and surveys about the pro and contra views of

potential membership. The percentage of Finnish population supporting Finnish NATO membership has steadily declined. The highest percentage in favour of membership has never exceeded 30 per cent. Forty-nine per cent thought Finland was not non-aligned anymore, 52 per cent were opposed to joining NATO, and 59 per cent were against joining if Sweden joined.¹⁰⁴ However, some reporting has emphasised that the percentage of Finns opposing NATO membership has decreased, which testifies to the different framing of the topic per media alignment and pollsters.¹⁰⁵

In Finland, the tendency to closely follow Swedish intentions (and vice versa, to lesser extent) and activities adds to the problematic situation. It partly diffuses agency from Finland's own hands into the hands of Swedish policy-makers. Also, this deflects from the ideal of transparent Nordic parliamentary democracy in which the citizens have wide access to political participation and setting the agenda. However, the high-ranking experts who published a government-commissioned report on the possible effects of Finnish NATO membership considered in 2016 that the Finnish and Swedish NATO debates and policies were closely intertwined.¹⁰⁶

In order to address this notion of a democratic paradox, a more concise and detailed analysis of the past activities, media coverage, interests, gains and risks needs to be made available for the greater public. Also the differences of the two states' situations and interests need to be acknowledged openly instead of almost alarmistically following the 'other'. Although this sense of alarmism, especially in Finland, originates from the historical experiences of 'being left alone', for example in the case of the EU membership applications, also the differences between Finnish and Swedish national interests needs to be addressed properly and information should be made available for the public.

Thus, besides the de facto security challenges and perpetual geopolitical dilemmas the two states are facing in this era of international interregnum, there is another paradox to consider. In order to foster the legitimacy of the political systems and culture, the existing paradoxes and issues mentioned in this chapter need to be addressed in detail. Otherwise, the multifaceted NATO debate might contribute to the deterioration of legitimacy for established representative political democracy. In addition, it needs to be made clear that the various, mainly technical arrangements that have been made in order to increase the two states' NATO compatibility have had political backing. No such technical arrangements could be made without policy guidance – and if they have been, alarmism is truly called for. A clarification of, for instance, the stances of the different political parties, at least, would enable the people to find out what their representatives are advocating, thereby enabling a democratic choice. The problems originating from the lack of trust in the international system during this era of interregnum and the subsequent liquid security policy responding to this situation might contribute in enhancing mistrust in domestic politics, political culture and politicians. One can sit on the fence only for so long. However, it will remain

a balancing act how to combine such democratic procedures with the need to keep certain national interests classified.

Notes

- 1 Bauman 2000, 2.
- 2 BakerFox 1959 suggests that despite various challenges small states have a variety of approaches at their disposal in order to cope with and to resist the pressure of the great powers. The Swedish option was armed neutrality and Finland's 'fighting neutral'; see also Hultdt 1977 who theorised that small states if threatened mostly align with a potential partner for cooperation and support. Walt 1987, agrees. See also Lindell & Persson 1986.
- 3 For instance, in Arter 2006, 2008. For variety and differences, see for instance Meinander, Karonen & Östberg 2018.
- 4 Dahl 1998, 2001.
- 5 For instance, Pharr & Putnam 2000, Runciman 2015, Streeck 2015. However, crises of democracy are not a novelty per se, neither as phenomena nor as a topic of research.
- 6 Huntington, Crozier & Watanuki 1975, 70–78, 97, 203–205; the roots of the decline of trust are deeper cf. 105–108.
- 7 Shapiro 2008.
- 8 See for instance the French Constitution of 1958. The Constitution of Finland 11 June 1999 (731/1999, amendments up to 817/2018 included): 'the Parliament accepts Finland's international obligations and their denouncement and decides on the bringing into force of Finland's international obligations insofar as provided in this Constitution. The President decides on matters of war and peace, with the consent of the Parliament.' Regarding Sweden: 'The Riksdag is guaranteed influence in important international agreements, however. All agreements that require a Riksdag decision in order to be implemented must be approved by the Riksdag. The Government must also obtain the approval of the Riksdag in regard to other important agreements. In such cases, however – if it is in the interest of the Realm – Riksdag approval may be replaced by consultation with the all-party Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs'. The Constitution of Sweden 2016, 42–44.
- 9 Brand 1992, Ihalainen & Matikainen 2016, Roitto 2015, 2016, in wider context cf. Wagner 2017, Häkkinen 2014.
- 10 Cottey 2018a, 1–4, 2018b, 211–212.
- 11 Forsberg & Vogt 2008, Saukkonen 2008.
- 12 Cf. Keohane 1969, Morgenthau 1978, Bull 2012.
- 13 For instance, see Pegram & Acuto 2015.
- 14 Murray 2013.
- 15 Diez 2004, Mead 2014.
- 16 For instance, Heinonen 2011, 150–151. For statistics concerning Finland, see Elinkeinoelämän Valtuuskunnan arvopankki.
- 17 Marcussen 2017, 240–244.
- 18 cf. Karonen, Roitto & Ojala 2018, Roitto, Karonen & Ojala 2018, Ojala, Roitto & Karonen 2018, Arter 2006, 2008, Nedergaard & Wivel 2017a, 1–2, 2017b, 306–312.
- 19 For instance, Kettunen, Lundberg, Österberg & Petersen 2015, also Meinander, Karonen & Östberg 2018, Gebhard 2017, 254–260.
- 20 Salmon 1997.
- 21 *Ibid.*, Kalela 1971, Ahlund 2012, Holmén 1985, Jonasson 1973. For Swedish aspirations on greater role, see Gerner 2002.
- 22 Heikka 2005, Roiko-Jokela 1995.
- 23 For instance, Wivel 2013a, 2013b, 2014, Arter 2008, 263–266.

- 24 Tornudd 2005, 43–52, Archer, Alyson & Wivel 2014, Browning 2002, 2007, Pesu 2016, Westberg 2012, 93–94.
- 25 cf. Hanhimäki 1996, 1997, Kronvall & Petersson 2005, Bjereld 1992.
- 26 Jakobsen 2017, 281–293, Arter 2008.
- 27 Agrell 2000, Åselius 2005. Main part of the military manpower was based on conscription built reservist army. Same applies to Finland, too.
- 28 Brand 1992, Browning 2007.
- 29 Agrell 1991, Holmström 2015, 123–127, Tunander 1999, 2001, 2005, 2008, Silva 1999, Nilsson & Wyss 2016. Dalsjö 2014, mentions that recent scholarly works have started to challenge the dominating view of neutrality and have instead paid attention to the rationalist aspects of security and foreign policy arrangements made by Sweden in the 1950s. However, Wilhelm Agrell and Gunnar Åselius published relevant works on the theme in the 1990s.
- 30 In the case of Finland one of the key scholars in this ‘revisionist’ approach to the grand narratives has been Juhana Aunesluoma, who has also studied the alleged Swedish neutrality through the case of Swedish-British relations. Cf. Aunesluoma 2003, Aunesluoma & Rainio-Niemi 2016. Concerning the domestic sphere of this double play in both states, cf. Meinander 2018.
- 31 Rainio-Niemi 2014. Although the focus of this particular research includes Austria, the small neutral states are considered in detail in the comparisons.
- 32 The Swedish Air Force was one of the largest in Europe. In the 1950s, the Air Force consisted of some one thousand planes, whereas the mobilised reserves could field up to 850,000 people, at least on paper. Cf. Åselius 2005, 26–27.
- 33 Meinander 2018, 340–346.
- 34 Romanovs & Andžāns 2017, 14–15. Sweden supported the Baltic Defence Collegium and donated full equipment for one infantry brigade. Lithuania gained equipment for two infantry battalions from Sweden in 2001–2004. Swedish Project to Support Lithuanian Land Forces Completed’ 3 December 2004. The Estonia project of the Finnish Armed Forces 1996–2003 donated to Estonia two fully equipped artillery batteries, 100 AAA-pieces and 54 mortars, communications and fire control equipment, and two coastal patrol vessels. In addition, 1,200 Estonians participated in military training organised by Finland, and 450 Estonians studied in Finnish military schools during the time. ‘Viro-projekti päättyi’ 2004. Statement by the Finnish General Staff, Blank 1996, (loc) 194–204, states that in Sweden Carl Bildt’s conservative government renounced neutrality in 1992–1993 and went as far as to openly declare Sweden’s interest in defending Baltic States against potential Russian invasion. Subsequent government committed again to neutrality.
- 35 Doeser 2012, 171–185, 186–199, Blank 1996, (loc) 90–204.
- 36 Blank 1996, (loc) 90–215.
- 37 Smith & Steffenson 2011, 405–408.
- 38 Iloniemi 1992, 43. About the rhetorics of these discussions cf. Särkkä 2019, 52–53.
- 39 For instance, in 1998, the tactical symbols, markings (and communications) were changed to be NATO compatible. cf. Sotilaslyhenteet ja merkit (SLM) 1998. In ‘Sotilasmerkistö ja -lyhenteet’ (SML) 2005, the NATO-based APP66 was recognised publicly as the basis of the symbols, p. 10. Sweden opted for NATO ammunition compatible rifle (AK-4) in the 1960s and in the 1970s – 1980s with the AK-5 opted for STANAG 4172 compatible NATO standard 5.56mm x 45 ammunition.
- 40 ‘Kohti Naton ydintä’ 2001, citations from 30 and 32. Särkkä 2019, 126–127, 243–245, Rahkonen 2006, 23, 110–112 considers some of the pro-NATO media discourse as backlash from the Cold War era foreign political correctness. In Sweden, media debate increased vis-à-vis opinion polling and views are somewhat divided, Blix et al. 2016, 185–189. Giles & Eskola 2014, 13 consider that most of the Finnish press, including the leading daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* have taken a pro-NATO stance.

- 41 Arter 2008, 289–294.
- 42 ‘Regeringens proposition 1995/96:12 – Totalförsvaret i förnyelse, etapp 1’; ‘Regeringens proposition 1996/97:4 – Totalförsvaret i förnyelse, etapp 2’; ‘Regeringens proposition 1999/2000:30 – Det nya försvaret’; ‘Regeringens proposition 1999/2000:97 – Vissa organisatoriska frågor inom Försvarsmakten’; ‘Regeringens proposition 2004/05:5 – Vårt framtida försvar’; ‘Regeringens proposition 2004/05:43 – Försvarsmaktens grundorganisation’. Implementation was considered, for instance, in ‘SOU 2005:092 Styrningen av insatsförsvaret’. These were followed up by Försvarsbeslutet 2009, Defence-decision 2009. The main decision was to give up national service (conscription-based military) and followed through the cutbacks of the military budget from that of 2 per cent of GDP in 1997 (3.1 per cent in the 1970s) to 1.1 per cent (from 2011 onwards).
- 43 ‘Regeringens proposition 2004/05:5 – Vårt framtida försvar’; ‘Regeringens proposition 2004/05:43 – Försvarsmaktens grundorganisation’.
- 44 Blix et al. 2016, 146–175.
- 45 Sjursen 2004. See also Kaplan 2004, 109–133. However, in 2018, Forsberg stated that neutral identity is still rather crucial stance, as it has served well and enabled certain room to maneuver.
- 46 Tunander 1999, Holmström 2015, Blix et al. 2016, 135–138, 159–170, Doeser 2012, 186–199, Gebhard 2017.
- 47 For Sweden cf. Blix et al. 2016, 156–171. For Finland cf. UTP 20/2007, 19–21, 37–38.
- 48 Walt 1987, 19–24.
- 49 Saxi & Friis 2018.
- 50 Petersson 2017, 99–101. Cf. Art 1998.
- 51 Bergquist, Heisbourg, Nyberg & Tiilikainen 2016, 47–53.
- 52 Coffey & Kochis 2016.
- 53 Dwyer 2013, 30–32, 35–41, Åtland 2011 mentions that Russian activities are also dependent on NATO and Arctic states although the scenario was rather different back in 2011. Konyshov & Sergunin 2014 however state that Russia is not seeking military superiority, but aims at protecting trade interests and economic spheres of interest and in showing great power capability in general.
- 54 Hayden 2017, loc 87–97, Bergquist, Heisbourg, Nyberg & Tiilikainen 2016, 51–52.
- 55 Clapper 2014, *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community 2014*. See also Polikanov 2013, 82–87.
- 56 Arter 2008, 292.
- 57 Blix et al. 2016, 153–154. See also Proposition 2008/09:140.
- 58 Britz 2012, 223–225, 230–232.
- 59 Speeches 6 September 2007 09:47; Minister of Defence Jyri Häkämies at CSIS in Washington.
- 60 *Maaseudun tulevaisuus*, 12 September 2007, 4. Also Särkkä 2019.
- 61 cf. Forsberg & Vaahtoranta 2001.
- 62 Archer 1999a, 1999b, 55–59, Sydow 2012, 13. Split interests were evident in the 1990s: Britz 2012, 231, 241, 257.
- 63 McCormick 2013, 107–108, 111–113; then again according to McCormick and the works he cites, the EU has other forms of power that should not be overlooked, 115–117, 121, and the joint defence budget of the member states amounts to US\$202 billion, second only to the United States, 122–123, table 5.2,
- 64 Valtioneuvoston selonteko eduskunnalle 1997.
- 65 Sydow 2012, 13, Britz 2012, 231, 241, 257.
- 66 Averre 2016, 699–704; also Howorth 2011.
- 67 The change from neutrality to non-alignment and non-allied is evident when comparing the various Government Reports on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy. Especially: VNS 1/1995, VNK Selonteko 2016. Also VNS 1/1997, VNS 2/2001vp. VNS

- 6/2004 mentions the EU framework as the basis of Finnish policy, VNS 11/2009, VNS 2012. In response, NATO and Nordic cooperation have become more prominent. The ‘EU line of policy’ has not been fully reinstated to its earlier level. See also Britz 2012, 257.
- 68 Karnitschnig & Herszenhorn 2019.
- 69 For Finland, Valtioneuvoston selonteko eduskunnalle 1997. For Sweden, Bergquist, Heisbourg, Nyberg & Tiilikainen 2016, SOU 2016:57, chapter 13 considers the EU level much more in detail than the Finnish NATO report, even if it is considered a work in progress in which Sweden might seek an ambitious role. See also Blix et al. 2016, Britz 2012, 257.
- 70 Petersson 2017, 99–102; also Saxi 2011, esp. n10.
- 71 Coffey & Kochis 2016.
- 72 Petersson 2017. SIPRI Military Expenditure Database for the period 1949–2018, however, reveals that since 2005 Norway has constantly increased its defence expenditures. On the change of Danish policy approach, cf. Wivel 2013b.
- 73 Petersson 2017, 104–106.
- 74 Coffey & Kochis 2016.
- 75 Åtland 2016, Winnerstig 2017.
- 76 Försvarsmakten, Försvarsmaktsidé 2020. Interestingly Finland also opted for downsizing its land forces considerably in the late 1990s, Valtioneuvoston selonteko eduskunnalle 1997.
- 77 SOU 2016:57. Försvarspolitisk inriktning – Sveriges försvar 2016–2020 Prop. 2014/15:109. *Resilience: The Total Defence Concept and the Development of Civil Defence 2021–2025* 2017.
- 78 ‘Sweden – Patriot Configuration–3+ Modernized Fire Units’ 2018.
- 79 ‘Patriot Missiles are Made in America and Fail Everywhere’ 2018. See also Hildreth 1992.
- 80 Försvarspolitisk inriktning – Sveriges försvar 2016–2020 Prop. 2014/15:109, see also Sydow 2018.
- 81 Blix et al. 2016, 156–159, Petersson 2018, Egnell 2015, 2016, 309–338.
- 82 Försvarspolitisk inriktning – Sveriges försvar 2016–2020 Prop. 2014/15:109.
- 83 VNK Puolustuselonteko 2017a, 16. ‘Puolustusjärjestelmää kehitetään siten, että mahdolliselle sotilaalliselle liittoutumiselle ei muodostu käytännön esteitä’.
- 84 Sydow 2018. Also *Resilience* 2017.
- 85 Coffey & Kochis 2016. Bergquist, Heisbourg, Nyberg & Tiilikainen 2016, 52.
- 86 Forsberg 2018.
- 87 VNK puolustuselonteko 2017a, 2017b. Esiselvitys Hornet-kaluston suorituskyvyn korvaamisesta, Loppuraportti.
- 88 ‘Hornet-kauppojen taustalta paljastui “erittäin ruma tempu” – kolmen koplä junaili salaa koneet Suomeen’ 2014.
- 89 Blix et al. 2016, 171–175. Also DS 2015:39 Samförståndavtal med Nato om världlandsstöd.
- 90 *Finlex* 82/2014 www.finlex.fi/fi/sopimukset/sopsteksti/2014/20140082/20140082_1.
- 91 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- 92 ‘Suomen johtamisjärjestelmäorganisaatio mahdollisti Bold Quest -tapahtuman toteuttamisen’, *Pääesikunta* 16.5.2019 15.49.
- 93 Trilateral Statement of Intent 2018.
- 94 Cf. Särkkä 2019, Rahkonen 2006, Ydén, Joakim & Magnus 2019.
- 95 SOU 2016:57. Bergquist, Heisbourg, Nyberg & Tiilikainen 2016.
- 96 Saxi 2011, Saxi & Friis 2018. See also Forsberg 2013.
- 97 SOU 2016:57, 14–15 mentions this to be the most important Swedish security policy direction, though this idea overlooks the precarious geopolitical situation of Finland vis-à-vis Russia’s border and different security interests, as the SOU report also emphasises

- a direct threat to Sweden from Russia. Were a conflict to occur, Finland would serve as a buffer or eastern flank for Sweden.
- 98 Petersson 2017, 104–106. This is noted also in SOU 2016:57, 137–138, 141–142, 146–147.
- 99 Bergquist, Heisbourg, Nyberg & Tiilikainen 2016, 24–25, 30–31, 45–46.
- 100 Blombergs 2016, Haukkala 2013, Bjereld 1992.
- 101 Cf. ‘Suomen huippusalaisen’ 2020.
- 102 Cf. Holmström 2015, Bruzelius 2007.
- 103 Regarding Finland, cf. Rahkonen 2006, Särkkä 2019, Blix et al. 2016, 185–189, SOU 2016:57, 150, however notes that Finland wants to remain outside the Swedish domestic NATO-discussion.
- 104 ‘Survey: Finns Wary’ 2013.
- 105 *Uusi Suomi* 3 February 2015. ‘Kysely: Nato jakaa suomalaiset – joka kolmas empii’. The article mentions that more Finns are changing their views regarding NATO membership to more positive. The pro-NATO support has increased from 18 per cent to 26 per cent by 2015, based on the EVA polls regarding NATO membership opinion surveys. *Uusi Suomi* is an online news media, which claims to be politically non-aligned. Särkkä 2019 mainly agrees.
- 106 Bergquist, Heisbourg, Nyberg & Tiilikainen 2016, 55. The report was commissioned by Mats Bergquist (former high-ranking Swedish diplomat), François Heisbourg (diplomat and director of the IISS), René Nyberg (former high ranking Finnish diplomat) and Teija Tiilikainen (at the time the leader of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, FIIA). Blix et al. 2016, 199, have considered the same, but mention that Finland applying NATO membership is very unlikely and were it to apply, Sweden might not follow suit, but were Finland to opt out, it would strengthen the reasons why Sweden should apply. Similar, but much more detailed report was crafted by Krister Bringéus in Sweden: SOU 2016:57, 148–150, which mentions that Finnish discussion is different due to Finns not perceiving a direct threat from Russia and Finland having less importance for Baltic seaways and thus not in the epicentre of potential conflict. Sweden, in turn, must observe the potential Russian threat for Baltic States in a different way.

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