

Neutrality has long been regarded as an unconventional basis for a foreign policy and often has been overlooked by theorists, due in part to its fluid definition. Neutrality has evolved differently in the states that claim to adhere to the principle and the changing conditions of the international system. Traditionally, as defined at the Hague Convention of 1907, neutrality refers to non-participation in foreign conflicts which includes the refusal of providing any military assistance and the use of the neutral's territory to transport troops. Most essential to the character of a professed neutral, however, is the rejection of any form of military alliance. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the subsequent reconfiguration in the world order and the commencement of integration into the European Union, "euro-neutrality" has become the subject of much speculation. Will neutrality continue to effectively describe the foreign policy of its adherents? In other words, will neutrality survive both the systemic changes and, more pertinently, integration into the EU's security architecture and economic union? Torn at by both these realist and liberal considerations, it is my belief that neutrality is in the process of dissolving as a substantive foreign policy and is now used as a loosely defined icon formulated to resemble national continuity and imbue upon national politicians the normative political legitimacy the policy has granted them in the past. Therefore, despite public support for neutrality and the presence of significant euro-skepticism (attitudes critical of the EU and supportive of national sovereignty) in each state, the political elite in Sweden, Austria, and Finland have advanced in the direction of security and economic integration to varying degrees since 1991 in the hopes that the EU will help the small countries remain economically competitive in the vast global market while simultaneously retaining the international prestige associated with neutrality.

In this comparative case study, I seek to explain why states have adopted neutrality, why

states choose to redefine it, and how neutrality cannot be compatible with the emerging EU security structure as envisaged in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Three of the five European neutral states fit within the framework I wish to establish: Sweden, Finland and Austria. All three are in the process of integrating into the EU, enforce armed neutrality, and have realist foundations for adopting neutrality. I exclude Ireland because it enforces an unarmed neutrality that is not founded on security concerns or geopolitics, but rather on an ideological protest against the UK.¹ Switzerland's neutrality, though founded upon realist principles, remains outside of the EU, making it more resilient to integrationist forces that would otherwise impact its neutrality policy as they do in the other three cases thus making this Alpine neutral unsuitable as well. The case of Maltese neutrality may potentially fit within my analysis and serve as an area for future research in comparative case studies of neutrality, but the literature on the small island's security policy is quite scant in relation to the other neutrals. For this reason and for the sake of expediency, I omit Malta from my analysis.

In order to demonstrate the evolution of neutrality, I will first discuss the neorealist factors that led to the adoption of neutrality in each state and how systems theory fails to explain wholly both why neutrality remains intact in an era bereft of traditional security concerns and why the neutrals have chosen to redefine their policies. I then propose that neutrality's evolution can best be explained through a combination of neoliberal and neofunctionalist theory in that complex interdependence and the need to remain competitive in the global market has compelled the three neutrals to redefine their policies in a very fluid manner that permit heightened degrees of cooperation in the security architecture of the EU, including a close relationship with NATO

¹ Neal, Jesse G. "Choosing to Go It Alone: Irish Neutrality in Theoretical and Comparative Perspective." *International Political Science Review* 1 (January 2006): 7-28.

despite repeated rejection of explicitly entering the alliance. I then shift my analysis to address constructivist arguments that often pertain to the role of national identity and cosmopolitan idealism in the maintenance of neutrality. Though these factors have succeeded in playing a larger role in the least integrated EU neutral (Sweden), it is still found that in all three countries (to varying extents) the elite engage in pursuing policies that tend to favor integration and the abandonment of neutrality principles, positions that are at odds with public concerns of retaining national sovereignty, a realist concept often linked closely to neutrality. National identity and state-level analyses of neutrality are thus found to be unsuitable in understanding the changing nature of neutrality.

Neorealism and the Foundations of Neutrality

Before discussing the deterioration of neutrality in the present day, it is important to understand the conditions that allowed such a policy to be both viable and desirable. Of the three states, only Sweden has a history of neutrality preceding the Cold War. It is a policy that has never been enshrined into either its constitution or common law, yet Swedish neutrality has been practiced for nearly 200 years. It was born from the triumph of Napoleon's strategy of mass conscription which created an environment in Europe where small states could no longer contend with the Great Powers militarily². Neutrality was thus formulated as a comprehensive policy at the Congress of Vienna in order to curb the power appetites of the larger states and to prevent any upset of power. Swedish neutrality, therefore, was both a product and a tool of the balance of power in a multi-polar system. The two world wars saw the evaporation of neutrality among most of the original adherents, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and Norway, leaving only

² Hopper, Bruce. "Sweden: A Case Study in Neutrality." *Foreign Affairs* 23, no. 3 (April 1945): 435-49.

Sweden and Switzerland. The post-war bipolar world order did not pose a threat to Swedish neutrality; on the contrary, the change served to reinforce it. Sweden's geopolitical position next to newly neutralized Finland provided for "the Nordic Balance"³, that is it served as a dividing bloc that could temper the power drives of the West, as Finland functioned towards the USSR. It is during the Cold War that Swedish neutrality takes on a high-minded moral character of being an agent of peace, providing Sweden with both prestige and a world stage to criticize all it saw as belligerents, the most poignant example being Prime Minister Olof Palme's sharp criticisms against the US invasion of Vietnam.⁴ With neutrality keeping Swedish troops out of two world wars and its new, cosmopolitan and idealist identification, the policy of neutrality became very popular among the Swedish public. The electorate thus reinforced the policy by keeping the Social Democrats in power.⁵ However, as I will argue later, realist considerations and the rigid bipolar order largely determined the behavior of Sweden, which, despite its neutrality, had formed, in secret, military contingency plans with US authorities on the occasion of a Soviet invasion. This brings forth interesting questions regarding neutrality's ultimate utility and Sweden's alleged traditional commitment to the principle in the context of neutrality's redefinition, as I will demonstrate later.

In contrast with Sweden, the neutrality policies of both Finland and Austria do not have such a long historic tradition, both having the policy imposed on them due to the post-war restructuring of the international order and weaker military deterrence, a model defined by Josef

³ Jakobson, Max. *Finland in the New Europe*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.

⁴ Ferreira-Pereira, Laura. "Swedish Military Neutrality in the Post-cold War: 'old Habits Die Hard'" *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 6, no. 3 (2005): 463-89.

⁵ Möller, Ulrika, and Ulf Bjereld. "From Nordic Neutrals to Post-neutral Europeans: Differences in Finnish and Swedish Policy Transformation." *Cooperation and Conflict* 45, no. 4 (January 2010): 363-86.

Binter as “positive-negative” neutrality.⁶ Upon its independence in 1919, Finland practiced a form of informal neutrality as to avoid antagonizing the USSR. However, the anti-communist rhetoric and behavior of Finnish elites served to undermine the policy and by the 1930s Finland tried to abandon it by forging a Nordic alliance structure. However, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, all neutral states at the time, did not want to be drawn into a conflict that would most likely originate from a Finno-Soviet dispute.⁷ Even in this earlier instance, Finland clearly distinguished itself as different from other neutral states in its willingness to abandon neutrality when faced with realist pressures. Truly, the Winter War between Finland and the USSR revealed to many Finns that neutrality was not reliable in preventing war and that neutrality should not turn into a dogmatic creed as it had in Sweden. After World War II and the subsequent emergence of the Western and Communist blocs, Finland’s neutrality was solidified due in part to its adverse geopolitical position between the two. As mentioned above, with Sweden, Finland formed “the Nordic Balance”⁸, wherein it took on the role of a mediator, in particular with the USSR. Indeed, Finland learned from the Winter War that neutrality could only be viable when relations with the Soviet Union were positive. Thus, despite its western socio-political orientation, Finland entered into friendly relations with the Soviet Union under both the 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance (YYA). As a consequence, Finland embraced a form of “active neutrality” known as the “Paasikivi–Kekkonen Line” (named after two Finnish presidents) that sought positive bilateral relations with the USSR

⁶ Binter, Josef. "Neutrality, European Community and World Peace: The Case of Austria." *Journal of Peace Research* 26, no. 4 (November 1989): 413-18.

⁷ Neuhold, Hanspeter. "Permanent Neutrality in Contemporary International Relations: A Comparative Perspective." *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1982).

⁸ Jakobson, Max. *Finland in the New Europe*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.

through avoiding criticism of its communist neighbor and strong trading relations. This is in stark contrast with Austria and Sweden's interpretations of "active neutrality" which insisted on equal criticism and greater internationalism. Throughout the Cold War, Finland was criticized by the Western bloc as being overly cozy with the USSR, the term "Finlandization" being used to describe the fear held by the US that other Nordic NATO members would drop out of the alliance in favor of a Finnish-style arrangement with the USSR.⁹ Even after the Cold War, perceptions that Finnish sovereignty (and the neutrality that maintained it) rested on the back of a happy Russia is a notion that has had a hard time dying in the minds of Finnish politicians, one particularly key in the 2007 debate on joining NATO that I will discuss later in the context of redefining neutrality in the new world order.

The case of Austrian neutrality differs from Swedish and Finnish neutrality in its lack of historical precedence before the Cold War. Prior to this, Austria had traditionally enjoyed status as one of Europe's great powers, embodied either in the Austro-Hungarian Empire or Nazi Germany. Its defeat in WWII brought with it the imposition of neutrality on Austria by the occupying powers. Its geopolitical position between the Soviet Union and the West helped induce neutrality, a policy the Soviet Union insisted on as a precondition before they withdrew troops from Austria. The neutralization of Austria was a positive development for Soviet security, as it diminished the possibility of a greater NATO presence in Eastern Europe, thereby reducing the rigidity of the alliance structure of the bipolar order.¹⁰ Neutrality, like the Finnish case, was a tool employed by the greater powers (in particular the USSR) to mitigate sources of tension between the two blocs. However, in response, Austria (like Sweden) adopted a policy of

⁹ Dutton, Edward. "Finland's Cold War Legacy." *Contemporary Reviews* 3, no. 2 (July 2006): 306-11.

¹⁰ Binter, Josef. "Neutrality, European Community and World Peace: The Case of Austria." *Journal of Peace Research* 26, no. 4 (November 1989): 413-18.

“active neutrality” that openly sought to reduce tensions through conflict mediation, arms reduction inspection, and indiscriminate criticism of the superpowers. Thus Austria, like the other neutrals, managed to play its relative weakness off as a ideational force that brought with it international prestige. In a key area differing from Finland or Sweden, however, Austria has written into its constitution a status of permanent neutrality similar to Switzerland, a position that poses some problems for Austrian politicians in their current efforts to redefine such a constraining policy in their efforts to integrate Austria into the EU.

In discussing the roots of neutrality, I have found that neutrality is a policy developed in response to the power politics of Europe as an alternative means of safeguarding a state’s sovereignty in the international system. This is not to say neutrals are not subject to the pressures of larger states, for neutrality can only be practiced when it is recognized and respected by greater powers. In essence, neutrality is a state-centric policy born from traditional understandings of international behavior in that it makes the assumption that the ability to initiate and sustain war is the monopoly of a state. However, the swift dissolution of the USSR brought with it structural changes to the international system that had no precedence in international relations. The sudden reality of a sole superpower brought into question whether joining the NATO alliance would be conducive to help deal with new European security threats or simply aggravate Russia and provide few benefits in the long term. Likewise, would integration into the EU better serve these security matters or would it undermine the sovereignty of the neutrals? Compounding this neutrality identity crisis is the growing presence of violent non-state actors (e.g., terrorists, pirates) and the frequency of civil wars that ultimately undermine national interests and humanitarian goals in such unstable regions. It is questionable whether such a policy, wrought in the forges of European power politics in the 19th and 20th centuries, can

effectively address these increasingly prevalent security issues effectively. Hopes that neutrality would spare its adherents from such unconventional security threats have proved to be delusional; for instance, the Austrian authorities foiled a terrorist plot in 2005 and Sweden suffered an unsuccessful suicide terrorist attack in 2010. The changing nature of both system and conflict has thus prompted neutrals to redefine their policies in order to conform to EU integration while simultaneously appeasing their citizens who greatly value neutrality as a vital characteristic of national identity. In the post-Cold War era, all three have done this by applying a narrow definition of “military non-alignment” to their neutrality policies, essentially allowing any type of aid or peacekeeping mission that falls short of combat operations. This has allowed the political elite to maintain an illusory vision of neutrality to satiate the public while simultaneously allowing the flexibility to partake in the EU security architecture.

The Limits of Neorealism: Neutrality Lives On

The unexpected and sudden collapse of the Soviet Union was a shock to the international system. The dissolution of one of the major poles demanded an immediate reevaluation of the security policy of all countries, the euro-neutrals, to differing degrees, not exempt. Perhaps the most notable change was felt in Sweden, where, in 1992, Carl Bildt’s Moderate-led government announced the “1992 Formula”, which redefined Swedish neutrality to read “non-participation in military alliances, with the aim of making it possible for our country to be neutral in the event of war in our vicinity”¹¹. By this wording, neutrality could be invoked in the instance of an immediate war between its neighbors, but the ambiguity of “with the aim of” (a phrase that was the subject of major debate in the *Riksdag*) allowed the country to make no guarantees on what

¹¹ Möller, Ulrika, and Ulf Bjereld. "From Nordic Neutrals to Post-neutral Europeans: Differences in Finnish and Swedish Policy Transformation." *Cooperation and Conflict* 45, no. 4 (January 2010): 363-86.

course of action it would take in the event. It has been argued that uncertainty and geopolitical factors played an important role in shaping this flexible definition, as Russian troops remained stationed in the newly independent Baltic States, but it should be noted that these were of secondary concerns to Bildt. The structural change of the international system merely provided the political opportunity to redefine Swedish neutrality to gain more flexibility in pursuing its international interests, prepare the country for eventual integration into the EU, and allow Sweden to take a larger role in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian aid, in particular during the Bosnian conflict. The Social Democrat's (SÅP) return to power in 1994 coincided with the withdrawal of Russian forces from the Baltic States. This development removed the most salient potential source of conflict in Sweden's vicinity, thus rendering the security implications of the 1992 formulation somewhat outmoded. Despite this, the SÅP retained Bildt's redefinition of neutrality not out of a fear of Russia, but for its original purpose of conforming Sweden to EU security standards.

Finnish and Austrian changes to neutrality policy following the immediate collapse of the USSR were far less reactionary, in part due to the nature of their respective neutrality policies. Finland's geographical proximity to Russia (a crippled giant, but a giant nonetheless) and heavy Russian military presence in the Baltic States prompted Helsinki to let the dust settle before any drastic policy changes were explicitly made.¹² When debating EU membership, security was used as a rationale for both the traditional maintenance of neutrality and the reorientation of Finland towards the western sphere of influence. Consequently, each side accused the other of undermining Finnish security. Though consensus between the parties ultimately coalesced into

¹² Schmidt, William E. "Did Moscow Spoil Finland for the West?" *The New York Times*, February 9, 1992.

an overwhelmingly pro-EU force, it is vital to understand that security interests are harder to define during a period of uncertainty and that we shouldn't overemphasize its role in Finland's decision to join the EU. Though powerful politicians, like President Mauno Koivisto, may have seen the EU as a source of security and supported membership on that basis, for the most part security issues were of secondary consideration to many of the Finnish political elite who sought to fix the dismal state of the economy, as will be discussed in the next section. Finland's eventual ascension into the EU in 1995 economically aligned the country with the west, serving as a future catalyst to neutrality policy change.

In Austria, constitutional neutrality prevented the type of swift reaction that occurred in Sweden, despite the immediate security concerns cropping up near its border and the mass flow of Bosnians in 1993. To most Austrians, neutrality was, in essence, still a viable security policy. In fact, neutrality's popularity reached its pinnacle among the public during this conflict, thus forcing the ruling ÖVP (liberal conservatives) and SPÖ (social democrats) to tread carefully in their future evaluations of the policy, a process that had begun before the fall of the Soviet Union for reasons vastly different from security interests: ascension into the (then) EC.¹³

It is curious to note in all three cases that though neorealist factors contributed greatly to the adoption of neutrality policies, they did little to induce a departure from the principle. As Jan Eliasson notes, "If during the Cold War, we managed to cope with the nuclear threat by remaining outside a military alliance, why seek nuclear guarantees when the Cold War is over? It's paradoxical."¹⁴ It is thus important to note that we cannot explain changes to neutrality

¹³ Luif, Paul. "Austria's Permanent Neutrality: Its Orgins, Development, and Demise." Edited by Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Ruth Wodak. In *Neutrality in Austria*, 129-59. Vol. 9. Contemporary Austrian Studies. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001.

¹⁴ Ferreira-Pereira, Laura. "Swedish Military Neutrality in the Post-cold War: 'Old Habits Die Hard'" *Perspectives on*

policy through solely realist interpretations, but rather in the context of EU integration. Indeed, the extinction of the antagonistic environment of the Cold War facilitated a profound shift in state priorities in Europe in that security, a principle considered vital by neo-realists, has become of increasingly of secondary importance to neutrals. Pertti Joenniemi supports this view, writing, “Rather than survival, they [neutrals] seem to be concerned about other types of problems, such as their technological competitiveness and economic performance in an increasingly integrated world economy.”¹⁵ The new world order that replaced the bipolar order thus greatly changed the vital interests of neutral states. It is therefore better to discuss neutrality’s redefinition in the context of neoliberal theory, that, through institution building (the EU, in this case), low politics such as economic growth and interdependence will ultimately become more salient than security and thus, via neofunctionalist spillover, shape the behavior of the state. This is not to say that realist considerations should be disregarded, for the absence of such pressures have helped render neutrality to be something of an artifact, an outdated foreign policy detrimental to the integrationist efforts of the state. However, the reasons behind reforming neutrality can be best described as efforts to pave the way for strengthening the EU and enjoying the economic and, to a lesser extent, security benefits accompanying it.

Neoliberalism: The Role of the Economy and Institution in Neutrality’s Redefinition

It has long been debated among states to what degree a neutral’s economic ties with an aligned country constitute as a *de facto* alliance between the two. For instance, the decision on the part of the German high command to sink neutral US merchant ships *en route* to Great

European Politics and Society 6, no. 3 (2005): 463-89.

¹⁵ Joenniemi, Pertti. "Models of Neutrality: The Traditional and Modern." *Cooperation and Conflict: Nordic Studies in International Politics* 23, no. 2 (June 1988): 53-67.

Britain during WWI was based partly on disproportionate trading figures and a founded belief that the alleged neutral was supplying a wartime belligerent with weapons. But it was not only weapons the US was shipping across the Atlantic in excess: food, medicine, and raw materials could likewise be interpreted as providing a form of military assistance under articles six through ten of the Hague Convention. It is thus quite understandable that the ambiguity of these clauses has been a source of contention between neutral states and great powers. During the Cold War, accusations were leveled by the USSR that Sweden and Austria were violating their neutrality by seeking economic integration within the western bloc. Likewise, the US was a vocal critic of Finland's close economic relationship with the USSR (established by the YYV Treaty) and, in many ways, considered the Nordic nation as overly subservient to its massive neighbor. To understand neutrality's change after the Cold War, it is important to look at earlier attempts made by the neutrals to strengthen economic ties and cooperation between themselves and their neighbors.

In the case of the European neutrals, the first step towards market integration came with the establishment of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), a trade bloc consisting of both neutral (Sweden, Austria, Finland) and aligned states, in 1961. It functioned as an alternative to the European Economic Community (the ECC, later EC, now EU) that permitted members to establish their own tariffs with non-members. Though EFTA proved to be beneficial to their economies, most of its members wanted to join in the ECC in order to secure greater access to the dynamic French and West German markets. Both Austria and Sweden (but not Finland) sought membership in 1963 but were discouraged by President de Gaulle's decision to veto Great Britain's application. Though Sweden withdrew its application shortly afterward, Austria continued to press for some form of association with the ECC. This is in part due to the

ruling ÖVP's position that neutrality constituted *only* military obligations, but this "military neutrality" was briefly lived when, in 1968, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia made security concerns far more salient. This period of heightened tensions succeeded in cowing the ÖVP to abandon market liberalization and maintain the status quo of quasi-autarchy and protected markets (much to the SPÖ's delight). The USSR was not pleased with Austria's decision to seek membership with an institutional union with West Germany, as one of neutrality's main functions was to ensure guarantees against a renewal of *Anschluss*. The Soviets thus saw economic integration with a strong political dimension as incompatible with neutrality, compelling Austria to amend its interpretation.¹⁶ But what of EFTA? Suffice it to say that the USSR was not ecstatic about the trade association, but its framework was seen as less threatening than the ECC since it excluded the FGR, had a membership of less committed NATO allies (Norway, Denmark) and neutrals (Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, and Finland), and had no past history of trying to form a European Army. For these reasons, it was seen as compatible with neutrality by the USSR, thus permitting all the European neutrals the flexibility needed to begin a process of limited integration. Furthermore, this attitude and the absence of an implicit security component contributed to tacit Soviet consent of the 1972 free trade agreement established between EFTA and the ECC to further economic cooperation. This was particularly important to Finland, as it could use its ties of EFTA to prop up the credibility of its neutrality by offering trading privileges with the western bloc once solely reserved for the USSR in the YYV.¹⁷

It is important to note that even at the height of Cold War tensions, there existed an

¹⁶ Luif, Paul. "Austria's Permanent Neutrality: Its Orgins, Development, and Demise." Edited by Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Ruth Wodak. In *Neutrality in Austria*, 129-59. Vol. 9. Contemporary Austrian Studies. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001.

¹⁷ Moisio, Sami. "Finlandisation Versus Westernisation: Political Recognition and Finland's European Union Membership Debate." *National Identities* 10, no. 1 (March 2008): 77-93.

underlying desire shared by western European countries to liberalize and institutionalize economic cooperation so to further bolster market competitiveness and sustain high levels of growth. However, it is equally important to keep in mind that the economies of countries during the Cold War were still quite sheltered, a trend fortified by the return of Social Democrats to power throughout Europe in the late-1960s. Adhering closely to a Keynesian economic model, Austria, Finland, and Sweden were similar in their desire to reach full employment, provide an extensive range of social welfare policies, and maintain a somewhat self-reliant image conducive to conveying their neutrality. The economic objectives of Social Democrats were thus complementary to the propagation and maintenance of neutrality and further reinforced its utility as a vital component of national security within both the spheres of national defense and economic stability. Economic integration prior to EU ascension in the context of the three neutrals should therefore be interpreted as both cautious and limited in its scope and nature, thus little spill-over can hardly be detected.

This relative economic independence was challenged in each country to varying extents during the latter half of the 1980s due in part to both the unsustainability of the Keynesian model in the face of globalization and the growing importance of transnational capital, since state-shielded industries found it increasingly difficult to compete in the global market. In Austria and Sweden in particular, the 1980s were characterized by prolonged recession and low rates of economic growth. Of these two neutrals, Sweden was perhaps more resistant to reforming the structure of its welfare state to conform to the neoliberal economic model espoused by the EU. Dominated by the SÅP for nearly the entirety of the Cold War, there was considerable reluctance from the government to abandon its popular positions towards welfare and neutrality by seeking EU membership. Instead of silently preparing for EU membership as was the case in Austria, the

SÅP opted to go a “third way” between the Keynesian and neo-liberal models, but it did little to inspire the confidence of its native transnational corporations (TNCs) who continued to pour FDI into the EC at the expense of the national economy. By 1990, the SÅP realized that membership in the EC could address this distressing development and attract more capital to the ailing Swedish economy and applied for membership. The fall of the Soviet Union, the following global recession, and the victory of the more vocally pro-EU Moderate Party (MS) in the 1991 elections greatly facilitated preparations to pursue membership. Among the areas needing reform was Sweden’s neutrality policy, which the SÅP had alleged as early as 1989 to be incompatible with the EC. As noted earlier, redefinitions to Swedish neutrality had a security rationale, but the underlying long-term goal was compatibility with the EU so to reap the economic gains of membership. Sweden’s narrow definition of “neutrality in an event within its vicinity” provided the possibility of a close economic and political union with the rest of Western Europe and thereby attain the means to economic recovery.¹⁸

Austria’s neo-corporatist Keynesian economy that had long functioned well for the “grand coalition” of the two major parties (ÖVP and SPÖ) came under great duress with the intensification of EC integration and global competition. Since few TNCs developed in Austria, this case differs slightly from Sweden. Instead, pressures to apply to the EC originated with a well-organized national industrial elite, the Federation of Austrian Industrialists (VÖI), who desperately wanted to participate in the growing dynamism of the European market. The pro-business ÖVP was the first to consent in 1988 and the more reluctant SPÖ followed suit in July 1989 when it at last applied to the EC. It is important to note that this occurred *before* the

¹⁸ Bieler, Andreas. *Globalisation and Enlargement of the European Union: Austrian and Swedish Social Forces in the Struggle over Membership*. London: Routledge, 2000.

fall of the Berlin Wall, thus prompting the Soviet Union to condemn what it perceived as a violation of Austrian neutrality despite the latter's insistence that the emerging EC would respect the institution of permanent neutrality. However, as will be discussed later, this fantasy hardly manifested in the 1991 Maastricht Treaty's establishment of the CSFP.

Finland differs from the other neutrals in its decision to apply to the EU, as security issues were far more salient in the 1980s and such a move would appear antagonistic only towards the USSR. Sweden's unexpected application to the EU in 1990, however, prompted Finnish politicians to reconsider its stance towards membership and its compatibility with neutrality. In 1991, Finland felt the initial sting of global recession that was fiercely exacerbated by the collapse of its principle trading partner (the USSR accounted for 15% of Finnish exports), an overheating of production, and a severe banking crisis. As a result, Finland endured a ghastly 20% unemployment and its GDP dropped by 13%.¹⁹ Such harsh economic realities prompted the EU debate within parliament to become increasingly tied to economic issues. Despite a fierce clash of interests between the pro-EU industrial/commerce sectors and anti-EU agricultural interests, there was surprisingly little open opposition to EU membership from any party, a curious trait in Finnish politics.

According to neoliberal theory, the building of institutions (such as the EU) can induce economic cooperation and establish a form of complex interdependence between member states. Since states sacrifice a degree of sovereignty in order to tame the anarchic system in which they exist, there must be a visible and continual shift towards cooperation as a co-requisite to integration within the created institution. According to neofunctionalist interpretations, integration in the economic sphere will lead to a sort of spillover effect of cooperation into other

¹⁹ Miles, Lee. *The European Union and the Nordic Countries*. London: Routledge, 1996.

policy areas, most importantly security issues, among member states. In each of the three cases presented, crippled economies and declining prosperity factored heavily into the decision to join the EU thus initiating deeper economic integration with the rest of Europe. When analyzing neutrality's redefinition in Sweden, Finland, and Austria, we must see it in the light of the spillover ascribed by neofunctionalism, that the need to conform to the EU security structure as laid out in the CFSP and cooperate with NATO (the foundation and principle mechanism of EU security) has pressured each country to amend its neutrality policy.

Sacrificing Security Sovereignty: Integration's Impact on Neutrality

Joining the EU in 1995 brought major changes in the neutrality policies of Austria and Finland, while Sweden retained the Bildt 1992 formulation, which was sufficiently ambiguous in its character and application to conform to EU security norms. Recent revelations from the 2010 WikiLeaks of the US State Department suggest that that Sweden has reverted back to its Cold War definition of neutrality as "non-participation in military alliances during peacetime and neutrality during wartime"²⁰, but such a notion is difficult to believe for two reasons. Firstly, Swedish military spending has decreased from 2.5% of its GDP during the Cold War to only 1.2%, discrediting the deterrent effect armed neutrality is supposed to have.²¹ Secondly, Swedish troops participated in Petersberg missions in NATO-led contingencies during the 2011 Libyan Civil War. In regards to Austria, membership into the union emboldened the government to resist Russia's pressure to affirm their neutrality²² and induce constitutional amendments to

²⁰ Cable 07STOCKHOLM506, "Sweden: Scen setter for Prime Minister," May 4, 2007. Accessed December 03, 2011. Due to the founder's decision to shut down WikiLeaks temporarily, data may not be attainable.

²¹ "The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database." SIPRI Publications. Accessed November 21, 2011. <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>.

²² Oesterreich-1 Radio (Vienna). "Russia Retracts Demand for Declaration on Austrian Neutrality." October 16, 1995.

neutrality that permitted Austria to take part in collective diplomatic sanctions. In 1998 the neutrality article was refined once again to allow all EU related peacekeeping and peacemaking operations as well as those duties of the NATO sponsored Partnership for Peace (PfP). These two amendments effectively permitted Austria to perform its security duties to the EU under the Amsterdam Treaty. It is clear through these measures that Austria has strictly defined its neutrality as “military non-alignment,” as it seems to have aligned with the EU in every other possible way. As noted earlier, the lack of normative imperative among the public and constitutional mandate provided Finland with more flexibility. EU membership allowed the government to actively denounce old interpretations of neutrality, the earliest example being President Martti Ahtisaari’s declaration in 1997.²³ Finland has since become even more vociferous in its redefinitions of neutrality, the Foreign Minister, Alexander Stubb in 2007, even going as far as saying to his Russian counterpart that: "We have been politically aligned with the EU as of January 1st, 1995, and we work in close military cooperation with NATO, among others... Finland's foreign policy doctrine is clearly defined in the government's policy programme, and neutrality is not a part of it." However, we must take into consideration that this newer notion of military non-alignment successfully replaced traditional neutrality as a source of conflict mitigation between the EU and Moscow, thereby retaining some sense of continuity in terms of Finland’s relationship with Russia, yet altering greatly its capacity to be an active member in the EU security structure, despite the latter’s close relationship with NATO.

Even after the end of the Cold War, NATO’s attractiveness to the neutrals has always been very limited. The immediate post-USSR environment led conservative politicians in

²³ Ferreira-Pereira, L. C. "Inside the Fence but Outside the Walls: Austria, Finland and Sweden in the Post-Cold War Security Architecture." *Cooperation and Conflict* 41, no. 1 (2006): 99-122.

Sweden to consider membership as a requisite to joining the EU, but it never had a substantial base of support in either parliament or the public. Likewise, conservatives in Austria also considered membership, but lacked overarching support to effectively pursue such a policy. The NATO debate in Finland, however, has always been more substantial than the other two neutrals as Finland's "military non-alignment" exists side-by-side with its policy of reserving the right to enter into a military alliance when it deems vital to its interests. Therefore, NATO membership has been proposed by several Finnish foreign ministers, most recently by Jyri Haakaemies in 2007²⁴. Despite this, the idea of joining the treaty organization still lacks both public and parliamentary support, many Finns worrying that such a move may unnecessarily antagonize Russia. It is thus important to note in the Finnish case that a great motivation to retain an ambiguous version of neutrality out of realist, power political concerns. However, the spillover of integrationist measures that support the EU has helped reinforce this ambiguity by creating an unconventional security relationship. The most prominent is the PfP, a peacekeeping/peacemaking international organization affiliated with NATO that is active in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and many other initiatives. In Finland, supporters of NATO point to the fact that "military non-alignment" is compromised to a degree in that the country is clearly associating itself with a particular military bloc. This is also true in Sweden and Austria, where PfP is quite popular due to its humanitarian aspirations and a non-threatening means of demonstrating neutral commitment to EU security. Each nation regularly sends peacekeeping forces through NATO channels, so it is interesting how such a close partnership can exist between a militarily unaligned state and an alliance structure. PfP further emphasizes the fact

²⁴ *Agence France Presse*. "Finland's New Defense Minister Eyes NATO Membership." April 25, 2007.

that neutrality in the contemporary sense simply equates to non-participation in combat scenarios, and even this could evolve if the EU was directly threatened.

The security structure of the EU is strongly tied to NATO, which, under the Berlin-plus Agreement, shares the same institutions and mechanisms in a time of war or crisis. In the case that NATO declines to act, the EU may utilize these assets to achieve its ends. Though the neutrals have largely been exempt from having to contribute militarily to the EU in the Amsterdam and Lisbon treaties, they have been prompted to contribute in other ways to the security objectives defined in the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and its European Security Strategy (ESS). Both seek to deal with the changing nature of conflict, focusing its efforts to combat terrorism and pirates, prevent environmental disaster, civil war escalation and nuclear proliferation.²⁵ Along with the Lisbon Treaty's guarantees in promoting cooperation in these matters (the Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defense), the EU established the battle group, a division of 1500-2000 troops that primarily perform Petersberg tasks currently. Some observers speculate that duties most likely will evolve as the EU continues to develop the ESS to include a more diverse range of missions (perhaps even military roles).²⁶ Sweden and Finland are both major contributors to the Nordic Battle Group that is currently ready to be mobilized. Austria contributes to the German-Czech Group, but it is not yet a functioning unit. With this open commitment to EU security, questions arise whether the neutrals would actually abstain from aiding their fellow members militarily. Flexibility exists in the Finnish and Swedish cases, but Austria's continued constitutional neutrality serves as a major

²⁵ Ferreira-Pereira, L. C. "Inside the Fence but Outside the Walls: Austria, Finland and Sweden in the Post-Cold War Security Architecture." *Cooperation and Conflict* 41, no. 1 (2006): 99-122.

²⁶ Wessels, Wolfgang, and Franziska Bopp. *The Institutional Architecture of CFSP After the Lisbon Treaty: Constitutional Breakthrough or Challenges Ahead?* Report no. 10. June 23, 2008. <http://www.ceps.eu/>.

barrier to practical defense operations. Many scholars point out that NATO's chances of declining to act in the event of a major European crisis is unlikely, so the EU security structure need not be mobilized. In short, the neutrals can ride on NATO tanks while maintaining their non-alignment image for their respective reasons (identity, geopolitics). However, no matter who acts, the EU will press neutrals to contribute to the effort in some form.

Getting Lost in the Details: The Shortcomings of Constructivism

It would be remiss to neglect perhaps the most prevalent theoretical interpretations of neutrality's alleged survival espoused by constructivist literature. The fundamental tenants of these approaches differ radically from realism and liberalism in that they reject the notion that states behave in a uniform manner in a falsely assumed anarchic international system. Security and economy are often insufficient means of interpreting a state's behavior, since states; in essence, define their own interests in accordance with not just these two cornerstones of power but also in terms of national identity within the context of the international community. This identity is shaped by both cultural values and social forces (i.e. competing interests organized within the state such as trade unions and activist groups) of the collective nation, making democracies particularly sensitive to its impact. As such, states cannot be deemed as rational actors and consequently behave in ways that often contradict their interests, however these may be defined.

When discussing the evolution of neutrality, it is important to address these normative aspects that underlie and reinforce neutrality within a society. Constructivists have argued that neutrality has become institutionalized within a state due to a positive feedback mechanism from the public. This is not to say that neutrality, *per se*, is the object of the resultant expression of

national identity. This is especially true in the Finnish case where neutrality is founded upon a stern pragmatism, but its connotations of self-reliance and national sovereignty still appeal to a healthy segment of the public. Though 45% of Finns agree that neutrality's meaning has changed and that a redefinition was necessary (in contrast with 33% against)²⁷, it belies the fact that neutrality as a principle is never rejected. For instance, when it was leaked that Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen had supported the US in its 2003 Iraq invasion, the public outcry against the government ended in the PM's resignation. It suffices to say that the Finnish people put a value on neutrality, but their government has hardly conformed to these ideational sympathies. One needs only to think back to Foreign Minister Stubb's words. Joining the EU effectively stripped Finland of its identity as an independent, self-reliant state and aligned it permanently within the "family of western countries," thus mythic notions of total sovereignty have been abandoned by the government unequivocally. Despite substantial public apprehension about the EU (the 1995 referendum passed with only a 56% approval)²⁸, Finland had no euro-skeptical parties. Elite consensus has largely shaped Finnish foreign policy since the nation's inception, insulating its formulation from the general public so to ensure its vital goals of security and economic growth. Finland's multi-party parliamentary system, its emphasis on consensus, and a deeply embedded elite political culture thus impeded the formation of a major euro-skeptical party during the 1993 EU debates.²⁹ To spare any one party the scorn of their anti-EU bases of support, the referendum (the first of its kind since 1930) was placed to the voters so to diffuse responsibility and legitimize the government's future efforts to deepen the economic union. Social forces within the

²⁷ Möller, Ulrika, and Ulf Bjereld. "From Nordic Neutrals to Post-neutral Europeans: Differences in Finnish and Swedish Policy Transformation." *Cooperation and Conflict* 45, no. 4 (January 2010): 363-86

²⁸ European Election Database - EU Related Referendums in Austria, Sweden, and Finland." Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (NSD). Accessed May 02, 2011.

http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/country/austria/eu_related_referendums.html.

²⁹ Raunio, Tapio. "Hesitant Voters, Committed Elite: Explaining the Lack of Eurosceptic Parties in Finland." *European Integration* 27, no. 4 (December 2005).

country could do little but try to mobilize a majority to oppose the item, but in the end, industrial and commerce interests won the day. Truly, as Sami Moisio suggests, the referendum sounded the death knell for the Finnish neutral identity and its rebirth as a true member of the western world.³⁰

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the populist True Finns (PS) has emerged to challenge this elite style of consensus force in the 2011 elections, but its choice to remain outside the government in protest against its Pro-EU peers has limited the PS's direct influence in policy-making. The PS has thus yet to make a lasting impression on Finnish political practices, and it is questionable whether a lone wolf in the *Eduskunta* can ever achieve its goals in a system structured around compromise.

In Austria, constructivists seemingly find an ideal case study, as neutrality has played a role in the formation of both Austrian national and international identity. After being absorbed into "Greater Germany" during WWII, the re-born republic was tasked with establishing a new Austrian national identity in the post-war era. This goal was vital to both the state's legitimacy and integrity, for as much as 46% of Austrians in 1946 still considered themselves to be German.³¹ Though initially perceived as a national humiliation by the public, neutrality permitted Austria to remain aloof from the great ideological divide separating Europe and acquire a significant moral standing in the world community. This impartial status brought Vienna great prestige in international affairs, attracting many international organizations and UN

³⁰ Moisio, Sami. "Finlandisation Versus Westernisation: Political Recognition and Finland's European Union Membership Debate." *National Identities* 10, no. 1 (March 2008): 77-93.

³¹ Utgaard, Peter. *Remembering and Forgetting Nazism: Education, National Identity, and the Victim Myth in Postwar Austria*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2003: 83.

agencies to Austria.³² It is thus not surprising that the emerging Austrian national identity would incorporate neutrality as an important component. According to constructivists, this widespread support for neutrality is reinforced through the ballot box and accounts for its survival in the present day. This interpretation, however, ignores several important factors, among the most significant being Austrian political culture. Like Finland, Austria follows a consensual model of governance on a multi-party basis, but for the most part, the “grand coalition” between the two largest parties, the ÖVP and the SPÖ, has largely remained constant for the past sixty years. Majority rule is uncommon, especially with the growth of political opposition to the two party model in the late 1990s and early 2000s. As discussed earlier, both the ÖVP and SPÖ supported admission into the EU as a solution to Austria’s economic problems. Anti-EU opposition from the far-right Freedom Party and the Green Party could not be mobilized due in part to their conflicting ideological interests and minimal representation within parliament. A Pro-EU message carried the day when the referendum passed with an impressive 66%³³ approval to join, despite 61%³⁴ support for maintain traditional neutrality. Since the referendum, Austrians have grown increasingly critical of the political alliance as many perceive that the government is subverting Austria’s constitutional neutrality through its constant efforts to conform to Brussels’ security and economic standards. Despite undeniable economic growth, the Austrian public has become increasingly euroskeptical, ranking fifth in its overall dissatisfaction, just above Sweden. The Austrian government’s ratification of the 2009 Lisbon Treaty (the latest amendment to the

³² Gärtner, Heinz. "Neutrality Must Change." Ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Ruth Wodak. *Neutrality in Austria*. Vol. 9. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2001. 115-28. Print. Contemporary Austrian Studies.

³³ "European Election Database - EU Related Referendums in Austria, Sweden, and Finland." Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (NSD). Accessed May 02, 2011.

http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/country/austria/eu_related_referendums.html.

³⁴ Luif, Paul. "Austria's Permanent Neutrality: Its Origins, Development, and Demise." Edited by Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Ruth Wodak. In *Neutrality in Austria*, 129-59. Vol. 9. Contemporary Austrian Studies. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001.

Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties that aims to further centralize the EU), for instance, was met with relative indignation, as many citizens had pressed for a referendum akin to Ireland's.³⁵ Moreover, the policy remains politicized by the Social Democrats and the ÖVP who regularly condemn the other of abandoning neutrality, when, in reality, both parties have been supportive of security integration into the EU. As Paul Luif suggests, neutrality functions as a tool in Austrian domestic power politics and is invoked in non-threatening situations (e.g. blocking transport of French soldiers for training in Slovakia) or when the constitution prevents action (e.g. the 1999 Kosovo conflict) so to garner public support.³⁶

Perhaps the most compelling case for constructivists exists in Sweden. Two hundred years of domestic peace have fortified large normative barriers that prevent an explicit departure from neutrality. This national preference for neutrality has come to define Sweden's international identity in such a profound way that Swedish neutrality has become a part of conventional international law. It is thus telling that, despite elite capital and the alignment of pro-EU TNCs, the major political parties (SÅP, MS), and the leading labor unions, there was considerable resistance against abandoning traditional neutrality among the public during the EU referendum. It is important to keep in mind, though, that opposition to the EU among the public was not based primarily on abstracts such as neutrality, but a concern that the EU would undermine the Swedish welfare state. Still, the ideological significance of neutrality as a symbol of Sweden's independence from Europe played an important role in the "no" campaign. With 83% of eligible voters participating, the referendum was only narrowly accepted by a 52% majority.³⁷ Though in

³⁵ *Austria Today*. "Government Ignores People's Worries and Future Topics, Opposition Claims." October 26, 2009.

³⁶ Luif, Paul. "Austria's Permanent Neutrality: Its Origins, Development, and Demise." Edited by Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Ruth Wodak. In *Neutrality in Austria*, 129-59. Vol. 9. Contemporary Austrian Studies. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001.

³⁷ "European Election Database - EU Related Referendums in Austria, Sweden, and Finland." Norsk

this instance the elite managed to achieve its goals and succeeded in securing legitimacy for ascension, the Swedish public has been more successful in its defiance of elite interests than Austria and Finland. This reality manifests most powerfully in the 2003 referendum on entering the European Monetary Union (EMU) where the pro-EU alliance once more mobilized to convince the public of the necessity to deepening the process of economic integration by joining the single currency. Growing euro-skepticism among the Swedish public cut across class and party boundaries resulted with a resounding rejection of the initiative (40% 'Yes'; 56% 'No')³⁸. Anders Wildfelt perhaps describes the implications of these results best: "Indeed, the fact that the 'No' side could win, despite inferior financial resources and against the major parties and interest organisations, could be seen as evidence that ordinary citizens in Sweden are not without influence."³⁹ Not only does this demonstrate the government's sensitivity to public opinion, it also shows the public's uncertainty of any form of alliance that may compromise Swedish neutrality or sovereignty, two concepts that seem intertwined at times. Neutrality still retains a lot of political power due to its basic ideational draw to all segments of the voting public, making it strongly supported (and effectively politicized) by the Social Democrats. Despite the SÅP's reluctant, though prominent role in EU integration, the party continues to unfurl the neutrality banner during each election cycle. It is thus important to the SÅP to ensure that changes to neutrality are limited and discreet, but still in accordance with the CFSP of the EU. The behavior of the SÅP is thus somewhat contradictory and should be understood as a conflict between facing economic and security realities while still placating the public with notions of traditional neutrality. Though Sweden is perhaps the most susceptible to ideational domestic pressures of

Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (NSD). Accessed May 02, 2011.

http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/country/austria/eu_related_referendums.html.

³⁸ Cowell, Alan. "For Swedes, Vote on Euro Is Also About Independence." *New York Times*, September 14, 2003.

³⁹ Wildfeldt, Anders. "Elite Collusion and Public Defiance: Sweden's Euro Referendum in 2003." *West European Politics* 27, no. 3 (May 2004).

the three cases, its political behavior in the international arena should be interpreted as rational and designed to maximize its economic and security interests.

In each case analyzed, constructivist arguments tend to focus on why neutrality is maintained rather than how neutrality has evolved. Voter attachment to neutrality in all three cases has had some impact on the behavior of the governing elite in that the neutrals have successfully watered down several collective security proposals in the EU (most prominently the Amsterdam Treaty's CSFP obligations), but it is difficult to say that traditional neutrality has been safeguarded. Rather, it has been steadily eroded by the realist and neoliberal considerations the elite must address such as economic growth and structural changes in the international system. These issues take precedence over national identity. It is true that normative issues may hamper a democratic government's abilities, but it hardly deter it from fulfilling its vital interests. The government simply changes its means to accomplish them.

Neutrality has existed for 200 years as a viable foreign policy for weaker, smaller states to defend their sovereignty from being consumed by the power politics of their more powerful neighbors. Their neutrality, however, was maintained through a cautious balance of power practiced by larger states in both multipolar and bipolar systems. Structural realism, systems theory and geopolitics thus offer an explanation of why Sweden, Austria, and Finland adopted neutrality policies but fail to answer why they have retained these policies in an era bereft of major security concerns. Constructivists point to neutrality as an icon of national identity and public support, but politicians in all three cases have clearly worked against these normative qualities in order to integrate economically and politically within the EU. With its focus on low politics, integration and interdependence, neoliberalism and neofunctionalism provide a

sufficient framework to understanding how Finland, Austria and Sweden have redefined neutrality to a very narrow definition of “military non-alignment”. Even in this sense, the neutrals’ affiliation with NATO and the fact that they are ultimately subject to its security structure raise questions about the worth of neutrality. The neutrals have negotiated hard in the EU to maintain some semblance of traditional neutrality to maintain credibility among voters, but the fact remains that, unless they opt-out (an unlikely and economically adverse choice) they are subject to supporting the EU and its security strategy. With European economies and institutions integrating and centralizing, the traditional model of neutrality as an autarkic preserve from the rest of the world is folly. Would it be possible for Sweden, Austria, and Finland to retreat in such a manner if the EU were invaded? Would they sit outside a security structure to foil terrorist activities, the relatively new face of global conflict and security issues? The evidence presented suggests that they would not. As a foreign policy, politicians have plucked neutrality of its substance to an extent that it can hardly be considered of the same vein as traditional or Cold War understandings, despite the public’s attachment to these antiquated ideals. Neutrality has been reduced to an identity with which politicians have to struggle (Austria and Sweden) and a tool to calm the Russian bear (Finland). It is paradoxical to adhere to “military non-alliance” while associating closely with partner organizations to NATO and working within its security architecture, as the Finnish foreign minister so deftly pointed out to his Russian counterpart. As Europe continues to integrate, pressures to conform to the developing ESS may induce more new evaluations and redefinitions of neutrality. Neutrality may survive as a vestige of national identity, but for all practical purposes, neutrality has significantly diminished as a substantive description of the foreign policies of these (more aptly named) post-neutral European states.

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