

# **Cooperation in the New Northern Europe: The Emergence of New Security Identities and Patterns of Interaction**

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## **Abstract:**

This paper's focus is on the changing nature of cooperation in Northern Europe, a region that witnessed a dramatic transformation after the Cold War's end and the accession of Nordic neutrals Finland and Sweden to the EU. The paper considers regional cooperation, including new challenges as the Baltic states seek to join both the EU and NATO (while Finland and Sweden remain outside NATO) and the EU's relationship with Russia requires further definition. Particular attention is given to the role of the EU's Nordic member states and the EU itself in the region, especially through the Northern Dimension Initiative, which was introduced by Finland in 1997 and developed by Nordic neighbors Sweden and Denmark during their EU Presidencies in 2001 and 2002 respectively. The paper also considers the wider perspective of interactions with non-EU actors, including the United States (and the role of its Northern Europe Initiative), and regional institutions such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Constructivist and new institutional theories are used to argue that new security identities are being constructed in Europe's North as patterns of interaction change.

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## Introduction

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, which impacted on the entire bipolar world order, had a particularly noticeable influence in Europe and especially on the Northern European region. These changes led to the construction of what scholars such as Max Jakobson (1998) and Ole Waever (1992) have referred to as the “new Europe” throughout the continent as a whole, as well as to the construction of a “new” Northern Europe. During the Cold War, one spoke of Eastern Europe and Western Europe and perhaps occasionally of Southern Europe, but Northern Europe was not a concept that featured either in daily speech or in scholarly or official publications. What, then, is today’s Northern Europe? For the purpose of this paper, it is defined as including the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) and the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). The Russian Federation (particularly the north-western portion of the country and Kaliningrad) may also be included, as can Germany and Poland (due to their littoral borders with the Baltic Sea). The focus here is, however, on the region’s small states, especially the Nordic countries.<sup>2</sup>

In particular, attention is given here to changes in patterns of interaction since the Cold War’s conclusion and the interrelationship between these patterns and security identities. Patterns of interaction refer simply to the contacts between official representatives from different countries, primarily at the national level, but even at the subnational or regional level. An example of changing patterns of interaction can be seen, for instance, in the cases of Finland and Sweden following the end of the Cold War as they became increasingly involved in European integration, which meant increased contacts with fellow Europeans. These patterns may then be institutionalized in formal bodies such as the European Union. They may also be the (at times unintended) consequences of participation in such institutions.

The changes since the end of the Cold War have led to the reformulation or creation of security identities to match with the Northern European states’ new geopolitical situations and changing patterns of interaction. In order to understand the meaning of the term “security identity” it is meaningful to deconstruct the significance of both “security” and “identity.” Clive Archer (2001) identifies four types of security: “hard” (difficult to achieve) security, “Hard” (military) security, “soft” (easy to achieve) security, and “Soft” (non-military) security. The focus in this paper, however, is on military versus non-military security rather than the ease with which security can be achieved and thus the terms “hard” and “soft” are both used here in reference to whether or not the use of military force is involved. As will be discussed later, the Cold War era was one in which military-based security dominated the agenda in terms of shaping security identities, while in the post-Cold War period security not involving the use of military force has predominated (at least during the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century).

Identity is a concept that it perhaps even more difficult to define than security. According to Alexander Wendt (1999: 170), “To have an identity is simply to have certain ideas about who one is in a given situation, and as such the concept of identity

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<sup>2</sup> Although the definition of a small state is controversial, Germany, Poland, and Russia are all considered to be too large to qualify as small states.

fits squarely into the belief side of the desire plus belief equation. These beliefs in turn help constitute interests.” For the purposes of this study, a security identity is considered to be a state’s (or a region’s) conception of who or what it is from a security perspective, including its conception of its allies, geopolitical position, and appropriate patterns of interaction. Patterns of interaction are involved in shaping security identities, while, at the same time, security identities themselves influence patterns of interaction, meaning that the two are concepts are intertwined.

This paper concentrates on the emergence of new security identities and patterns of interaction in the new Northern Europe within the context of the evolving nature of cooperation in the region. In order to do so, it examines first these identities and patterns during the Cold War period before examining how they have changed since the end of the Cold War. Finally, consideration is given to the usefulness of constructivist and new institutionalist theories in explaining these changes.

## The Cold War

During the Cold War the Northern European region was filled with divisions, disunity and differing security identities. Even the Nordic region, despite common historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, was divided as far as security identities were concerned. Denmark and Norway, which had histories of invasions by Nazi Germany, were founding members of NATO in 1949. Iceland, which also participated in NATO from its inception, was occupied by British and US forces during the Second World War and did not gain independence from Denmark until 1944. The small island nation signed a defense agreement with the US in 1951 and allowed US military forces to be stationed there.

While Denmark, Iceland, and Norway were clearly within the US sphere of influence during the Cold War, Finland and Sweden professed their neutrality, although clearly there were significant differences between the positions of the two Nordic neutrals. Sweden had not experienced war since the early nineteenth century (when it was forced to cede Finland, which had previously been a part of the Swedish kingdom since the middle ages, to the Russian empire). Finland, on the other hand, had suffered not only a bloody civil/independence war in 1917-1918 but also fought against the Soviet Union in the Winter War in 1939-1940 and the Continuation War in 1941-1944.<sup>3</sup>

Due to their collaboration with Nazi Germany against a common Soviet enemy during the Second World War, as well as the Finns’ closer proximity to the Soviet Union, Finland was constrained during the Cold War far more than Sweden was. The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (*Sopimus ystävydestä, yhteistoiminnasta ja keskinäisestä avunannosta Suomen tasavallan ja Sosialistisen Neuvostotasavaltain Liiton välillä*, known as the YYA-sopimus or FCMA Treaty), signed in 1948 by Finland and the Soviet Union, served as the basis for Finland’s foreign policy during the Cold War. Examples of its importance are particularly noticeable in the cases of the Night Frost and Note Crises in 1958 and 1961

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the historical differences (and similarities) between Finland and Sweden, see chapter three of Novack (2002).

respectively (cf. Novack 2002: 123-125). The Soviet Union's establishment of a base at Porkkala, which it maintained until 1955, made its influence in Finland tangible. As Ole Waever (1992: 90) argues, Finnish neutrality was "the best Finland could get" rather than "an end in itself."

In contrast to the situation in neighboring Finland, Swedish neutrality was "not guaranteed by any international treaty and was not part of international law" (Miles 1997: 41). While Finnish neutrality was very much a product of the Second World War, Swedish neutrality was, as Lee Miles (1997: 41) points out, "a relatively old and deep-seated concept, originating from 1814 and lasting in its most complicated form until 1991" (cf. Penttilä 1999: 172). For Sweden, neutrality had greater moral tinges than was the case for Finland (cf. Waever 1992: 90). For both countries, however, neutrality was an important component of their Cold War security identities and both resulted from and impacted on their patterns of interaction, notably in terms of their participation in international and regional institutions. Differences in the nature and bases of their neutrality policies were also reflected in differences in their patterns of interaction.

Initially the establishment of regional institutions was very much connected to the direct aftermath of the Second World War, and the patterns of interaction and experiences of the war impacted on the postwar period. Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Sweden (along with Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey, and the UK) were founding members of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in 1947, a direct consequence of the provision of US Marshall Aid. Following the Soviet Union's refusal of such financial assistance from the US and thus also membership in the OEEC, Finland also chose neither to accept the aid nor to join the OEEC and did not become a member until after the OEEC changed its name to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1961, when it broadened its base to include non-European countries such as the US and Canada. Finland joined the OECD in 1969. Finland was also late in joining the Council of Europe, which came was established in 1948 with Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (as well as Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Turkey, and the UK) as founding members. Iceland became a member in 1950, but Finland did not join until 1989 (although it was a founding member of the associated Council for Cultural Cooperation in 1961). Thus, the decisions on whether or not to accept Marshall Aid impacted on patterns of interactions that were institutionalized through regional organizations.

Although the United Nations provided an important forum for all of the Nordic countries to meet in the international arena during the Cold War, even here Finland trailed behind its Nordic colleagues in deciding to become a full member. Although the UN was formed in 1945, when Denmark and Norway joined (followed by Iceland and Sweden in 1946), Finland did not become a member until 1955. Once joining, however, Finland became an active member, sending troops to the Middle East to assist in the resolution of the Suez Crisis in 1956. Particularly for neutral Finland and Sweden, UN membership and the associated peacekeeping were important components of their security identities during the Cold War. For Sweden, UN membership was especially key and had moral undertones. According to Charles

Silva (1998: 139), “support for the UN became the keystone of [Östen] Undén’s foreign policy when he led his nation into UN membership in 1946.”

Strictly Nordic cooperation was also developed but limited. In 1952 all five Nordic countries established the Nordic Council to provide an institutionalized forum for parliamentary cooperation. The corresponding body for intergovernmental cooperation, the Nordic Council of Ministers, was created in 1971. The Nordic Council of Ministers (like its counterpart in the European Union) has differing membership depending on the relevant issue under consideration, meaning that, for instance, agricultural ministers meet to discuss agricultural policy while education ministers meet to discuss educational policy. In keeping with the constraints of the Cold War era of which the institution is a product (and in contrast to the EU’s Council of Ministers), however, foreign and defense ministers did not (and still do not) meet within the context of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Security matters, which in the Cold War context meant hard military security (with the concept of soft security being unheard of), were excluded.

Involvement in European integration was more controversial and, indeed, out of the question for the Nordic neutrals during the Cold War. In fact, no Nordic states were present when the Treaties of Paris and Rome were signed in 1951 and 1957 respectively and thus all were latecomers to the process of European integration. Nevertheless, Nordic countries did begin a move towards greater integration with their European colleagues as the 1950s drew to a close. In July 1959 Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (along with Austria, Portugal, Switzerland, and the UK) signed the Stockholm Treaty establishing the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which came into existence in May 1960. Iceland joined in 1970. Although a special FINNEFTA agreement was signed with Finland in 1961, which paved the way to a limited free trade agreement with the EU’s predecessor, the European Economic Community (EEC), in 1973, Finland did not become a full EFTA member until 1986. In 1973 Denmark was the first Nordic to leave the grouping to join the EU (or its predecessors).<sup>4</sup> Although these examples show moves by all Nordic countries to participate in European integration, they also highlight the differences between them.

Perhaps ironically (as it is not today a member of the European Union), Norway joined with Denmark in becoming one of the first Nordic countries to apply for membership in the EEC in 1961 (along with Ireland and the UK), although the applications of the four countries were vetoed by France in 1963. The accession of Denmark and Norway, as well as Ireland and the UK, was finally approved in 1972. However, after Norwegians voiced their opposition in a referendum, Norway’s application was withdrawn, and Denmark became the only Nordic member of the EEC in 1973, joining at the same time as Ireland and the UK.<sup>5</sup> For Finland and Sweden, EEC membership during the Cold War was out of the question. The Nordic countries’ differing participation in the institutions of the Cold War meant that they

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<sup>4</sup> By 1995 Iceland and Norway alone of the Northern European countries remained in the now tiny EFTA (along with only Liechtenstein, which became an EFTA member in 1990, and Switzerland).

<sup>5</sup> Norway also had plans of joining the EU in 1995 along with Finland, Sweden, and Austria, but the Norwegian public voted against membership for a second time in the 1994 referendum. Finland and Sweden (as well as Austria) became full members of the EU in 1995, more than twenty years after fellow Nordic Denmark.

were involved in differing patterns of interaction, which impacted on and was influenced by differences in their security identities.

For the Baltic states, participation in institutions and patterns of interaction differed dramatically from those of all five Nordic countries during the Cold War. Annexed by the Soviet Union, they participated as part of that state in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON, established by the Soviet Union in January 1949) and the Warsaw Pact (founded in May 1955). Indeed, not only their geopolitical position behind the iron curtain that divided Europe but also their inclusion in the Soviet Union limited their ability to interact with the broader international community and to have security identities of their own. Although the Soviet Union participated in the UN as one of the Security Council's five permanent members, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, not being independent states, were without individual representation there. The Soviet Union itself was separated from Western Europe and its North American allies, as East and West formed two opposing poles in a bipolar world that largely defined the security identities of both NATO members and the Soviet Union and its allies. Poland, too, was on the communist side of the iron curtain, while Germany was divided, with one half in the East and the other in the West.

The institutions and patterns of interaction during the Cold War mutually reinforced each other. The divisions between East and West were embodied in institutions such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which in turn reinforced patterns of interaction that separated Eastern and Western European countries from each other. These differing patterns of interaction and the accompanying institutions in turn shaped and were reinforced by security identities that, for those countries that were clearly a part of the Eastern and Western blocs, were defined by their allegiance either to the Soviet Union or to the US. For those outside the alliances, notably Finland and Sweden, neutrality was a defining feature of their security identities.

These divisions separated not only Northern Europe but also the Nordic region. Although the Nordic region was united through pan-Nordic institutions, these were carefully constructed so as not to challenge the conventions of the Cold War and thus excluded cooperation on security and defense issues. Although there was a sense of Nordic identity (or at least common Nordic values) shared by the five Nordic countries during the Cold War, security identities were not included. Rather, security, which during the Cold War was equated with hard security, was considered to be outside the remit of Nordic cooperation. While Denmark, Norway, and Iceland were NATO members with clear Western European security identities that included their alliance with the US, Finland and Sweden had identities based on their status as neutral states. These different identities were reinforced by and reflected in the differing patterns of interaction in which the countries engaged. For instance, while Denmark, Iceland, and Norway participated in NATO, Finland and Sweden did not. The Baltic states, as part of the Soviet Union, were further removed from these circles and unable to develop independent security identities. Despite cultural, linguistic, and historical ties between the Nordic countries, the differences between the countries outweighed the similarities even between these states during the Cold War period, particularly from the perspective of security identities and patterns of interaction.

## The Construction of a New Northern Europe

The end of the Cold War created dramatic changes in institutions and patterns of interaction in Northern Europe. Perhaps the most obvious change was the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which not only led to the end of the bipolar world that had been a feature of the Cold War era but also to the emergence (or re-emergence) of new small states. From the Northern European perspective, this meant significantly the independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1991. The Nordic countries were no longer the only small countries in Northern Europe, and all eight countries were united in their need to redefine their roles in the new Europe. On the other hand, Germany was reunified, giving Europe a new heavy-weight.

The Cold War's conclusion led not only to the expansion and evolution of existing institutions such as the EU and NATO but also to the construction of new ones that would institutionalize the changes in the Northern European region, develop new patterns of interaction, and promote regional security and cooperation. One of the earliest and most important institutions to emerge was the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), established in Copenhagen in 1992. Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden were among the founding states, as were Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Russia, as well as the European Commission. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden were also founding members of the Council of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR), which was established in Kirkenes, Norway in 1993. The co-founders of this organization also included the European Commission and Russia. In addition, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Poland, the UK, and the US were involved as observers from the Council's inception. As can be seen from the above examples, the European Commission (and thus the EU) was involved from an early stage in Northern European regional cooperation. The new patterns of interactions established by these institutions thus increased contact between the EU and Russia, as well as, particularly through the CBSS, the Baltic states, and Poland.

With the Cold War's end the Baltic Sea itself was transformed from a dividing into a unifying sea that could be used in the construction of a new region and regional identity. Ole Waever (1992: 92) has referred to the "Baltic project" as part of the "new Europe." Rather than forming borders, seas such as the Baltic would form "prime mythic sources of identity" in this new Europe (Waever 1992: 102). Yet, such an identity is not one traditionally associated with the new broader Baltic Sea region that previously had not been regarded as a meaningful region. The new region and accompanying identity that emerged following the Cold War's end were, at least in part, constructed. The new Baltic Sea region at the heart of the new Northern Europe was in many ways truly new and is still developing even today (with the notion of a Baltic Sea regional identity controversial). The considerable differences between the two regions (Nordic and Baltic) that were merged to create this new Baltic Sea area are pointed out by scholars such as David Kirby (1995: 381), who argues that, despite similarities between the Nordic and Baltic states, "the differences between the Baltic and Nordic states far outweigh their similarities." This new identity was constructed not only at the national level but also frequently at the sub-national level, as Kari Möttölä (1996) points out.

For the Nordic region's two neutral countries, Finland and Sweden, building regional security in the post-Cold War era has been a vital concern. A crucial part of creating both the conditions for regional stability and a new Northern European identity has been the evolution and enlargement of existing institutions, as well as the construction of new regional institutions. The institutionalization of new patterns of interaction between Northern European countries has been used as a way of increasing regional stability and thus also security. For Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, one of the first steps to increased involvement in European integration was membership in the Council of Europe (in 1993 for Estonia and Lithuania and 1995 for Latvia). Even the Russian Federation joined in 1996, meaning that all the countries of the Northern European region were included within the body. There has thus been a tremendous increase in interactions between Northern European states since the end of the Cold War.

Nordic cooperation itself in the post-Cold War era has often centered on Russia and the Baltic states. According to Pär Stenbäck (1995: 26), "Operations in northwestern Russia and the Baltic countries are the fastest growing forum of Nordic cooperation." In 1995 the Nordic Council of Ministers established an information office in St Petersburg. The Nordic Council of Ministers' budget for regional cooperation (which includes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and north-western Russia) in 2003 was 85 million Danish crowns. In addition to the office in St. Petersburg, there are also information offices in Riga, Tallinn, and Vilnius (the capitals of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania respectively).

The European Union has also evolved and expanded to become a central body that has institutionalized patterns of interaction, even within the Northern European region. The door to membership in this organization was first opened for Finland and Sweden after the Cold War's end. EU membership for Finland and Sweden and the deepening of the European integration process has changed patterns of interaction for the entire Northern European region. For instance, although not members of the EU, Iceland and Norway now participate in the Schengen agreement, allowing free movement of persons between participating countries. Although Norwegians rejected EU membership for the second time in 1994, Norway has not remained completely outside the EU's patterns of interactions. According to John T. S. Madeley (2002: 212), "It can well be said that if Norway is not actually in the EU, the EU is very much in Norway. The country's seeming splendid isolation is both less splendid than most of its political and business elite would like and much more ambiguous than might at first seem." For Iceland, too, there is cooperation with the EU through, for instance, the European Economic Area (EEA, in which Norway also participates).<sup>6</sup> Thus, although not EU members, Iceland and Norway are not completely outside the European integration process. The decision taken at the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002 to admit ten new members (including Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) to the European Union in May 2004 suggests that there will be increasing interaction between the countries of the new Northern European region during the coming years. These developments have reinforced and built upon increasing ties between the Nordic and Baltic countries that emerged since Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania gained their independence from the Soviet Union.

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<sup>6</sup> Although the EEA provides access to the EU's internal market, it does not provide influence on the EU's legislative process.



In addition to the Baltic states, Russia has become more involved in cooperation with the new Europe. The extent to which the large country that is spread across both Europe and Asia is a member of this new Europe is, however, not entirely clear. The increasing interaction between Russia and Europe even includes NATO, which was originally established in large part to protect Western Europe and North America from, what US Cold War president Ronald Reagan termed “the Evil Empire,” the Soviet Union. The establishment of the NATO-Russia Joint Council, which held its first meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland in May 2002, was, according to the UK’s foreign secretary Jack Straw, “the funeral of the Cold War.” Russia’s increasing interactions with the countries of the new Europe, including the new Northern Europe, impacted not only on Russia’s own security identity (which is not the focus of this paper) but on the security identities of other Northern European countries and of the region as a whole. The increasing involvement of the EU member states with Russia also meant that the close contacts that Finland and, to a lesser extent, Sweden had of dealing with their large neighbor to the east were of greater interest to the EU as a whole, paving the way for initiatives such as that for a Northern Dimension for the EU (discussed below). It also eased the way for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to be given invitations to join both the EU and NATO.

As the continued role of NATO suggests, the US has also participated in new patterns of interaction with Northern European states. In the context of NATO, there is not only the NATO-Russia Council but also the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in which all non-NATO Northern European countries participate. The US has also worked to increase cooperation in the Northern European region through the development of its Northern Europe Initiative (NEI), which was launched in 1997 by the Clinton administration (cf. Novack 2001, Department of State 2003). Although it has not been particularly visible, the NEI has been continued by the current Bush administration. Frank Möller (2002: 80), however, argues that the NEI’s “low profile . . . need not be negative.”

Yet, the increasing interactions within Northern Europe and between Northern European countries and those outside the region (including the US) do not necessarily mean a more important position for the region. According to Henrikki Heikka (2002: 6), the end of the bipolar Cold War order has led to a multipolar world, which “has reduced the importance of Europe (and thereby the Nordic countries) in the hierarchy of national interests both in the United States and in Russia, although the military strength of the United States and the military-political weakness of the EU still ensure NATO’s role as the guarantor of European security.” Kari Möttölä (1996: 152) argues, “From the perspective of influence, the Nordic countries face the paradoxical dual challenge of *marginalisation* and *enlargement* of their roles, the task of coping simultaneously with the status of periphery and centrality. While the Nordic countries have to fight the disadvantages of being a periphery within the wider Western Europe, they are given the position of centrality in the wider Northern Europe.”

An important part of creating the new Northern Europe, particularly from a Finnish perspective, has been the development of the EU’s Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI), which shares many similarities with the US NEI. The initiative, which has been publicized far more than the NEI, is “part of EU policies for external relations with a specific aim to raise the Union’s profile in Northern Europe” and is “conceived as a way of working with the countries of Europe’s northern regions to increase

prosperity, strengthen security and resolutely combat dangers such as environmental pollution, nuclear risks and cross-border crime” (Stenlund and Nissinen 1999: 1). According to the EU’s General Affairs Council’s conclusions (1999), the Northern Dimension “can contribute to the reinforcement of positive interdependence between the European Union, Russia and the other states in the Baltic Sea region, also taking into account the enlargement process and thus enhancing security, stability and sustainable development in Northern Europe” (General Affairs Council 1999: 4-5). Rather than focusing on hard, military security, the NDI is based on the concept of soft security and as such has been easier for both non-aligned and allied states to accept.

The NDI has its roots in Finland, where it was developed during the mid-1990s in conjunction with Finland’s membership in the EU. The initiative appeared already in speeches by then Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari in autumn 1994 (Luoto 2002: 87). Finland’s prime minister, Paavo Lipponen, presented it officially at a conference in Rovaniemi (in Finland’s northernmost province, Lapland) in September 1997. There was consultation at the highest level (including between Lipponen and Commission president Jacques Santer) prior to the 1997 launch (cf. Arter 2000). The initiative was adopted as EU policy in December that year at the Luxembourg European Council and then marketed by Finland in 1998 through “roadshows” in Brussels and Moscow (Arter 2000: 690).

Although the NDI was conceived by Finland, other Nordic countries were informed of its development. Lipponen’s adviser Jari Luoto (2002: 88) argues that the Finnish prime minister discussed the plans for the initiative in a meeting of the Joint Committee of the Nordic Social Democratic Labour Movement (SAMAK) in Mariehamn (the capital of Finland’s Åland Islands), which included both the Danish and Swedish prime ministers, in April 1997 and again when he met Swedish prime minister Göran Persson at the Swedish Social Democratic Party’s conference in Sundsvall, Sweden just before he drafted the final version of his Rovaniemi speech. Luoto (2002: 90) expresses his hope for increased Nordic cooperation within the EU and notes the agreement of the Nordic prime ministers in Imatra, Finland in July 2001 to work for closer cooperation, including joint preparation for European Councils. Denmark and Sweden have also contributed to the development of the initiative, notably during their EU presidencies (cf. Sweden 2000, Denmark 2002a, Denmark 2002b). There have also been attempts to involve the US in the region and to coordinate the NDI with the NEI, as well as to include Canada, which has also shown an interest in the region (cf. Novack 2001).

The evidence of the post-Cold War era thus demonstrates the emergence of new patterns of interaction and related bodies to institutionalize these new patterns. In part, these changes have been possible due to changing security identities, which have in turn themselves been strengthened by the new patterns of interactions and new or changed institutional structures. The development of soft security as an important component of security identities has made it easier for the Nordic neutrals (now considered to be non-aligned rather than strictly neutral) and the Baltic states to assume more Western European or simply European identities in a Europe that is no longer divided between East and West. Soft security has also contributed to increased cooperation in the Northern European region (notably through the EU’s NDI and

regional bodies such as the CBSS) and even the creation of a (still weak and evolving) Northern European identity.

## **New Divisions Appearing**

Although the previous section has emphasized the increasing interactions between the countries of the new Northern Europe, new divisions have developed. For instance, the entry of Finland and Sweden into the EU in 1995 meant that the Nordic countries were divided by EU membership, with three inside the EU and two outside it. Even within the EU Nordic group there have been divisions. Despite predictions that Finland and Sweden would join with Denmark to form a Nordic bloc within the EU, the reality did not meet the expectations of such unity (cf. Novack 2002: 130-137). Although Finland and Sweden did work together and achieve success in the joint initiative on integrating the Petersberg Tasks into the EU through the Amsterdam Treaty, Denmark was not part of the initiative. According to Knud Erik Jørgensen (1999: 119), "on the whole, Denmark has been inactive in the context of the CFSP [Common Foreign and Security Policy]." Denmark is the only EU Nordic that is also a full member of NATO. In terms of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the differences are particularly noticeable: of the three EU Nordics, one (Finland) is a full participant, one (Denmark) has a treaty opt out, and one (Sweden) created an opt-out for itself that is not guaranteed by treaty.

Even between Finland and Sweden (the most similar of the Nordics in that both are non-aligned and joined the EU together in 1995) there have been noticeable differences, with Finland embracing participation in European integration most enthusiastically. As Jussi Seppälä (2002: 16) writes, "Pursuit of the core has characterised Finland's EU policy from the beginning." Sven Arnswald and Mathias Jopp (2001: 21) argue that Finland has been a "pro-integrationist" and "pro-active" EU member, while Sweden has been "promoting and pushing through original, traditional Swedish interests." Nevertheless, particularly since Sweden's EU presidency in 2001, the country has been an important European partner. Although initially hesitant, prime minister Göran Persson has given his support for Swedish participation in EMU. A date for the referendum has been set for September 14, 2003, meaning that Sweden may be preparing to join Finland inside the euro zone in the near future. The low level of public support means that the referendum may not be successful, and Swedes may follow the Danish example of saying no to the euro (in a September 2000 referendum). The Danish situation differs, however, from that of Sweden in that Denmark has a treaty opt-out from EMU, a luxury not afforded Sweden, which did not join the EU until after the Maastricht Treaty had been negotiated. Denmark also secured treaty opt-outs from common justice and home affairs and defense policies (cf. Arnswald and Jopp 2001: 22). Luoto (2002: 90) admits differences between the Nordic countries' EU policies, arguing, "The different EU policies of the Nordic countries add to the difficulty of cooperation."

Even in areas that might seem to be examples of Nordic cooperation within the EU, there are instances of a lack of coordination or disagreement (cf. Novack 2002). One case is that of EU enlargement, a priority for all three EU Nordics, but an area in which there have also been differences. These differences were particularly noticeable in 1997, when Finland strayed from the common Nordic position of pushing to include all three Baltic states in the next wave of EU enlargement. Instead, once it

became clear to the Finns that such a position was not pragmatic and risked excluding all three Baltic states from the first wave of eastern enlargement, they decided to fast-track only Estonia of the three Baltic countries (Novack 2002: 186-190, Miles and Sundelius 2000: 43, cf. Council of State 1997: 21, Utrikesutskottet 1997: 3). This dispute was resolved at the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997, when EU members agreed not to fast-track Latvia and Lithuania but to review their candidacy on an annual basis. Nevertheless, differing approaches during 1997 demonstrate a lack of Nordic unity within the EU.

The development of the NDI also demonstrates differences between Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. Even if Finland's Nordic neighbors were aware of its plans, there was not a clear Nordic endorsement of the initiative initially. In the beginning, the initiative was developed almost single-handedly by the Finns in conjunction with the European Commission. The reaction it received from fellow EU Nordics Denmark and Sweden was, according to David Arter (2000: 687), "lukewarm" and the initiative even "encountered suspicion and informal opposition" from both countries. Although support did increase, Danish and Swedish support for the NDI has never matched Finnish enthusiasm for the initiative. Although Sweden mentioned the NDI in its presidency program and worked to further the initiative during its EU presidency in 2001, there was not the same focus afforded the NDI as during Finland's 1999 presidency (cf. Sweden 2000, Finland 1999). The 2002 Danish presidency, despite mentioning the initiative in its presidency program and hosting a conference on the NDI in Greenland, also gave it less emphasis than the Finnish presidency did (cf. Denmark 2002a). There was skepticism as well in the Baltic countries, where there was concern that the NDI would serve as a means of diverting trade between Russia and the EU away from the Baltics and through Finland instead. In Finland the initiative was better received, and it raised Finland's profile within the EU. Thus, although all three Nordic EU states supported the NDI, it has remained very much a Finnish project and has not received the same attention elsewhere.

Considering the differences between the EU policies of the three EU Nordics, it would be naïve to assume that there will be a Nordic-Baltic bloc after Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania join the Union (planned for 2004). Despite relatively strong ties between Finland and Estonia, the links between the Nordic and Baltic countries are not necessarily greater than those between the Baltic states and other European neighbors. For instance, Lithuania has strong ties with Poland and an interest in Belarus (Arnswald and Jopp 2001: 25). Although they admit that "future coalitions between the Baltics and the Nordics cannot be ruled out," Arnswald and Jopp (2001: 31) argue that "no solid and permanent block with clearly defined contours is visible as yet in the Union's North. Co-operation between Baltic and Nordic EU-members will take place on an ad hoc basis and, quite naturally, will very much depend on the issues at stake."

Even the formation of a Baltic bloc should not be taken for granted. Indeed, the three Baltic states should not be considered to be one homogeneous group (cf. Tismaneanu 2002: 84). For instance Laszlo Bruszt (2002: 133) argues that Estonia has a "well functioning regulatory state" while Latvia and Lithuania are "lagging behind." Another difference is that while there are substantial Russian minorities in Estonia (28% of the population) and Latvia (32%), only eight percent of the Lithuanian population is Russian (Arnswald and Jopp 2001: 15). Despite their common aims of

joining both the EU and NATO, “[t]he three Baltic states also have different foreign policy goals due to their different geographical positions and their respective bilateral preferences” (Arnswald and Jopp 2001: 20).

NATO, too, is a forum that may highlight divergences at the same time that it establishes new bonds. The ambiguity of NATO’s influence on the development of new security identities in Northern Europe is compounded by the fact that the role that NATO will play in the new Northern Europe is not certain. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania received their invitations at the November 2002 Prague summit and are set to become NATO members in 2004. The fates of Finland and Sweden are unclear, although a decision from Sweden to join NATO could push Finland in the same direction. In Sweden, however, despite greater support for NATO membership than is found in Finland, the ruling Social Democrats are opposed to joining. An opinion poll conducted in Finland in mid-February 2003 showed that only 15% of the public supported Finnish NATO membership, down from the already low figure of 24% in a January 2003 poll (Jääskeläinen 2003). As Seppälä (2002: 18) argues, if nearly all EU members are also members of NATO, then Finland, which has actively pursued being a part of the EU’s core, may have to choose between its policy of non-alignment and being part of the EU’s innermost circle, as NATO membership may become a prerequisite for inclusion in the EU’s core.

Even within NATO there have been divisions among Northern European states. Karoliina Honkanen (2002: 44) argues that, although Norway has also been supportive of the Baltic states’ accession to NATO, “its attitude has been more prudent and its support more reserved than Denmark’s.” Since the Cold War’s end both Denmark and Norway “have observed a highly Atlanticist membership strategy” that “has been emphasised by Denmark opting out of the EU’s defence dimension and Norway staying out of the EU unlike Finland and Sweden” (Honkanen 2002: 44).

The terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001 put challenges on not only the states of Northern Europe but also the entire world order in a way that could not have been envisioned at the time. In the aftermath of the attacks, there was broad international support for the US and condemnation of Osama bin Laden. Even traditionally neutral Finland and Sweden were quick to give their support to US president George W Bush following the attacks.

What followed during the coming months and years, however, would not only question the role of the UN but threaten to draw new dividing lines in a Europe that had confidently viewed itself at the turn of the millennium as well on its way to reunification if not already there. Suddenly France and Germany were labeled by US secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld as the “old Europe”, while the formerly communist EU applicant states were categorized as being part of the “new Europe,” which supported the Bush administration in its desire to disarm Saddam Hussein, if need be by force and without UN backing. A new constellation was emerging with a Europe that was divided in a new way, a Europe with an old heart surrounded by a new periphery (including both the EU applicants, many of whom were also either NATO members or soon-to-be NATO members, and the UK). Yet, it was the periphery that was regarded by the US as central in a strange reversal of typical roles. The periphery was becoming a new European core with which the US wished to strengthen its ties.

These differences are, in part, a reflection of the continuing importance of these countries' differing historical experiences and security identities during the Cold War and even before. For instance, Finland's strive towards greater integration than Sweden during the mid and late 1990s can be explained at least in part by differing historical experiences and identities (cf. Arter 1995, Novack 2002). They are also the result of the changing world order and the emergence of new patterns of interaction that at times have united Europe but also have drawn it apart.

The disagreement in March 2003 over the use of force in Iraq has threatened to divide Europe, including the Northern European region, even further. In part, the reason why the crisis over whether or not to support a US-led attack on Iraq and the response to global terrorism have threatened to divide the new Northern Europe (and, indeed, the new Europe as a whole) is that they involve hard, military security. With hard security back on the agenda, it is perhaps only natural that new divisions will form in response to it, albeit along very different lines from those of the Cold War period, as new players such as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have the freedom to side with NATO. Thus, the future of the security identities of the countries of the new Northern Europe and of the new region (if, indeed, a cohesive regional security identity is possible) is unknown.

Nevertheless, these new divisions (as well as new unity) cannot be explained purely by the re-emergence of hard security concerns. Rather, changes in patterns of interaction and the associated changes in security identities are important components of understanding both the new fault lines and the new convergence and cooperation. The invitations to the three Baltic states to join both the EU and NATO and the changes in their patterns of interaction with those two bodies since they became independent states has certainly paved the way for them to be among the open supporters of a US-led attack on Iraq in March 2003, a stance that would have been impossible during the Cold War. Furthermore, for non-aligned Finland and Sweden, even after September 11, 2001, soft security is an important part of their security identities and patterns of interaction, which include involvement in institutions (such as the EU and the CBSS) that prioritize soft rather than hard security.

## **Support for Constructivist and New Institutional Approaches?**

Having examined the way in which patterns of interaction have impacted on and been influenced by the construction of security identities in the new Northern Europe it is useful to consider whether or not there are theoretical frameworks capable of explaining these processes. As time and space do not permit a more thorough analysis here, attention is concentrated on two approaches that would appear to be particularly relevant for this study: constructivism and new institutionalism.

Constructivists, termed "reflectivists" by Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (1993), adhere to a school of thought in International Relations (IR) that, according to leading constructivist Alexander Wendt (1999: 1), can be dated to 1989 and the work of Nicholas Oluf. According to Wendt (1999: 1), "[S]tudents of international politics have increasingly accepted two basic tenets of 'constructivism': 1) that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and 2) that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by

these shared ideas rather than given by nature.” Although Wendt’s structural approach regards change as difficult, he argues that “identities are always in process, always contested, always an accomplishment of practice” (Wendt 1999: 340).

Constructivism would seem to be appropriate in explaining the security identities of the countries of the new Northern Europe, as these identities have been constructed over time by individuals in the countries concerned “rather than given by nature” (cf. Wendt 1999: 1). Within the context of this paper it has not been possible to pursue a thorough examination of the role of ideas in the construction of these identities. There are, however, indications that ideas have been involved, for instance, in the integration of neutrality into Finnish and Swedish security identities. Constructivist theories do not, however, typically concentrate on the role of institutions and patterns of interaction.

Yet, the analysis presented in this paper has concentrated on the role of patterns of interaction and institutions. In light of this, it is logical to consider the relevance of new institutionalist approaches, which came to prominence in the 1980s and 1990s and emphasize the importance of institutions. Although there are many variants of new institutionalism, even within political science (and far more when all social science disciplines are considered), there are certain unifying features. According to James G. March and Johan P. Olsen (1996: 30), “The core notion (from an institutional perspective) is that life is organised by sets of shared meanings and practices that come to be taken as given. Political actors act and organize themselves in accordance with rules and practices that are socially constructed, publicly known, anticipated, and accepted. Actions of individuals and collectivities occur within these shared meanings and practices, which can be called identities and institutions.” These identities and institutions in turn “constitute and legitimate political actors and provide them with consistent behavioural rules, conceptions of reality, standards of assessment, affective ties, and endowments, and thereby with a capacity for purposeful action” (March and Olsen 1996: 30). For March and Olsen (1996: 27), the concept of an “institution” refers “not only to legislatures, executives, and judiciaries but also to systems of law, social organization (such as the media, markets, or the family), and identities or roles (such as ‘citizen,’ ‘official,’ or ‘individual.’)”

A particularly relevant variant of new institutionalism for the current study, due to its focus on the importance of historical experiences, is historical institutionalism (HI), one of whose most prominent defenders is Paul Pierson (1996). According to Pierson (1996: 126), HI is historical “because it recognizes that political development must be understood as a process that unfolds over time” and institutionalist “because it stresses that many of the contemporary implications of these temporal processes are embedded in institutions -- whether they be formal rules, policy structures, or norms.” For historical institutionalists, there are sunk costs that add constraints to later policy options.

Historical institutionalism would thus appear to be especially useful in examining the construction of security identities and would fit in well with the analysis presented here. The experiences of states within the Northern European region during the Cold War (and, indeed, even earlier) have shaped their security identities during the post-Cold War era. For example, Danish and Norwegian experiences during the Second World War, when they were occupied by Nazi Germany, led to their decisions to join

NATO, which in turn had a lasting impact on their security identities. The main criticism of HI is that, as Andrew Moravcsik (1998: 491) convincingly argues, the consequences of actions are not necessarily unintended (as HI theory suggests), but may in fact be “deliberate.”

Thus, the analysis in this study, which argues that patterns of interactions and the institutions (within which these interactions occur) before, during, and after the Cold War have influenced the construction of security identities in Northern Europe, is generally in keeping with constructivist and new institutional approaches. As such it presents a challenge to approaches such as that of Christine Ingebritsen (1998), who gives little or no regard for such factors. Clearly, the evolving security identities of both the Northern European region as a whole and the individual small states in the region are the result of far more than simply differing economic sectors.<sup>7</sup> In addition, sunk costs -- in terms of historical experiences, security identities based on concepts of neutrality or NATO membership, inclusion in pre-existing institutions, etc. -- have impacted on future patterns of interaction and security identities.

Nevertheless, neither constructivists nor historical institutionalists stress the importance of patterns of interaction to the same extent as has been done in this study. It is not just participation in institutions that is important for shaping identities. It is also the patterns of interaction associated with those institutions. For instance, for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania it has been important to interact with “Western Europeans” and North Americans following their independence after the fall of the Soviet Union. The increasing contact between the Baltic states and their Northern European neighbors as well as other EU and NATO countries has been an important step towards closer integration into both the new Northern Europe and the new Europe and the construction of new security identities. Furthermore, the impact of previous actions may either unintended (as HI theory argues) or deliberate (as Moravcsik 1998 suggests).

## Conclusions

This examination of the changing institutions and patterns of interaction found in Northern Europe since the end of the Cold War lends support to constructivist and new institutional theoretical approaches, although it suggests a need for more attention to be given to the significance of changing patterns of interaction. During the post-Cold War period, new institutions have been constructed, which have led to (and been the product of) new patterns of interactions. These new institutions and the related patterns of interaction are part of the construction of new security identities, including an emerging (although weak and evolving) new Northern European regional identity that was not found during the Cold War period. Indeed, the very institutions and patterns of interaction during the Cold War made the construction of such an identity during that period impossible. The new possibilities for increasing regional interaction have been at least in part the result of changes in patterns of interaction, including the development of new regional institutions and changes to pre-existing regional and European bodies, such as the EU and NATO. At the same new time, the legacy of the Cold War period has to some extent endured, resulting in continuing

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<sup>7</sup> A more detailed critique of Ingebritsen’s work can be found in this author’s PhD thesis (Novack 2002), which also challenges the approach of Moravcsik (1998).



differences within the Northern European region. New patterns of interaction based on recent developments in a world increasingly faced with the threat of global terrorism may also lead to new divisions that could impact on security identities within Northern Europe and beyond.

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