IDEATIONAL AND MATERIAL FACTORS AS DRIVING FORCES OF DEFENSE COOPERATION IN THE NORDIC REGION

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

I hereby declare that this thesis, “Ideational and Material Factors as Driving Forces of Defense Cooperation in the Nordic Region”, is my own work and my own effort and that it has not been accepted anywhere else for the award of any other degree or diploma. Where sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Name

Michael Littlehale

Signature

Date

February 5 2015
The Ministers emphasized a strong community of values between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Efforts to promote democracy, international law including human rights, gender equality and sustainable development are integral parts of the foreign policy of the Nordic countries. On the basis of common interest and geographical proximity it is natural for the Nordic countries to cooperate in meeting the challenges in the area of foreign and security policy in a spirit of solidarity. In this context Ministers discussed potential risks inter alia natural and man-made disasters, cyber and terrorist attacks. Should a Nordic country be affected, the others will, upon request from that country, assist with relevant means. The intensified Nordic cooperation will be undertaken fully in line with each country’s security and defense policy and complement existing European and Euro-Atlantic cooperation.

— Nordic Declaration of Solidarity, Helsinki, 5 April 2011
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>CSDP</td>
<td>Common Security and Defense Policy</td>
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<td>COPAs</td>
<td>Cooperation Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
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<td>ECSC</td>
<td>European Coal and Steal Community</td>
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<td>EDA</td>
<td>European Defense Agency</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Area</td>
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<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Free Trade Association</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>ESDP</td>
<td>European Security &amp; Defense Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>ICRU</td>
<td>Icelandic Crisis Response Unit</td>
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<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security and Assistance Force</td>
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<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>NORDAC</td>
<td>Nordic Armaments Cooperation</td>
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<td>NORDCAPS</td>
<td>Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Peace Operations</td>
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<td>NORDEFCO</td>
<td>Nordic Defense Cooperation</td>
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<td>NORDSUP</td>
<td>Nordic Supportive Defense Structures</td>
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<td>NSHP</td>
<td>Nordic Standard Helicopter Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIPRI</td>
<td>Stockholm International Peace and Research Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEF</td>
<td>United Nations Emergency Force</td>
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<td>UNPKO</td>
<td>United Nations Peacekeeping Operations</td>
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<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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I. Introduction

The Nordic region is seeing a resurgence in geopolitical importance not seen since the space acted as buffer zone between the two superpowers in Northern Europe. After over two decades of rapid integration and cooperation on the European continent following the end of the Cold War, recent events have brought security and defense back to the forefront of issues concerning the Transatlantic community. One area especially affected by a number of these developments is the Nordic region, consisting of Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland, and Sweden. The Nordic region is undergoing a newfound geopolitical importance as the Arctic continues to draw interest and create competition and security concerns, and Russia becomes more brazen in its actions. These developments, in conjunction with the reality of shrinking defense budgets, the European Union (EU) continuing to grow as a global security actor, and the North Atlantic treaty Organization (NATO) looking for a renewed relevancy and direction as its operations in Afghanistan come to a close, make for an incredibly dense and complex security landscape in Europe and beyond. With this in mind, it is easy to understand why the Nordic states are eager to cooperate together on a number of issues, but especially on security and defense policy.

Much of the focus on defense cooperation in Europe has been on the major powers; specifically France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. It was not until a UK-French agreement in 1998 set in motion European defense integration as it is today. However, the Nordic countries are should not be reserved for the periphery. Combined, the Nordic region counts for around 25 million people, and, when combined, boasts the world’s tenth largest economy (with a GDP around $1.3 trillion). This is certainly significant, and worth noting to given the focus on Nordic defense cooperation. And while much of Europe was putting together integration efforts in the aftermath of World War Two, the Nordic countries were limited given their geopolitical position.

Of the major and minor participants in the Cold War, a drastic reassessment of defense policy was required to adapt to a changing security landscape, as it transitioned to the

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1 It should be noted that Iceland does not have an armed forces, thus a majority of the focus will be on Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. However Iceland still takes part in Nordic defense organizations, and does have the ability to send trained personnel to peacekeeping and crisis management operations via the Iceland Crisis Response Unit (ICRU)


post-Cold War world. Common security policies were attempted in the European Community (EC). Yet despite continuing efforts in today’s EU, security and defense is one policy area that has not fully lived up to expectations. Still, many would argue that defense cooperation is the solution for Europe, despite its difficulty in practice. This is especially true in Norden, given how the countries related to one another during the Cold War, and the course that defense and security policy in the region took in the early 1990s.

Defense (and security) cooperation, is a term that will be used often in this thesis. In this case, it refers to the collaboration between two or more states in the policy area of security and defense. This can be through political dialogue between government officials, defense ministries, or direct military collaboration (often times a combination of all three). It can also be via institutional frameworks for cooperation and/or within international organizations. More specifically, it can be any act that an individual state might make in the realm of security and defense, but done in a bilateral or multilateral context. This can include military training, education, deployment, weapons procurement, and equipment repair and upgrades, just to list some examples.

With this in mind, this thesis will be investigating defense and security cooperation between the Nordic states. A variety of factors can drive defense and security cooperation at any level, and especially so among a group of closely relating countries, both in terms of geographical proximity and shared cultural identity and experience. However, cooperation on complex security issues is not simple, even among the closest states. Where there are factors of close relation, there are also important factors that the Nordic states diverge on, or there might be an autonomous security alliance already. Thus, the focus of this thesis will be on the driving forces of cooperation between the Nordic states.

More specifically, the main research question asks: how have both ideational and material factors interacted to drive Nordic defense cooperation from the end of the Cold War until today? This raises a number of related questions that this thesis will subsequently attempt to answer in coming to the analysis of the main question. How does the dichotomy between NATO and CSDP affect defense cooperation amongst the Nordic countries, given that some belong to NATO, and some to the EU? And finally, can Nordic defense cooperation be seen as a model for other regions in Europe to cooperation on a regional level?

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4 A Scandinavian term that refers to the Nordic countries
Given the research problem at hand, an appropriate theoretical framework is necessary. The main research question will be looking into both material as well as ideational factors. Traditionally, a realist approach is best capable of explaining international relations by way of material factors. On the other hand, constructivism takes into account more ideational factors like identity, values, and norms to better understand international relations. Both traditions might offer valuable insight into the problems addressed in this thesis, but the middle ground should offer a more well rounded analysis. With that in mind, this thesis will take on a modernist constructivist approach, which emphasizes ideational factors while still including material factors, and accepts that these factors exist separately from the social world, but only gain meaning through ideas, beliefs and norms. European integration following the Cold War was difficult for (neo) realist scholars to explain (in addition to the end of the Cold War), and gave constructivism an opening to provide valuable insight, as it was better able to explain the integration process in Europe. Still, realist critiques were focused on the EU’s difficulties in security and defense, because of how material factors generally dominate this policy area. It is with this in mind that some constructivists have turned back to draw from realism. These discussions, which will be elaborated on in more detail in the next chapter, provide the foundation for the theoretical framework to be used in the thesis.

The thesis will start more broadly by examining defense cooperation in Europe from a number of theoretical perspectives, which will set the foundation for the theoretical framework. In doing so, some time will be spent on a general discussion of the ideational and material factors that are expected to play a role in driving Nordic defense cooperation. Once this is laid out, the second part will shift attention to the Nordic region and examine defense and security cooperation from the end of the Cold War up until present day. The ideational and material factors discussed in the first part will be specifically analyzed in the context of the Nordic region. At first, the ideational and material are analyzed separately, and the final section analyzes their interaction as pushing the Nordic countries towards, or driving the Nordic states away from closer defense cooperation. The conclusion will summarize the findings, put the research in its wider context, as well as speculate on further avenues of research.

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Overall, the intentions of this thesis is to offer both theoretical and practical value. Theoretical in that it uses a modernist constructivist approach when discussing security and defense—and the interplay of ideational and material factors—something that has been a main distinction between schools of International Relations theory. By doing so, it hopes to show the research benefits of a more pluralistic approach to studying International Relations. Today, International Relations is in what some have called an identity crisis, as seen in the recent debate contemplating if we are witnessing the end of IR theory. While this thesis is not intended to join the debate, it is an effort in problem driven research, which opponents of paradigm driven research advocate for.

The topics of the thesis is also one of growing importance due to changing global politics and affairs as Northern Europe finds itself once again moving off of the periphery in global affairs. Russia’s annexation of Crimea in Ukraine, and a general disdain for the west overall has the Nordic region, Baltic sea region, and eastern Europe on edge. Current trends have the Arctic as a future area of interest, with melting of polar ice caps creating new shipping lanes and contested waters. Overall, the events of 2014 inject an urgency into the discussion of how best the EU and NATO should manage its security and defense practices.

In addition, this thesis hopes to offer practical insights on regional defense cooperation, at a time when security and defense policy integration at the EU level is lacking progress, while concurrently the United States continues to shift focus to the Middle East and the Asia Pacific. Regional cooperation in defense policy may prove to be a viable solution in time where budgets are shrinking and new security threats are emerging. Naturally, cooperation in the defense and security sector is a complex task from both a political and an institutional standpoint. Taking a theoretical approach to investigate the factors that drive cooperation, then, might help to isolate crucial factors, as well as to identify in which combinations these factors push towards or pull away from successful defense cooperation. It is not possible to have full control over these driving forces in practice, however, awareness of driving factors can help move defense cooperation in the right direction, and increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of international cooperation.

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This chapter will serve as a review of the literature on the main topics relevant to the thesis, as well as an explanation and justification of the theoretical approach to be used. In doing so, the intension is to provide an overview of the research on defense cooperation in Europe since the end of the Cold War, as well as to set up the theoretical approach by showing the shortcomings in research that rely on either ideational or material forces as main explanatory factors. The review will consist of neorealist speculations following the Cold War, as well as other realist criticisms and analysis of the defense policy integration happening in Europe. A look at recent variations in realism as well as constructivism will conclude the section, because it is from these perspectives which the theoretical approach draws from. The third and final section of the chapter will be a general discussion of both ideational and material factors, as it is important to have a clear understanding of what these factors consist of before looking at the specific factors that drive Nordic defense cooperation and answering the research question.

In the discussion of ideational and material forces, the end of the Cold War will briefly be examined, as there is a rich collection of research to draw from concerning the emphasis on both material and ideational factors, and the interaction thereof. It can be said, then, that the end of the Cold War is still quite relevant for the purpose of this thesis, for two reasons. First, in a more theoretical sense, in that we can draw on previous scholarship explaining the end of the Cold War in terms of both ideational and material forces to help establish the framework for the rest of the thesis. Second, and more practically speaking, the end of the Cold War shifted the international security landscape, giving Europe, and the Nordic countries in particular, the opportunity to incorporate cross-border defense cooperation as states adjusted their national foreign and defense policy. The intension of this chapter’s final section is not to add to the debate on the end of the Cold War, but instead to use this debate to highlight the importance of both ideational and material factors in understanding international politics.
2.1 - European Defense Cooperation in Theory

Defense cooperation in Europe has been a source of inquiry for over two decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and there is certainly no lack of positions on the subject. While some perspectives had difficulty explaining security and defense cooperation in Europe, other approaches took the opportunity presented by the new developments to come off of the margins of International Relations theory. This section will review some of the prominent research on defense cooperation from the perspective of realism and constructivism, both in a general sense and with a focus on European defense cooperation in the last two (plus) decades. It starts with realism, and its various sects, after the Cold War. This is followed by a realist take on European defense and security integration and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), both in its early stages and as its development matured. The section concludes by looking at constructivist approaches to European defense and security integration.

By taking this approach, realism is explained to understand the state of the paradigm in the context of the conclusion of the Cold War before examining how it took to European defense cooperation, before finally analyzing alternatives to realism. With the theoretical approach based in constructivism and taking strands of realism, it is important to establish the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches in the context of defense cooperation (and to specify which variation of realism will be drawn from) before returning to it for the elements to be used in the theoretical approach.

2.1.1 - neorealist theory after the cold war

The basic tenets of realism hold that the world is an anarchic, self-help system, made up of competing states with a main goal of survival. Kenneth Waltz’s Neorealism, in particular, has been a dominant paradigm in International Relations for much of the latter half of the 20th century. As states are seen as like units with a largely ahistorical understanding,

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11 not say history goes completely ignored, it is in fact a reading of history that can lead to a realist view of states acting in their own self interest for the purpose of survival.
material conditions and the relative distribution of capabilities take precedent in neorealism’s definition of structure and understanding of global politics. In this definition, there are no idealistic characteristics (“ideology, form of government, peacefulness, bellicosity…”) because distribution among capabilities is not an attribute, but “a system wide concept.”

The result is a structure filled with states as like units. Still, there is a socialization in that the anarchic system socializes states to behave in a certain way, with the ultimate goal of survival in mind, the key to explaining international relations according to neorealism. Besides this, any social aspect to the theory is left by the wayside. Waltz's emphasis on the structural approach and material conditions would leave little room for the social interaction of states. Identity is a result of the structure, and interaction is limited by the structure. This is an important division between Waltz’s neorealism and classical realism. Neorealism holds that a system of bipolarity, with two balanced powers, might be the most stable system of global politics, because of its predictable nature. It was the end of bipolarity—with the collapse of the Soviet Union—that worried neorealists. Their research in the wake of the Cold War reflects concerns about how the geopolitical landscape would shape in the early 1990s and beyond.

A return to a multipolar Europe and a reunified Germany was a development that caused much speculation. John Mearsheimer argued that European powers would have difficulty in containing German power once again, as the country goes through a “normalization” of its foreign and defense policies. Normalization in the neorealist sense where Germany will emulate the most successful states within the system, forgoing cooperation to be able to guarantee its own survival and increase its relative power. Mearsheimer goes as far as voicing concerns for a Germany with nuclear weapons, and the potential for an arms race in Europe, which could spell disaster on the continent. Granted, this was before the Soviet Union completely dissolved, so a German and Soviet balance of power was indeed difficult to predict, and Mearsheimer saw Germany potentially seeking

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12 Waltz (1979): 98.
14 ibid.: 97.
17 ibid.: 36.
nuclear weapons to stave off a conventional attack by the Soviet Union. Still, the idea was just a continuation of realist fundamentals, balance of power theory being one them. Naturally, a rising power would come to challenge the hegemonic power, that being the United States.

This Cold War era thinking called for proliferation of nuclear weapons across Europe.\(^{18}\) A scenario that is incredibly difficult to imagine today. Kenneth Waltz wrote to length in a number of publications about the structure of international politics in the post-Cold War world. Who would emerge as great powers? Much of the literature is broad speculations, building off of a neorealist theoretical foundation, as it does not boast much predictive ability.\(^ {19}\) Still, clinging to the structural outlook made for some fairly off base assumptions of what post-Cold War Europe would look like.

In many regards, the staples of realism hold true today. The system in which international politics occurs in is still anarchic, as there is no higher authority above the states. States want to survive, and will increase their relative capabilities with other states to do so. These assumptions also bring on limitations. one notable limitation is ignoring the domestic affairs of the states. Civil unrest may cripple a state from within and limit its ability to act on the world stage. This may not have much significance for realists, and why should it? Even by not prioritizing internal factors, the results as they appear through the actions of that state in the international system can still be seen. However these are still interesting factors to explore by looking at events on the world stage in the context of internal factors, or any combination of. The point of this section was not to call realism dead, as oft occurred in times of major change or events in international politics.\(^ {20}\) Instead, it shed light on the troubles the end of the Cold War posed for realism (especially neorealism); important points to keep in mind when moving on to European integration.

\hspace{1cm} 2.1.2 - realism and european security and defense cooperation

While the previously mentioned neorealist scholars were focused on analyzing the changing international system following the Cold War, applying the fundamental neorealist

\(^{18}\) Mearsheimer (1990): 54.


arguments to the new unipolarity (or multipolarity in Europe), other realists set their sites on a European wide defense and security policy as it started to gain momentum. These works came in a variety of different manors, from criticizing its failure to arguing against the project all together.

Barry Posen provides for one of the more notable attempts at explaining European defense integration with structural realism. By working towards autonomous capabilities for external action, Posen argues, the EU is balancing United States power, not as an existential threat, but in the sense that it does not trust the US to always be there, citing waning American interest in European security. Even though the balancing predicted here is in the form of competition (and not military build up to prepare for war), Posen speculates that such balancing will strain US-EU relations. In particular, the EU’s own capabilities might be seen as attempts to undermine NATO. However, Europe’s owns security policies have been tailored to compliment NATO, not to compete. This was made clear in the St. Malo agreement between Great Britain and France in 1998. Structural Realism, when relying on its basic tenants, just does not go deep enough into the complex issue of European integration. That is, beyond a weighted emphasis on material factors. These material factors allowed for other realists to focus on intra-Europe complications as a source of criticism to defense cooperation. One event, however, did have a strain on EU-US relations, but it was not a result of European policy. More importantly, it was the source of a major divide across the continent, bringing the European defense integration under scrutiny once again.

In 2003, the American led Iraq War stirred a heated debate in Europe, while the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) was still in developing stages. The major security powers in Europe were divided on the Iraq issue, with the United Kingdom joining the US led coalition, while France and Germany were set to not partake in the campaign against Iraq. Some saw this as a defining case to further defense integration in Europe, while others saw European divide over Iraq as reason for skepticism of the integration project.

Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni argues that, among other reasons, ESDP is unlikely to succeed because of the political divisions in Europe (as made clear during the Iraq crisis).

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21 especially following the 1998 St. Malo Agreement between Great Britain and France that set in motion European security and defense cooperation as we know it today, and resulted in the European Security and Defense Policy.


However, the argument is focused strictly on military capabilities and the ability of the EU to rabidly deploy forces. Sangiovanni points out the unlikelihood of the member states agreeing to the use of force (especially in the form of rapid reactionary deployment). What is overlooked here is the comprehensive approach that the EU took to security policy. The EU’s clout as an international actor has largely come by way of soft power. By focusing on the difficulty of attaining and deploying traditional military capabilities, unanimously by EU member states, is to miss some of the goals of ESDP/CSDP set forth by these same member states.

In a similar vain, Julian Lindley-French argues that for Europe to become a serious security actor, it requires the lead of the big three; the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Small states, the argument goes, impede progress of European defense integration. So, essentially, the answer is another Concert of Europe, with the big states taking the lead and smaller states following suit, even if they do not agree with the outcome. This state-centric view has a lot of truth to it, and it is indeed true that integration has gained the significant momentum when one (or more) of the leading European power takes action (However, that is not to say that small states cannot drive integration in security and defense either). What is unique about today, compared to the post-World War I Europe in which Lindley-French draws his comparisons from, is that European institutions are much more effective today, and a true representation of the member state’s values and interests. This has been an essential aspect of the European project from the beginning, and has been seen in a number of other policy areas. It is hard to believe that security and defense would be any different, despite its slower progress.

A noticeable trend in realist work on European defense and security integration is a shift away from neorealism, especially during the late 2000s. While still realist, these emerged as classical and neoclassical realism. The stark difference is telling, where realists were sure to witness failure of CSDP and related efforts around the time of the Iraq crisis,


while later new realist analyses slowly gave more credit to the integration project, albeit still in a limited capacity. Selden uses a state-centric realist approach to compare Europe’s efforts to the United States of the 1890s. Both the EU and the US consolidated internal developments to exert more external power. Selden makes some concessions, notably to the importance that institutions effect the internal environment of the state, a much different tune than realists were singing seven years prior. However this is not an analysis completely shedding its realist skin, but instead a shift to account for realities that in turn effect the European Union’s ability to wield its power externally.

Sten Rynning offers a recent effort analyzing realism’s outlook on CSDP, by looking at both structural realism and classical realism, concluding that the latter is more capable of explaining CSDP. Structural realism, as touched upon in the previous section, fails to offer a deep explanation for European integration because the theory relies on states, and the EU is not a state. This leads to one of three arguments; that integration is balancing American power, or integration is balancing German power, and finally, that European integration is an attempt at burden sharing to keep America interested in European security matters. Rynning argues that the neorealist emphasis on material conditions and power dynamics brings them to two rather basic conclusions. Either CSDP is the result of smart power politics (as the above three conclusions fit to), or CSDP is destined to fail, as without Europe being a state actor, its combined efforts will still fall short of state power politics.

Classical realism, while still in the rationalist realm of theory, differs in key ways from structural realism. Referring once again to Rynning; classical realism has a dualist view of the world, made up of history and ideas on one hand, but also material forces and brute power. These inclusions are what brings us back to a classical realism. The realism that emerged after World War II was aptly named exactly because it looked at history, and at the time it was a rather bleak outlook. Having seen Europe engulfed in war over the past centuries, a realistic view of international politics was a sensible endeavor. This is a distinction from neorealism that is worth noting. The emphasis being on the structure of the international system, where states are like units and looked at through an ahistorical lens.


This makes for key elements of analysis to go missing, the elements which turned realism into one of the most productive paradigms in International Relations, but were not necessary for neorealism’s structural approach during the stability of the Cold War.

As mentioned, neorealism falls short of explaining security and defense integration efforts in Europe because the policy goes beyond the scope of key neorealist assumptions. However, later efforts in classical realism have made more significant observations than its structurally focused cousin. The European Union member states share a number of norms and values, yes, but the last fifteen years have provided many cases of ESDP and later CSDP in action. This is in part because the policies put in place by member states includes facets well beyond traditional military capabilities. An important emphasis is put on crisis management and civilian operations, two areas where the EU has excelled. It can be argued that soft power output does not raise power in a realist sense. Likewise, it can be argued that 31 EU led civilian and military operations (16 still ongoing), do in fact raise the international clout of the European Union. Hard power or not, because there are tangible results from defense cooperation, then it is worth taking into consideration. To do so, it appears moving beyond Structural Realism might provide a better lens for examining defense cooperation in all forms.

To be sure, defense cooperation in Europe is not a story of unimpeded success. A failure to cohesively act as conflict escalated in the Balkans, to raise one example, haunted European leadership and brought scrutiny to common security projects at the time (but also opened debate on how to improve capabilities for future crises). Still, Europe continued the trend towards cohesion. It is not perfect in practice, but progress cannot be ignored. So what can neorealism continue to offer to this debate at all? The position is clear; unipolarity is unstable, and eventually the international system will force other states to balance the hegemonic power, “not today, but tomorrow”.

In the mean time, cooperation in Europe as a whole, and in her regions is an interesting development and worth making inquiries into. Realism is a staple to International Relations theory, and has and will continue to be a major part of the field. However, it cannot explain everything, and there is ample room for other theories to contribute to the knowledge of international politics. The modernist constructivist approach, then—as will be shown later

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**33** Waltz (2000): 27.
in the chapter—“picks and chooses” from realism the components that when combined with a constructivist foundation make up an appropriate theoretical approach for analyzing the interplay between material and ideational.34

Thus, pluralistic research programs that can draw from realism, instead of trying to argue against its continued relevance (a futile effort, to be sure), offer a viable alternative. The previous section is intended to show neorealism’s difficulty with European integration. In addition, a shift in tone in realism over the course of the first decade of the 21st century is worth noting because there is still hope to benefit from (neo)classical realism when studying defense cooperation. Before moving on to the theoretical framework, a look at constructivism’s work on defense integration in Europe is needed.

2.1.3 constructivism and european defense cooperation

Strictly speaking, constructivism is not a theory of International Relations in the same sense that neorealism is, however, Alexander Wendt’s brand of social constructivism challenged rationalist theory, specifically Neorealism, in the study of International Relations, leaving the neo(realism)/neo(liberalism) debate behind and ushering in a debate of materialism versus idealism.35 Wendt carefully crafts his argument between Neorealism and so called radical constructivists—whom reject the notion that material forces have any independent effects on international politics whatsoever36—by pointing out ideas and interests are in part influenced by a physical (material) reality.37 This is an important concession to make, but like neorealism only puts a small importance on the socialization that the structure has on units, social constructivism is focused on the importance of ideas, interest and identity with respect to material forces (i.e. the distribution of capabilities). In its “purest” form, as some argue, social constructivism fails to go deep enough into a thorough examination of change in material conditions and thus the interaction of ideational and material forces.38

36 It is worth noting, however that Wendt admits this is an extreme view that few IR scholars actually hold, but the argument is still important to make based on postmodern literature.
This is because of the distinction that social constructivism made from structural realism on how identities and interests are formed. This is of importance, because where Waltz states that identity and interest are a result of the system, Wendt states that identity and interest are in part shaped by “domestic or genetic factors”\textsuperscript{39} This would indicate that states are not like units. With that established, then, other factors, like shared knowledge, that are not constituted by a system of anarchy can be used to understand how the world works.

Where structural realism falls short, constructivism provides an opportunity for studying the European Union’s defense cooperation by looking at factors generally ignored in realist literature. Attempts to explain by power politics, balance of power miss key elements of integration. Why would Europe need to contain German power, as some contend, if Germany has been incredibly explicit in their reluctance of the use of force?\textsuperscript{40} Or, as John Mearsheimer advised, Europe should undergo nuclear weapons proliferation to contain German power.\textsuperscript{41} This is just another example of an analysis that makes complete sense within the scope of realism, but fails to account for important ideational factors like norms and values that have come to play a major role in European cooperation.

Empirical work from constructivists on CSDP is often in the form of process tracing, and discourse analysis (using interviews, surveys, and similar means to collect data) to explain and understand the intricacies of European defense integration. That is to say, the complex bureaucratic process that technocrats would go through in implementing policy tweaks to CSDP, until it is down to what can be agreed upon by member states.\textsuperscript{42} The political differences that some realists saw as a hindrance to defense integration is shown that they can be overcome through processes, while not always smooth and timely, at the European level between EU bureaucrats. A step outside hard power politics, to be sure, but one worth taking note of when Europe’s major players are taking part.

Moreover, in regards to power politics, why would the European Union seek to balance the power of the United States? While the US and Europe do not agree on everything, the common core values (democracy, open-market economy, individual liberty,


\textsuperscript{40} Meyer & Strickmann (2011): 63.

\textsuperscript{41} Mearsheimer (1990): 32-40.

\textsuperscript{42} Meyer & Strickmann (2011): 64.
human rights, etc.) keep competition from being anything but healthy. The reality is that the EU saw fit to take more responsibility of their own security and defense. The results are what we see today. Still a work in progress, but the intricacies of defense cooperation make ideational factors worth being taken into account. Integration in defense and security is a “two way street” in the sense that member states construct the EU but are also influenced by the EU. This also speaks to constructivism’s ability to explore discourse across different levels (intragovernmental, intergovernmental, and supranational institutions).

An example of this is shown in research from a constructivist perspective looking beyond the major military powers in Europe when studying European security and defense policy. In an analysis of small state influence in the European Union, Annika Bjökdahl looks at how Sweden, working with Finland, was able to use norm advocacy via framing, agenda setting, and diplomatic tactics to introduce the Petersberg tasks, effectively institutionalizing conflict prevention and crisis management into European policies. In this case, conflict prevention and peace building goes beyond rhetoric, because it is seen in the European Security Strategy of 2003, and fulfilled in subsequent EU led operations. The study helps to emphasize three things; first, the influence of states outside of Europe’s “Big Three (or even four)” to dictate EU policy in security and defense; second, the importance of civilian crisis management the overall European strategic culture; and third, the diverse set of tools that constructivists employ to reach these conclusions.

Other examples look at security beyond its traditional scope, as Burgess does when examining European security and the inclusion of values. He states that modern security threats are a threat to European values. This is important, as European integration has always been pushed as project based on shared values. Here the work focuses on the “internal-external continuum in Europe,” and institutional arrangements and responses to border security, migration and terrorism. More broadly, however, the work emphasizes the broadening scope of security, and the values that come in to play in security cooperation and integration at the EU level.

Suffice to say that there is a large body of work on European security more broadly, as well as defense cooperation from constructivists looking at recent developments, focusing on

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ideational and normative factors to offer deeper insight into Europe’s integration in this policy area. As constructivism will provide the foundation for the theoretical framework, constructivism will be further explored in the following section.
2.2 - A Theoretical Framework

It is widely accepted that the dominant paradigms of International Relations were not prepared for the sudden change in global politics that occurred at the end of the Cold War, however the debate it sparked might have been the wake up call that was needed. While no theory had seen the major change that was coming, the majority of criticism was directed towards neorealism, and social constructivism emerged from the rubble as a viable alternative. It is constructivism, then, that will be used as the foundation for the theoretical framework. It is the ideational and material forces that will be the main source of interest for this thesis, so while constructivism is the starting point, there will be elements of realism used, ending up with a modernist constructivist approach to examine the interaction of material and ideation factors that drive defense cooperation amongst the Nordic countries.

2.2.1 - modernist constructivism

An overview of the social constructivist - structural realism debate reveals two theories at loggerheads. To say that ideas and shared knowledge constitute behavior in the international system is simply refuted by neorealist claims that material distribution of capabilities causes states to fear for their own survival and thus act. This, it should be noted, is the debate stripped down to bare bones. There is without a doubt a plethora of literature that falls on one of these two sides to varying degrees, but an exploration of the intricacies of this debate goes well beyond the scope of this thesis. For the purpose of this thesis, one such approach that is worth exploring is modernist constructivism.

Modernist constructivism is a project that has emerged in recent years, but not always under this name. For this thesis, we will be using this term, but other research has been done in a similar vain, if not under the same label. Sørenson, being one, uses “analytical eclecticism” to look at change in statehood over the past two decades. The analysis combines elements of neorealism and social constructivism to include both material and ideational factors. A key take away from Sørensen’s argument is that analysis of the interaction between material and ideational factors is underutilized. His focus is on change of


statehood, but the idea can be applied to security cooperation because of the significance of material factors in defense, as well as the ideational factors that affect cooperation in this area. Glenn had similar sentiments when exploring the possibility of competitive collaboration between neoclassical realists and strategic culturists. In doing so, Glenn gives explanations comparing ideational and material forces to provide a richer account of global politics. Barkin settles on a realist constructivism that examines how power structures effects normative change in international relations, and in turn (and this is the key part) how normative change affects power structures.

Meyer and Strickmann—from whom the term modernist constructivist is borrowed from—offer the most relevant study to this thesis. Focusing on European defense, the article argues that the development of CSDP can be best explained through the interplay of both material and ideational factors. Like Glenn, the authors cite neoclassical realists, who concede that domestic ideational factors have an affect on behavior at the international level. This is a departure from neorealism and the little attention paid to domestic processes. On the other hand, Meyer and Strickmann note that constructivism suffers from prioritizing ideas and shared knowledge, while still ignoring material change and the ideational effect of material change. The framework here comes from this void left by social constructivism and realism. It can be filled by taking aspects from each side. Finally, an important note from Meyer and Strickmann is that the modernist constructivist framework is intended to support the strengths of both realist and constructivist approaches to “create new avenues of investigation”. One such avenue being defense cooperation of the Nordic countries, to which this framework will be applied to investigate the interaction of material and ideational in the Nordic regional security context.

48 see: Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 144-172. neoclassical realists argue that foreign policy decisions of a state are not dictated completely by structure and material capabilities, but instead by the perceptions of those making the decisions. Thus, the domestic is brought back into the picture as political leaders often have to deal with domestic constraints and do not have limitless access to the physical and material capabilities that a state may have at its disposal in theory.


52 ibid.: 68.

53 ibid.
The aforementioned studies all look at varying issues in international relations (and International Relations theory), and indeed have a slight difference in which areas of realism and constructivism they draw from. However, a common thread to take from them is that ideational and material factors interact and there could be more analysis done to explore this interaction.

In taking on the main research questions with this theoretical framework, yet another middle ground is being “seized”.⁵⁴ As International Relations scholarship has developed, especially since the “constructivist turn”,⁵⁵ there has been an obsession with finding a middle ground between theories and approaches. A worthy cause, it can be argued, because criticizing a theory from the opposite end of the spectrum can make that theory susceptible to similar criticism (albeit on opposite grounds). By providing answers to questions in International Relations, or at least adding knowledge, then it also adds to the mounting arguments supporting pluralistic approaches in the study of international politics. So, as constructivism found the middle ground between postmodern (and critical) and rationalist scholarship, the current modernist constructivist approach used in this thesis will find yet another middle ground between constructivism and rationalist approaches. It is from here then that the theoretical framework will be finalized with a general discussion of both ideational and material factors before moving on to answering the research questions in the pages that follow.


2.3 - Material Factors, Ideational Factors, and the End of the Cold War

With the theoretical framework established, only one area needs further explanation. The main research question inquires about the material and ideational factors that interact to drive defense and security cooperation between the Nordic countries. The modernist constructionist approach looks to take both factors into account, as has been shown, and now both material and ideational factors can be discussed to provide a proper understanding of what each factor might include before moving forward and looking at their interaction in Nordic defense cooperation. This short section to conclude the chapter will sum up both material and ideational factors. In doing so, both types of factors will be discussed separately before analyzing the interaction of both in relation to the end of the Cold War. This is to give a sense of how modernist constructivism can be used to study the interaction of material and ideational factors. An important step before moving on to answering the main research question.

2.3.1 Material factors

Material factors are the main factors to explaining international politics for rationalist theories. Waltz, and subsequently neorealism focus on power and interests. The factors that determine a state’s power include geography (territory size), population size, natural resources, economic & military strength, political stability. These are more general, while specific factors based on the above could include defense budget (standalone and as percent of Gross Domestic Product), economic independence, and military technology and capability. The essential feature of material forces are that they are described in quantitative terms. Their ability to be measured allows for comparison without any doubt. To state, for example, that the size of the United States’ armed forces is much larger than that of Belgium can be backed up by an examination of the relevant material factors (active military personnel, military expenditures as percent of GDP, etc.). Other factors can include threat perceptions, the international system as a whole, and any systemic pressures that can be attributed to this system.

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56 Waltz (1979): 131.
2.3.2 Ideational factors

While material factors are quite clear, ideational factors are less so. Entire chapters could be dedicated to a discussion on what exactly is meant by ideational factors. They are much more open to interpretation than material factors are. Ideational factors were brought to a more significant place in International Relations theory by the constructivism and critical theory, with a focus on ideas, identity, culture, history and so on. Wendt’s work was to use ideas and culture as the main factors explaining power and interest, where Waltz relied on brute material forces to explain global politics. The distinction is that states are not constituted by the structure, but the reverse. A state’s interest may change due to a change in that state’s perception (knowledge, ideas can lead to that change in perception). Thus, it becomes possible to explain a state’s behavior based on how its culture, ideology, norms, (and other attributes stripped away in neorealism), not just in terms of its capabilities relative to other states within the international system. In Wendt’s words; “anarchy is what states make of it”.57

Going beyond Wendt is important for the study of defense cooperation, because it is more specific in nature. Some ideational factors like strategic culture, then, bring rise to sub-factors that have been pointed out in the literature. Meyer and Strickmann point out a set of factors58 that can be used as indication for convergence of European strategic culture. These factors include shared culture, experiences, shared view of both internal and external dynamics, elite socialization in common institutions, and learning from crisis, among others.59

2.3.3 Material & ideational factors at the end of the cold war

The Cold War came to an end following “new thinking” from Mikhail Gorbachev in an attempt to reform the Soviet Union as it declined economically, making it difficult to keep up its military competition with the United States. There have been countless empirical

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59 Meyer & Strickmann (2011): 64.
attempts to come to grips with the conclusion of the Cold War, from multiple perspectives. It would be a futile effort to try sum up the literature here. However, a review of various explanations drawing on both material and ideational factors will help show the value of combing both factors, as will be done in subsequent chapters of this thesis. With that in mind, Margarita Petrova’s review article from the *European Journal of International Relations* will be used to help illustrate the end of the Cold War using ideational and material factors.\(^6\)

Rationalist theories rely on a number of material factors, starting with diminishing power in the international system, to explain the end of the Cold War. The exact factors that caused this decline vary slightly among realist scholars, but they are centered around a weak economic situation in the Soviet Union coupled with technological shortcomings compared with the west. Specifically, the Soviet Union could not keep up with the United States advances in technology and globalization as early as the 1980s.\(^6\)

On the other hand, approaches that relied on ideational factors offer different explanations, while still being mindful of the material reality in the closing decade or so of the Cold War. The decrepit economic situation opened the door for new ideas to view the material realities in a different light. So it can be said that while the “new thinking” amongst Soviet leadership did not cause the end of the Cold War in it of itself, it did allow for a change in the status quo and bringing the rivalry to a peaceful end.

Waltz, again: “the Cold War ended only when the bipolar structure of the world disappears”.\(^6\) What seems to be the neorealist trump card fails to shed light on why the bipolar structure of the world came to disappear. While the extent to which both types of factors interacted has been argued in various ways, it is safe to say that material and ideational forces were interacting in a way that brought along this major change. As Petrova points out, the Cold War made for a hard case that forced rationalists to pay attention to ideas, and interpretivists to pay attention to the material constraints.\(^6\) This thesis hopes to show that defense cooperation amongst the Nordic countries is also a case where material and

\(^6\) Margarita H. Petrova, “The End of the Cold War: a Battle or Bridging Ground Between Rationalist and Ideational Approaches in International Relations?” *European Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 1 (2003): 115-163. a review of three books on the end of the Cold War using ideas as explanatory factors to various degrees, juxtaposed against traditional realist explanations. She concludes that the end of the Cold War is only a single case that cant prove nor disprove theory, it is the source of competition and collaboration between theories, and a good example of where material and ideational factors interact.

\(^6\) ibid.: 125.

\(^6\) Waltz (2000): 39

ideational need to be accounted for, and that the interaction can lead to a full picture and better explanations.

In this largely theory based chapter, defense cooperation has been discussed through the lens of realism and constructivism. Concluding that while realism (especially neorealism) can still offer valuable insight to international politics, a continuing struggle comes in the area of the trend of defense integration in Europe.

The goal, then, was to first highlight the trend of defense cooperation taking place in Europe since the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent reaction to this development in the literature. This segued into the theoretical framework to be used for the remainder of the thesis. The modernist constructivist approach was introduced as being based in constructivism but including important strands of realism, which provides the appropriate, problem driven approach for the research questions posed in this thesis. By assessing the problem first, and choosing an approach after, any limitations were bypassed that may have impeded research if a particular perspective had been chosen before the research problem. A problem in both rationalist and constructivist research.64 It is no coincidence then, that for inquiring on the interaction of material and ideational forces in defense cooperation, a pluralistic approach drawing from realism and constructivism is being utilized. The following chapter will use this theoretical foundation and apply it to Nordic defense cooperation, moving towards answering the research questions.

III. The Driving Forces of Nordic Defense Cooperation

Up to this point, this thesis has mainly examined the theoretical approaches to various forms of defense and security cooperation. Through a discussion on realism and constructivism’s theoretical approaches to defense and security cooperation, the thesis’ own theoretical approach was brought to light. In doing so, modernist constructivism was described as drawing from both realism and constructivism. This chapter will build off of that by using the established theoretical framework and investigate the material and ideational factors that drive security cooperation amongst the Nordic countries, building up to the main analysis intended to answer the research question.

To do so, the present chapter will begin by looking at the various ways that the Nordic countries have cooperated in defense and security policy from the end of the Cold War until the present day. First, Nordic institutional developments to facilitate defense cooperation will be examined up to the present day. Second, more informal modes of cooperation will be highlighted to show where progress has been made outside of formal institutional agreements. This includes key government reports and government sponsored investigations, joint declarations, and other side projects that influence defense cooperation.

Following this, both ideational and material factors that drive Nordic defense cooperation will be examined in separate sections. The ideational factor section will include the shared historical experience of the Nordic countries, the strategic culture of the Nordics, and the identity of the Nordic region. The material factor section includes looking at power politics and the international system, the economic impact on defense spending, and the defense industries and weapon procurement in the Nordic region. An analysis will conclude the chapter by examining the interaction of these two types of factors and look to determine the driving forces Nordic defense cooperation as well as the factors that hinder defensive cooperation.
3.1 - Defense Cooperation in Norden from the End of the Cold War to the Present

Defense cooperation for the Nordic countries has always been rooted in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, dating back to the mid 1950s. Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden all contributed troops to the first United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in 1956, during conflict involving Egypt and Israel (with France and the United Kingdom). This was important to the Nordic balance, as it showed the Soviet Union that both Nordic members of NATO (Denmark and Norway) favored peace, along with non-aligned Sweden. Finland was also able to participate because of the Soviet Union’s permanent seat on the UN Security Council—and subsequent veto power—assured that no UN-led peacekeeping operations would go against Soviet interests. This started what would be a long tradition of contributions to UN mandated peacekeeping operations, despite the differing foreign and security policy orientations at the time. With the conclusion of the Cold war, however, defense and security policy was open to deeper cooperation between the Nordic States.

While the opportunity and motivation existed to add security and defense to the already extensive efforts of cooperation between the Nordics, the process itself was slow. It was not until 1997 that the defense ministers of each state attended a session of the Nordic Council. Still, progress has been made both institutionally and by other means, as Nordic leaders continued to push for cooperation in security and defense policy. With that said, this section will be separated into two subsections. The first will look at the institutional developments made between the Nordic countries to facilitate defense cooperation from the end of the Cold War until today. The second section will examine defense cooperation as it occurred more loosely and outside of a formal institutional framework. The combination of these two subsections is intended to provide background for the analysis through an overview of the varying ways in which the Nordic countries have worked to collaborate on defense and security policy issues.


66 Denmark and Norway’s NATO membership, Finland’s treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, Sweden’s policy of neutrality.

3.1.1. institutional frameworks for cooperation

As was eluded to in the introduction of the thesis, the institutional foundations for cooperation amongst the Nordic countries have been in place since the end of World War II, though defense and security was not on the agenda. Both the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers are the main institutions that facilitate cooperation between the Nordic states. The Nordic Council was formed in 1952 as a way for the five nations to come together and discuss issues and policy affecting the Nordic community. The Nordic states worked together in a number of policy areas, for example labour, transportation, and the environment. Defense and security was briefly on the table when Sweden proposed a Nordic defense alliance in 1948, but the other Nordic states were reluctant, and it never materialized. The Nordic Council was formed to promote cooperation between the national parliaments. The Nordic Council of ministers, founded in 1972, was tasked with coordinating intergovernmental cooperation, and to implement Nordic cooperation initiatives.

Defense cooperation initiatives were solidified further in the early 1990s by institutional agreements, referred to as a memorandum of understanding (MoU), between the five Nordic states. This started in 1994 with the Nordic Armaments Cooperation (NORDAC), a flexible framework not requiring full participation, and with room for bilateral arrangements. The focus of NORDAC was the defense industry, and to coordinate procurement of weapons and defense systems across the Nordic countries. Sweden is the only Nordic country with a significant defense sector, while the other Nordic countries have relatively smaller weapons industries. The idea was that if common defense material were maintained across the Nordic countries, cooperation would be easier as each member states’ armed forces would be familiar with the systems used by their Nordic neighbors, and vise-versa. It would also promote growth in the smaller defense industries in the region. This was seen as an obvious benefit for all parties involved, both financially, and with regard to joint

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71 Forsberg (2013), 1168.
training and maintenance. The goals of NORDAC were clear, but putting it into practice proved more difficult than expected. Two notable attempts at coordinating weapon procurement ended in failure.

In 1998, the Nordic Standard Helicopter Project (NSHP) was initiated. Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden intended to jointly purchase helicopters from the same manufacturer, and to the same specifications. An NSHP office was setup in Stockholm, and the countries jointly met with multiple contractors and eventually decided on the French company NHIndustries’ NH90 helicopter. The project ended with each country making their own purchase orders, as they could not agree upon a common configuration for the helicopter. Denmark ordered an entirely different helicopter all together, while Norway and Sweden had their own specific configurations differing from that of Finland.

Another project started in 1995, with a goal to develop and produce a common Viking submarine; a collaboration of three Nordic companies. The project collapsed as Norway and Denmark withdrew, and Finland was not even participating (thought it planned to purchase submarines if the project was successful).

Despite these highly publicized failures, there were aspects of NORDAC that were beneficial to the Nordic countries. Part of the role of NORDAC was screening of all weapons procurement from each country. In doing so, areas of collaboration were identified, saving over €80 million on defense expenditures. Some examples include the joint purchasing of an anti-tank missile, and shared testing and purchasing of an all terrain carrier, saving €5 million overall (and an additional €1 million annually).

The second institutional framework implemented by the Nordic countries was the Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS) to support efforts of coordination when participating in UN peacekeeping missions. Other organization led peacekeeping operations would fall under this agreement as they became more common. At the end of the cold War, NATO and later the EU emerged as organizations willing to take on peacekeeping operations, which the Nordic countries also participate in.

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73 Kockums of Sweden, Kongsberg Defense & Aerospace of Norway, and Odense Staalskibsværft of Denmark.


75 Forsberg (2013): 1167.
NORDCAPS was seen as much more successful, as it was an area where Nordic cooperation has excelled in, with participation in UN led operations since the 1950s. A planning and coordination office was setup in Stockholm, and has facilitated Nordic troop involvement in operations from Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 (which, it is worth noting, was the first time Finland and Sweden contributed personnel to a NATO-led operation), and later in the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan (NATO) and the European Union operation EUFOR in Chad. By not requiring all Nordic countries to participate, the framework has been successful with various combinations of coordination between Nordic states. NORDCAPS focused not only on the deployment of Nordic troops to peacekeeping operations, but also on education and training for peacekeeping and crisis management. Courses and training exercises were coordinated between the Nordic states and open to both Nordic and non-Nordic participates. NORDCAPS was also instrumental in the formation of an EU battle group, under the framework of ESDP, originally consisting of Estonian, Irish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish units.

It was not until 2008 when the Nordic countries adopted a new institutional agreement. The Nordic Supportive Defense Structures (NORDSUP) was another move towards closer cooperation. The goal was to provide a framework to explore “capability development based on the principles of mutual interest, equality, reciprocity, and sovereignty”.

In actuality, NORDSUP would lead to the latest stage of institutional Nordic defense cooperation, still in its early stages today. Finland had the first Chair of NORDSUP in 2008, with a goal to create all encompassing organization to facilitate and support Nordic defense cooperation. Defense ministers in the region agreed, and the result was the aptly named Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO), founded in 2009 to strengthen the areas of cooperation that were already under development since the end of the Cold War, and without stepping on the toes of the varying institutional affiliations and orientations of its member’s national security and defense policy. Thus, NORDEFCO creates a framework for cooperation at a political and military level by absorbing the roles of NORDAC, NORDCAPS and

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76 Forsberg (2013): 1167.


78 Memorandum of Understanding on Nordic Supportive Defence Structures (NORDSUP), Bornholm, Denmark, (2008).

NORDSUP. as such, the organization is structured to facilitate cooperation between all five Nordic states, in any combination. The chairmanship is held by one state, and rotates on a yearly basis, while the Cooperation Areas\(^80\) are led by one nation and rotate on a biannual basis.\(^81\) From each country, the ministers of defense, as well as chiefs of the various branches of the armed forces are the main actors facilitating cooperation in NORDEFCO. Another advantage of NORDEFCO is that it is under constant evolution and development. Potential areas of cooperation and synchronization are always being identified, and brought under the NORDEFCO umbrella and integrated into one of the COPAs. The adoption of NORDEFCO was an important step to making Nordic cooperation a permanent fixture in the national security and defense policies of the Nordic countries.

### 3.1.2 deepening nordic cooperation

Besides the above mentioned institutional and organizational agreements made between the Nordic states, defense and security cooperation is also pursued in a number of informal agreements and efforts. This came in the form of joint declarations, studies, proposals, and other collaborations exploring new avenues of deepening defense cooperation.

An important initiative came in 2007, just prior to institutionalizing NORDSUP, when the Norwegian and Swedish defense ministries (later joined by Finland), published a report outlining over 140 ways in which the Nordic countries could better cooperate in defense and security policy. The end goal of the suggested collaboration was to maximize cost effectiveness, while still retaining military effectiveness.

One such way was in the form of civil-crisis management, an area where Nordic countries have experience in. The Haga Declaration of 2009, agreed upon by Nordic ministries responsible with crisis management and societal security, formalized relations and called for the creation of cross border emergency preparedness. In effect, this would synchronize the Nordic response to crisis management for seamless cooperation in the event of a crisis in the region.\(^82\) This was also a form of expanding cooperation within the policy area beyond traditional notions of security and defense.

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\(^{80}\) COPAs: strategic development, capabilities, human resource education, training exercise, and operations.


In 2009, Nordic ministers commissioned a report from the highly experienced and well respected former Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg on areas where the Nordic states could improve security cooperation. The final report made 13 proposals for enhanced cooperation, and garnered positive support. While a report does not immediately turn into tangible cooperation, the positive reception to Stoltenberg’s proposals signaled that the Nordic countries were serious about broadening regional defense cooperation. This is indicative based on what the report contained; including joint maritime monitoring, joint monitoring of Icelandic airspace, a shared satellite program, and joint amphibious units, to just name a few. Arguably the most jarring of all proposals called for a declaration of solidarity by the Nordic countries, assuring mutual assistance from all Nordic states should one be attacked (in the same vein as NATO’s article 5).\(^{83}\)

The idea of a Nordic declaration of solidarity was seen as an important step in Nordic cooperation, and Sweden took initiative in 2009 by declaring it would not stand passively if a neighbor was threatened, and would expect the same in return. The following year, Nordic ministers began to formulate an official declaration of solidarity. in 2011, the declaration was made and signed in Helsinki.\(^{84}\) The declaration, coinciding with the formation of NORDEFCO, were important symbolic steps in Nordic defense cooperation.

Outlined here are ways in which Nordic states showed continued motivation to further defense and security cooperation. The process has seen its shares of ebb and flow, but is currently in an upswing of progress since NORDEFCO came into existence in 2009. With this understanding of the progress in defense cooperation that has taken place in Norden, then, the forces that drive this cooperation can now be explored through both material and ideational lenses.

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3.2 - Ideational Factors of Nordic Defense Cooperation

Moving towards answering the main research question of the thesis, this section will start by looking at the ideational factors that have an impact on Nordic countries and their defense cooperation. To be sure, a shared *Norden* identity will play an important role in driving defense cooperation. Before starting the analysis on how identity drives cooperation (and how it interacts with material factors to drive cooperation), it will need to be explored on its own, in addition to other ideational factors. Historical experience, and strategic culture are both related to identity (and help create that identity), but will also be explored separately in this section.

Ideational factors are useful when exploring defense cooperation between the Nordic countries because of a strong shared identity that exists in Northern Europe. Other ideational factors help make up this shared identity, starting with history. The history of the Nordic states is intertwined, dating back centuries. To go into too much detail would distract from the main purpose, but it has an impact on the make up of the Nordic states and the cooperation taking place in the region today.

3.2.1 historical experience of the Nordic states

The Northern region of Europe was marred by centuries of conflict, as powers contended with each other on important trade routes and seas, and alliances constantly shifted. The vikings famously conquered territory, leaving a wake of destruction, spreading to Iceland, England, and mainland Europe.\(^85\) Signs of cooperation in the region started around 1397 with the meeting of the three crowns in Kalmar, Sweden, led to the Kalmar Union between kingdoms in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The union was certain not to last, however, with Denmark as the central power that imposed heavy constraints and taxes on Norway and Sweden. Sweden's power grew, and Danish efforts to balance Sweden's power, with Norway, led to more conflict which extended to the mainland with wars against Russia in the 1700s. It was Peter the Great’s triumph over Swedish expansion that can be seen as the peak of Sweden as a great power in the region.\(^86\)

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\(^86\) ibid. 8.
2014 marks the two hundredth year anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Kiel towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars. While the event was a minor detail in the continent wide conflict of the early 19th century, it made a major difference in the future of the Nordic region. In signing the treaty, Denmark—after siding with the French—was forced to resign Norway over to Sweden, who lobbied for support from the British after recently losing Finland to Russia. Norway refused to comply, however, resulting in a brief conflict with Sweden. Norway and Sweden would ultimately agree to form a union, with Norway under its own constitution. Denmark would later fall to Prussia in 1864, losing a significant portion of territory.

This would lead to a shift towards neutrality, as Denmark no longer had the power to try and balance with the great European powers. In short, the events in 1814 and beyond started the transformation to the region as it is known today. The rise of Norway as an independent state, and the decline of Denmark and Sweden to smaller states put the region on the periphery of power politics in Europe, allowing the Nordic states to start to coexist together instead of counter balancing each other within the scheme of great power politics in Europe. This era also saw the rise of Scandinavianism, a transnational cultural movement that also helped Denmark when German speaking populations started a separatist movement, supported by Prussia. Sweden and Norway, with permission from their respective parliaments, offered Denmark thousands of soldiers, as the King of Sweden described the separatist movement as a threat to all Nordic countries.

In the latter half of the 19th century, Northern Europe became a relatively peaceful place. Rising population and periods of modernization and nationalism internally led to more cooperative external relations in Norden in addition to constitutional reforms. These changes ushered in a new era, as the reign of absolute monarchy drew to a close. However, this occurred in a much more moderate fashion in comparison to violent revolutions in France and the American colonies. Both Norway (1905) and much later Iceland (1944) would gain

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90 ibid.
their full independence from under the rule of another Nordic state. Finland (1918), meanwhile, would gain independence from Russia by way of a civil war. In short, the countries in the Nordic region share a closely knit history, and relations were not always on the friendly terms they are today.

During World War II, the countries in Northern Europe went through different experiences. With a new regime in Russia gaining power after the Bolshevik Revolution, the Soviet Union sought to return Finland to within its domain once again, leading to more conflict in the Winter War. For the most part, Finland took advantage of an extremely cold winter, and used familiar territory to stave off Soviet invaders. The result was a brief peace and newly negotiated borders to the east, though Finland as a state survived. The Continuation War (1941-44) against the Soviet Union was fought in close coordination with Nazi Germany, but Finnish aims to regain lost territory did not materialize. Finland would eventually sign an armistice with the Soviets, and would mobilize against German troops, forcing them north into Finnish Lapland and across the Norwegian border. Finland managed to retain its status as an independence state, despite facing much more powerful nations in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

Both Norway and Denmark were invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany in early 1940. Denmark surrendered relatively quickly, while Norway put up a strong resistance with British assistance, because of the strategic importance of the country; the proximity to Great Britain, North Atlantic ports, and important resources in iron ore. Both countries remained occupied for the duration of the war with varying instances of resistance throughout. Sweden, retained its policy of neutrality and was subsequently not invaded by Germany. This is in part due to Sweden’s successful maneuvering of geopolitical relations by conceding to Germany the use of its railways and territory for troop and weapons transport between Norway and Germany and Norway and Finland. Iceland, a sovereign under Denmark at the time, was “invaded” without shots fired by the United Kingdom for strategic purposes. Iceland did protest on the grounds of its neutrality, but would later declare its independence from an occupied Denmark.

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92 Ingebritsen (2006): 79
Following the Second World War, and with the onset of the Cold War, the five Nordic states created a dynamic known as the Nordic balance.\textsuperscript{93} This emerged from being tightly situated between the two superpowers, with strategic territory in the the North Atlantic and Arctic Circle. Norway, with its vast coastline of—and island possessions in—the North Atlantic, Iceland in the northern Atlantic, and Denmark’s possession of Greenland and the Faroe Islands were strategic areas for the United States, and led to Denmark, Iceland and Norway becoming founding members of NATO.\textsuperscript{94} Sweden continued its tradition of neutrality. Finland also favored neutrality, but was heavily pressured from the east to hold a formal security treaty with the Soviet Union following the pair of wars between the two during the Second World War. Sweden’s neutrality was important to Finland’s security because joining NATO could have provoked the Soviet Union. Norway and Denmark further contributed to this balance by not permitting both foreign troops and nuclear weapons to be stationed in their territory while in times of peace.\textsuperscript{95} In addition, the Nordic states were successful in diplomatic efforts to mediate deliberation between the United States and Soviet Union, often hosting the representatives of each in Nordic capitals for talks.\textsuperscript{96}

The end of the Cold War made for drastic changes in the political and security landscape across Europe and the world, and the Nordic region was no exception. The Dissolution of the Soviet Union ended the Friendship Treaty, allowing Finland to pursue a foreign and security policy in a truly independent capacity for the first time in over 40 years.\textsuperscript{97} Denmark, Iceland, and Norway remained members of NATO, and Sweden sought to remain militarily non-aligned, joined by Finland. Foreign and security policy was rethought across the board, allowing the policy area to enter the agenda of multilateral discussions between the Nordic states.

This is by no means an in depth historiographical analysis, but a number of important themes can be derived from the experiences of the Nordic countries. First, after 1814, Nordic states gained independence from each other without much bloodshed. Second, many centuries prior to the 19th, Nordic states would overpower each other during interchanging


\textsuperscript{95} Bailes, et al. (2006), 4.

\textsuperscript{96} Ingebritsen (2006):11.

\textsuperscript{97} ibid., 79.
periods of status as a great power (both Denmark and Sweden) in the region. In later times it was external superpowers that would overpower and exert political and military pressure on the region. Third, internal factors that occurred in much of Europe were shared by all the nordic countries leading them to shift towards social democratic governments and away from absolute rule by the monarch. These experiences ultimately factor in to the deeper cooperation that occurred during the Cold War, setting the precedent for defense and security cooperation when it became politically possible.

3.2.2 the Nordic states and strategic culture

The idea of strategic culture has its roots during the Second World War, known then as “national character”. The concept was further developed by Jack Snyder in an analysis on the strategic cultures of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and how it influenced strategic decision making. A defining debate about strategic culture was between Johnston and Grey, which provide two competing views of strategic culture, and from which most contemporary studies of strategic culture draw from. In short, the discrepancy in definitions comes down to if strategic culture explains strategic behavior (Johnston) or if it is only a context for understanding, but not defining, strategic behavior (Gray). As the current thesis is a study examining a number of factors to explain defense and security policy, the latter definition is of better use here. Thus, strategic culture as referred to here will be in line with Heiko Biehl, Bastian Giegerich and Alexandra Jonas’ definition, who define strategic culture as a set of “shared beliefs, norms and ideas within a given society that generate specific expectations about the respective community’s preferences and actions in security and defense policy.”

This section will examine each of the Nordic state’s strategic culture. This will make it possible to both draw common themes from each of the Nordic sate’s strategic culture, and also to connect it to other ideational and material factors in the analysis.

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Starting with Denmark, who’s strategic culture is best characterized by an internal debate between cosmopolitanism and defencism, according to Rasmussen.\textsuperscript{101} Both of these two broad orientations has been the stance—that is, the strategic culture—of Danish defense policy at one time or another. Cosmopolitanism, in the context of strategic culture, views the (offensive) use of the armed forces as unnecessary, and instead favors pursuing mutually beneficial relations over zero-sum politics. Though it is worth pointing out that, despite having a preference for cooperation, the cosmopolitan view holds that even alignment in NATO and other military organizations might lead to involvement in power politics. This view is most clearly seen in Denmark’s opt-out of CSDP. Thus, preventive wars to make peace are not on a cosmopolitan agenda, and the armed forces are strictly for national defense against external threats. Alternatively, defencism is slightly more realist, in that it prefers a more active role in defense and security policy, including alignment with NATO and an active role in the European Union’s security and defense policy.\textsuperscript{102}

Today, a middle ground between the two perspectives makes up Denmark’s strategic culture in practice. In turn, activism has defined Danish security and defense policy since the end of the Cold War. Denmark was ready and willing to contribute to a number of missions, from peace support operations in the Balkans during the 1990s, to out of area combat operations with NATO in 1999 in Kosovo, and Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003. This was seen as a way to contribute at an international level, and, as Rynning points out, spawned the term “international activism”.\textsuperscript{103} The aforementioned active participation in international operations also signal a Danish strategic culture favoring transatlantic relations in security and defense. It was a US/NATO led mission in both Kosovo in 1999 and Afghanistan in 2001, and a US led coalition in Iraq two years later. Still, Denmark sensibly deals with the NATO - EU dichotomy by leaning towards NATO in instances where “hard power” is needed, and the EU for “soft power”.\textsuperscript{104} For example, Denmark participated in the NATO operation in Libya, but also looked to the EU to conduct a stabilizing civilian post-conflict mission in the country. Much of Denmark’s activity in security and defense since the end of the Cold War has been military in nature, however, which transformed the Danish armed

\textsuperscript{101} Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, “‘What’s the Use of It?’: Danish Strategic Culture and the Utility of Armed Force,” \textit{Cooperation and Conflict} 40, no. 1 (2005): 68.

\textsuperscript{102} ibid., 73.

\textsuperscript{103} Rynning, (2013): 86.

\textsuperscript{104} ibid., 92.
forces from a territorial defense force to an internationally deployable army, which also helped to modernize the country’s armed forces.\textsuperscript{105} To sum, Denmark’s historical experience guided an attempt to neutrality from 1864, which proved relatively successful until the Second World War. The end of the Cold War allowed Denmark to take on a much more active role, and has since shed its strategic culture of neutrality. However this could change once again, as political dispute and shrinking defense budgets will have an affect on Danish security policy in the coming years.

In Finland, the national legacy of survival and territorial defense defines the nation’s strategic culture. This can be traced back to experiences during the Second World War when Finland was left to defend itself against a superior force in the Soviet Union. Finland managed to secure defensive victories, and survived as an independent state. This was done with an emphasis on both territorial defense, as well as activism in international peace keeping operations. During the Cold War, Finland (along with fellow Nordic states) participated in UN sanctioned peacekeeping operations. With a UN resolution, it was thought, participation signaled Finland’s neutrality and preference for peace. This continued beyond the Cold War with Finland joining the EU and has made an impact on Europe’s security and defense policy. Most notably in efforts, joined by Sweden, to include the Petersberg Tasks that integrated humanitarian and peacekeeping capabilities into EU policy. Finland also remained non-aligned with Sweden, even though an application to join NATO would be a simple technicality. Despite this, as Forsberg & Seppo argue, Finland has transatlantic leanings, and sees the importance of a US presence in Europe.\textsuperscript{106}

It is worth noting that there is a fundamental conflict in Finnish strategic culture between realist notions of survival (territorial defense) and international liberalism (humanitarian/peacekeeping operations).\textsuperscript{107} A number of interpretations can be made from this discrepancy. One is that Finland’s traditional commitment to territorial defense is deeply ingrained in its strategic culture and will remain the core, even as a shift is made towards peacekeeping and crisis management. The ending of the Cold War might have indicated that a territorial defense need not remain a high priority, but a renewed aggressiveness in Russia’s external relation says otherwise.

\textsuperscript{105} Rasmussen (2005): 79.


\textsuperscript{107} ibid., 116.
Regardless, The Fact remains that Finland has earned a reputation of being a successful mediator in conflict management. On the other hand, Peacekeeping operation and crisis management can be seen as a way to ensure survival, by joining in international efforts and cooperating with other Nordic and European allies, to emphasize a western leaning (and thus, a balancing).\footnote{Henriikki Heikka, “Republican Realism: Finnish Strategic Culture in Historical Perspective,” \textit{Cooperation and Conflict} 40, no. 1 (2005): 107.} In doing so, Finland shows it is invested in international peace and cooperation, while keeping close with strong western allies, should Finland be threatened from the east.

Like Finland, Norway’s strategic culture was defined by ‘invasion defense’ after the Second World War and even after the conclusion of the Cold War.\footnote{Nina Græger & Halvard Leira, “Norwegian Strategic Culture after World War II: From a Local to a Global Perspective,” \textit{Cooperation and Conflict} 50, no. 1 (2005):46.} Along with the other Nordic countries, Norway gained significant experience in international peacekeeping operations under UN mandate during the Cold War. It was not until the mid 1990s where international operations extended beyond traditional peacekeeping, and included operations in the Middle East with NATO and the United States. Græger and Leira argue that a duality exists in Norwegian strategic culture, containing both realistic and idealistic traits.\footnote{Græger & Leira (2005): 47.} Realist in the sense that its main goal was territorial defense given its strategic location in the North Atlantic, and sharing a northern border with Russia. This also lead to strong transatlantic ties with the United States, becoming a founding member of NATO. An important component of this was a “people’s army” through conscription, in that it was an important distinction that the people defend their own land.

The idealist aspects of Norwegian strategic culture stem from UN Peacekeeping operations, which Norway contributed to throughout the Cold War. The discrepancy, which remains a common theme throughout Nordic countries, led to the armed forces becoming better equipped for territorial defense than rapid response and deployment for international operations. Modernization of Norway’s military did not occur until the 1990s.\footnote{ibid., 51.} In addition, an important emphasis is put on civil-military relations, partly through conscription, which helps keep the armed forces as an important pillar of society. This also alludes to an important economic impact, where territorial defense helps create local jobs, directly and indirectly, by way of military installations in rural parts of the country where communities are
often built around. Following 2001, Norway stepped beyond its perceive role as a peacekeeper by actively participating alongside the US in Afghanistan and later in Iraq.\textsuperscript{112} Today, Norwegian security and defense still remains at the core of its strategic culture, while still allowing for participation in international operations with NATO and the EU, despite not being a member of the latter.

In Sweden, the trend continues of a two pronged, and often conflicting strategic culture. In Sweden’s case, as Aselius argues, the two competing visions of defense and security is that of a “People’s Defense” and that of a “High-Tech Defense”. The People’s Defense is the idea that the emphasis should be on the people defending the people’s territory. Not only was conscription a norm, but special attention was paid to having important voluntary units, as well as including the armed forces as an important part of society. High-Tech defense, while agreeing in the societal functions of the armed forces, put more emphasis on a professional military.

This approach saw the modernization of Sweden’s armed forces as a priority over issues of democratic credibility.\textsuperscript{113} These two doctrines of Swedish strategic culture exist in a context of neutrality, which has been a policy for Sweden since 1815, to varying degrees. For example, in the Second World War, Sweden adopted a policy of “armed neutrality”, while both selling raw materials to Nazi Germany and allowing Nazi troops passage through Swedish Territory (though Sweden also made concessions to the Allies to maintain its sovereignty and neutrality). During the Cold War, Sweden chose non-alignment coupled with an active role in global politics, participating in peacekeeping operations and contributing humanitarian aid around the world. Under this particular variation of neutrality, Sweden has been described as a “moral superpower”, offering a critical voice as well as mediation and bridge building between the two superpowers.\textsuperscript{114}

When the Cold War ended, Swedish strategic culture would once again shift. While retaining its core neutrality, Sweden (with Finland) joined the European Union in 1995. As Ruffa points out, Swedish policy on paper as a nonaligned neutral is somewhat contradictory to Sweden’s use of its armed forces in practice. Sweden has participated in two NATO

\textsuperscript{112} Græger & Leira (2005): 58.


operations, in Kosovo and Afghanistan, as well as a number of EU operations.\textsuperscript{115} Still, despite a stance as a neutral, Sweden justifies the use of its armed forces in humanitarian/peacekeeping operations as “a force for good in the world”.\textsuperscript{116} This is the view that Sweden has taken when participating in these operations, and most recently in Libya, where Sweden contributed jets to enforce the NATO no-fly zone over the North African country. This can be attributed to a shift from use of force in the defense of territory to defense of national interest.\textsuperscript{117}

While Sweden is not in NATO, it has been involved with the organization, discreetly during the Cold War, and officially after 1994 through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Sweden, at least on paper, still favors the EU. It actively seeks to make contributions to EU foreign and security policy, and views participation in EU operations as a way to increase solidarity. Overall, Swedish strategic culture can be defined by its traditional of neutrality, and a shift to “non-alignment”, while remaining an active force in humanitarian, peacekeeping, and crisis management operations through either the EU, NATO, or the UN.

As stated earlier, Iceland does not have an armed forces, and only operates a small Coast Guard, who monitor Icelandic waters and airspace, but with very limited capabilities. Thus, Iceland lacks a strategic culture. Its security is hinged on NATO membership, and participation with the other Nordic countries in areas where it can contribute. Contributing civil officers to crisis management operations, for example. The Nordic states take Iceland security seriously, as one of the joint efforts has been monitoring Icelandic airspace since the United States closed its air force base at Keflavik International Airport. Iceland does not factor in to the analysis of this thesis, but is worth noting in this section because Icelandic territory and airspace remains an important aspect of Nordic cooperation. Overall, Iceland puts effort into relations with the US, Nordic states, NATO, EU, UN, and other organizations to ensure its security.

Overall, the strategic culture of the Nordic countries have their general similarities, but important differences come down to varying approaches to neutrality, territorial defense, norm entrepreneurship, institutional affiliation, and material realities. These important distinctions will come to light in the analysis when compared with material factors. The


\textsuperscript{116} ibid., 343.

\textsuperscript{117} ibid., 351.
distinctions in strategic culture will show which aspects of strategic culture drive the Nordic countries towards or away from defense cooperation.

3.2.3 Nordic and national identity

At the forefront of constructivist work in the last two plus decades of international relations theory is the notion that identities matter in foreign policy. Thus, the common identities of the Nordic states are important factors leading to defense cooperation. This section will attempt to contextualize the previous two sections by discerning key aspects of regional identity, as the states were looked at separately in the previous section.

As previously alluded to, the Nordic countries have, in part, a shared identity across the region. Each country identifies strongly with Norden, the historical, cultural, and social bonds between each country. The subsection on historical experience traced the paths that the Nordic states took to independent statehood and how it shaped states they became today, and these experiences have had a large impact on the shared Norden identity. A surge during a Scandinavianist movement in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden during the mid-nineteenth century, followed by a lull when Denmark fought and was defeated alone by Prussia; post-World War II saw Norden on the rise again with close cooperation during the Cold War. Much of this cooperation was outside the realm of security and defense policy because of the geopolitical limitations of the Nordic counties, but there was still ample room to strengthen ties in cultural, social, and economic areas. Cooperation has been especially prominent in the overlapping areas of culture, which were the roots that started the Scandinavianist movement in the beginning and still is important today.

Norden has always been postured as (a better) alternative to Europe. After the Cold War, the question was how much of European integration would be seen in Northern Europe, and what that might mean for Norden as an identity. Would Nordic identity slowly give way to a European Identity, or would the Nordic states slowly “upload” a Nordic agenda to Europeanization? These were often the questions asked, as this was the challenge to Nordic identity brought on by the end of the Cold War, and it played a vital role in shaping future

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cooperation between the Nordic states, including in security and defense policy. The Nordic countries are small states in the international system. This is vital to the identity of the Nordic region, and each state within, creating a common foundation to build efforts of cooperation upon. At their core, the Nordic states adhere to a set of common values and beliefs that allow them to be norm entrepreneurs on the global stage.\textsuperscript{121} It is the combination of their core values and the use of institutions that allow for Nordic voices to have an impact internationally.

What makes it necessary to acknowledge the identity of each Nordic state separately, however, is that the Scandinavianist movement was only a foundation where Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden crafted their close, but separate identities from. Professor Iver B. Neumann uniquely describes the pan-Scandinavianism as nationalism without borders, in that the necessary shared components of language, culture, and values existed, but not confined to the borders of each Nordic state.\textsuperscript{122} So each country grew its own identity while simultaneously contributing aspects to a regional identity. And despite the outsiders view that the Nordic countries are largely the similar, at times the longevity of \textit{Norden} itself was questioned.

At the end of the Cold War, the idea of a Nordic identity stalled, especially in areas of security and defense. The collapse of the Soviet Union immediately ended the necessity and idea of a “Nordic Balance”, and almost every country in Europe was left to take a new approach to defense and security policy in a post-Cold War world. European integration was gaining momentum, and if the Nordic states were to join the trend, \textit{Norden} could lose its political influence in the region, without losing its historical and cultural importance, but its ability to drive cooperation in the region. It is clear that the values that hold true for the Nordic states did not vanish, however, and the “Nordic Model” of social or welfare democracy, as an in-between capitalism and communism was left entirely intact.\textsuperscript{123} On the other hand, during the process of European integration, some Nordic countries limited their involvement to protect national identity.

The fear of \textit{Norden} falling by the wayside never materialized, and the each Nordic state has worked hard—and in significantly different ways—to balance their Nordic identity

\textsuperscript{121} Ingebritsen (2006): 102.


\textsuperscript{123} Wivel (2013): 307.
with Europeanization. However, as was seen in the previous section on strategic culture, there exists strong national orientations that make the strategic cultures of each Nordic state unique in its own right. There might be a more institutionalized defense union or alliance today, if not for each state holding to a national identity, which plays an undisputed role in foreign and defense policy creation and implementation. Thus, identity and its role as a driving force for defense cooperation is a complicated topic, Despite a common outsider view of that sees the Nordic states closer to one unit than what might actually be the case in reality. As can be deduced from this section so far, there are signs that the Nordic countries hold true to both a Norden and national identity, and the both come in to play when it comes to defense cooperation.

3.3 - Material Factors of Nordic Defense Cooperation

The previous section went into detail about the ideational factors that play a role in cooperation amongst the Nordic states (both in general, and specifically in defense and security policy). This section will go into the material factors that play a role in Nordic cooperation. As was stressed in earlier sections, material factors will taken into account in the same way as ideational factors are, as their interaction holds the key to answering the main research question.

3.3.1 geopolitics, structural factors & military capabilities

The Nordics are small states in global politics. Something that is part of their identity, but also has a very real impact on their ability to act at an international level. The last brush with great power status in the Nordic region was the Swedish Empire in the 17th century. Since then, Nordic countries have not dictated European great power politics, but have certainly been affected by them. It was the dramatic conclusion of the Cold War that opened the door for the Nordic states to start Cooperation beyond social policies, and into more high political areas like security and defense.125

The landscape had shifted immensely, and for the first time, Nordic states had full flexibility with defense and security policy. The United States as the lone superpower still had a strong presence in Europe, and with no direct external threat, security policy would also broaden. This development happened across Europe and beyond. Similarly, threat perception is a factor that can drive cooperation. The end of the Cold War was interesting in this regard, because the threat to the east subsided. Instead, the concept of security in the west expanded to include a number of new components, which were seen as threats in the post Cold War world. These included intra-state conflict, terrorism, non-state actors, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, and human security (food, water, energy, environment).126

The Nordic state’s policy adapted to reflect these changes, and common threat perception make cross border cooperation more enticing for the Nordic states to participate in.

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Another development that brings global affairs closer to the Nordic states is the opening of the Arctic. Forecasts expect the impact of global warming on the polar icecaps will open new shipping lanes during the warmer months in the Arctic Circle. This new arena of international politics is in the backyard of the Nordic region, and each Nordic state has their own vested interest, in particular Norway and Denmark (via Greenland). However, each Nordic state is a member of the Arctic Council, along with Canada, Russia, the United States and a number of observer countries. This development is significant not only for the economic and material wealth expected to be gained, but also because of potential military confrontation.

Varying and competing claims and interests are present, creating potential for conflict among the Arctic rim states and non-Arctic states alike. The Arctic Council is one of a number of regional institutions facilitate dialogue in the Arctic, and attempts to supplant diplomatic cooperation as the first measure in disagreements relating to the Arctic. So far, signs show that states are willing to participate for the most part, but there is still plenty of room to improve. Still, states are preparing their respective Navies for use in the Arctic. Not strictly for warfare, but also surveillance, escort, and search and rescue. It is still early, but from the international institutions already in place, cooperation is off to a head start in the Arctic. Though it is still a relatively new development, the Nordics have a chance to be on the forefront of geopolitics in the Arctic, and their experience with each other should play a significant part. In turn, cooperation outside of the Arctic would only strengthen Nordic cooperation and its ability to play a significant role in the region as it becomes more contested in the future.

As the development in the Arctic demonstrates, geography is an important material factor to take into account. Despite being “small states”, the territory that the Nordic region takes up is quite large. This is not only due to the size of the countries themselves, but also includes territory belonging to the states. The total size of the Nordic region (countries + territories) is 3,425,804 kilometers squared. If the region included in a ranking of states by size, the Nordic region would rank 7th, situated between Australia and India. The location of

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this large area is also important, as a vast amount of the territory is in the North Atlantic and the Arctic Circle. A strategically important area as Denmark, Iceland, and Norway as founding NATO members can attest to.

The large space available, especially in the North has been an important aspect of defense cooperation. Nordic countries often participate in training exercises on or over each other’s territory. Since 2006, Cold Response has been a major training exercise taking place in the large area of Norway and Swedish Lapland. All the Nordic countries participate in the exercise, along with other partner countries that are invited. Cold Response is one of many programs started since 2006 that territory or airspace in multiple Nordic states. Taking place within the NORDEFCO framework has allowed for less bureaucratic and regulatory roadblocks, which gives more incentive for cooperation in training and exercise.

This speaks to the wishes to be able to seamlessly combine forces when and where possible, because the Nordic states do not boast large armies. Norway has the most active military personnel, at 24,450, and Denmark with the smallest at 18,628. One interesting point is the reserve personal of Finland at 340,000. This is by far the highest of the Nordic countries, and combined with their active military personnel (22,100) gives them a total military personnel of 71 per 1000 capita. In comparison, the rest of the Nordics range from 13 to 24. Given their small armed forces, cooperation is an opportunity to combine military forces to punch above their weight, much like a combined Nordic voice has more impact on the global stage.

This section alone can make for an argument as the key driving force of cooperation. The material and structural realities since the end of the Cold War have played a crucial role in developing cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Despite mixed institutional affiliation across the region, a unified Nordic voice is louder than the sum of its parts, a principle understood across the region and put into practice on the global stage, whether that is in the European Union, the United Nations, or with NATO.

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3.3.2. economic impact on defense spending

When it comes down to it, the governments of the Nordic countries have explored defense cooperation because of difficult economic times, and the prospect and opportunity to save in defense spending. The opportunity to save money in procurement is hard to resist, and a vital way to gain political support for cross boarder projects. Economic issues have been the story of the decade since the global financial crisis came in the 2008, and money strapped countries have had no choice but to look at the national defense budget for potential savings. How has this come into play in the Nordic countries, and how has this had an effect on defense spending and defense cooperation?

Table 3.1: Basic economic profile of Nordic countries (as of 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>GDP (rank)</th>
<th>GDP per Capita (rank)</th>
<th>Defense Spending (rank)</th>
<th>Defense spending as % GDP (rank)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>5,269,000</td>
<td>$335.9 billion (34)</td>
<td>$59,832 (8)</td>
<td>$4,553 million (42)</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>5,427,000</td>
<td>$267.3 billion (42)</td>
<td>$49,147 (16)</td>
<td>$3,262 million (50)</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>5,086,000</td>
<td>$512.6 billion (26)</td>
<td>$100,819 (2)</td>
<td>$7,235 million (29)</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>9,621,000</td>
<td>$789.7 billion (22)</td>
<td>$60,430 (7)</td>
<td>$6,519 million (30)</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank Open Data, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database

Finland is the only Nordic country to have adopted the Euro, while Denmark, Norway, and Sweden kept their respective Kroner (Which is worth noting, with Norway being a part of the European Economic Area (EEA) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and Denmark and Sweden European Union members). The economic crisis that plagued most of Europe and America did not have as devastating an effect on the Nordic region, largely because of their social democratic structure of government.131 The style is subject to constant reform and upgrades, leading the Nordic states to rank near the top in areas like economic growth, prosperity, equality, and competitiveness. The Nordics shifted from tax and spend economies in the latter half of the 20th century to more frugal balance of welfare and free market capitalism. The debt crisis for the Nordic countries happened in the

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1990s, which helped in dodging major financial difficulties in the following decade, though they did not emerge unscathed.\textsuperscript{132}

As much as debt ridden countries look to Scandinavia for inspiration from their relative economic success, the story is largely the same for the Nordics in regards to defense spending. Budgets for defense are being cut, and in many cases, military forces are not being streamlined to balance efficiency and modernity. In this section the economies of the Nordic states will be examined, with a focus on defense spending since the Cold War. This will help paint a picture of the economic factors that come into consideration when discussing defense spending and procurement, which in turn become important factors in driving defense cooperation.

The Nordic states are small states with strong economies. They rank within the range of 22 to 42 of the world’s largest economies based on gross domestic product (GDP). However, when looking at GDP per capita, the Nordic states rank much higher. Norway is ranked 2nd, and Finland, the lowest, is ranked 16th. Sweden and Denmark are ranked 7th and 8th, respectively.\textsuperscript{133} More relevant to topic of this thesis, The defense spending of the Nordic states is just above 1% of the national GDP; Denmark at 1.4%, Finland at 1.2, Norway at 1.4, and Sweden at 1.2 (see table 1 for a comparison).\textsuperscript{134}

These numbers provide a good indication as to where the Nordic economies stand today. More telling will be how these numbers have changed since the end of the Cold War, and when paired with defense spending over the same time period, will give a better


idea as to how much economic strength plays a role, and why defense spending is at the level it is today. The Nordic countries had their own economic crisis before the rest of Europe and the western world plunged into a recession in the 2000s. Most of the Nordic countries had experienced rapid economic growth in the 1980s (the outlier being Norway, who’s crisis had already started in the late 1980s). The 1990s brought a significant crash, with the worst of it experienced by Finland with GDP annual growth just below -6.0% at its worst, resulting in a recession for three years.\textsuperscript{135} However, the Nordics were not unaffected by the financial crisis in the late 2000s. All four countries showed significant drops in GDP annual growth in 2008 and 2009 (Finland with, once again, the worst at -8% in 2009).

What is striking from an economic standpoint is defense spending as percent of the GDP. Both national GDP and military spending from 1989 until today follow a similar trend. However, looking at defense spending as percent of the GDP, besides a few one year spikes, the general trend is downward.\textsuperscript{136} This implies that the Nordic states were interested in allocated less of the budget towards defense spending since the end of the Cold War. Not an uncommon trend at the time; nations faced other issues and had less to worry about from a security standpoint. Even as the GDP rising, the percent of that used on defense was shrinking. Thus, with lower or stagnate defense spending, the lure of defense cooperation is much more significant. Allocating less money towards defense spending would not have to mean a stripped down military, but instead one more efficient and streamlined.\textsuperscript{137} Cooperation is expected to play an important part in this, as projects undertaken across the Nordic region were expected to save hundreds of millions of dollars, in some cases.\textsuperscript{138} With the economic picture of the Nordic region presented, along with connections to defense spending, the next section will focus on a specific economic area more directly related to Nordic defense cooperation.


\textsuperscript{136} see figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. Charts scaled down for visual representation.


Another aspect of defense and security policy that falls within the larger realm of economic factors is defense industry and weapons procurement. The Nordic states can only boast of a modest defense industry from which their national governments (though not exclusively) purchase weapons systems and other military equipment. The Nordic states are less prone to protectionism of its defense industry, contrary to larger European countries like the UK, France, and Germany who have a much more significant defense industry that supplies nations across Europe and around the world. Moreover, the Nordic states rely on non-Nordic imports for the majority of their arms and equipment. From the period of 1993-2003, the main supplier of arms imports was the United States; 43% of Danish imports, 74% of Finnish imports, 46% of Norwegian imports. The outlier being Sweden, to which 76% of its arms imports came from Germany (though, a majority of this is from the licensing of a German battle tank, which were built in Sweden. The majority would also be from the USA if licensing for the German tank is not included).

Despite the majority of armament coming from outside of the Nordic region, there are signs of industrial collaboration. Cross boarder ownership of defense companies is not uncommon, with companies in Finland and Sweden holding shares in Norway’s major defense company. Sweden has the largest defense industry in the Nordic region, with the only capacity for special weapon systems. The other Nordic countries specialize in small munitions that are sold around the globe.

As Hagelin argues, Nordic defense industry and procurement cooperation is “limited and unbalanced…” This is highlighted by the high profile failures of common purchasing projects undertaken during the 1990s by some of the Nordic countries (see section 3.1.1), as well as the above statistics on arms import distribution. Varying institutional membership also comes into play. The European Defense Agency (EDA) was established in 2004 to promote

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141 ibid.
pooling and sharing, and projects with a wider range of members might be more appealing for Nordic countries.\textsuperscript{142} NATO has similar structures to promote Smart Defense. For example, preference has been given to join already existing collaboration efforts that might go beyond the realm of just the Nordic region, like the NATO TOW missile partnership group.\textsuperscript{143}

The Nordic defense industry is complex and intertwined. There is only a limited intra-regional market for arms, with transfers coming sporadically and in bilateral combinations rather than involving most or all of the Nordic countries. There is also the risk of creating monopolies by shifting the dynamics of the industry. Efforts to improve a pan-European arms industry to compete with Europe might hurt local Nordic arms industries, which, in turn, has a negative impact on defense cooperation in the region.\textsuperscript{144}

Defense industry is an area originally falling under the framework agreement NORDAC (see section 3.1.1), which was absorbed by NORDEFCO in 2009. Thus, efforts are still in their infancy under the institutional framework. As the armed forces of the Nordic countries are modernized, and reequipped for a changing security landscape, efforts have been made for the Nordic defense industry to help in this transition. High profile projects that were attempted in the past might not be as common, but smaller scale procurement to both fit the needs of the Nordic militaries, and the capacity of the defense companies in the regional are expected to grow in number.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{142} Hagelin (2006): 181.

\textsuperscript{143} Hagelin (2006): 177.


3.4 - Interaction of Ideational and Material Factors in Driving Cooperation

The previous two sections separately examined the ideational and material factors that drive defense and security cooperation between the Nordic states. This final section will combine both, and look at how the two types of factors drive Nordic defense cooperation, with special attention on the interaction of both ideational and material. What is important here will be to track the changes that take place over time (since the end of the Cold War). It is more likely then that changing material and structural factors influence ideational factors, but this is not always the case. The key points to emerge from this section, then, are which factors (and interaction of factors) push the Nordic states towards cooperation, and which factors (and interaction of factors) pull the Nordic away from cooperation.

It is not disputed that geopolitical landscape has an influence on defense cooperation. This is apparent since the end of the Cold War saw Europe becoming more comfortable in an integrated foreign and security policy. The same is true for the Nordic region. The Cold War coming to a swift conclusion opened the door for modes of cooperation that were simply not possible during the Cold War (at least not publicly). This event drastically changed the international system, and the external systemic pressure that the Nordic states felt to create the “Nordic balance” no longer existed. With these constraints removed, the Nordic states were able to bring defense and security policy to the table as a direct result to the change in the material reality of the international system.

Today’s events are critical in understanding how systemic pressures can drive cooperation. Russia’s increased activity in the Baltic Sea has the Nordics, especially Finland and Sweden, on edge. Recognition of an increased threat is certainly pushing the Nordic states towards closer cooperation. Even more pressing are reports of ill-prepared militaries in the unlikely event of a conventional attack from the east. Recent reports suggest that Sweden would not be able to defend its Baltic-state partners, let alone its own borders. The past has suggested that systemic changes push the Nordic states towards cooperation. While recent events are not the dramatic systemic change that the Cold War caused, there are new pressures in the international system that should push Nordic defense cooperation, but (with

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events happening in the last six to eight months) it is too early to tell how significant this push towards cooperation is.

The shared Nordic identity and history, in turn, were the ideational factors that gave the Nordics a framework for cooperation. Each countries prime ministers and other high ranking officials immediately discussed the possibility of defense cooperation following the end of the Cold War. However, progress was somewhat slow in the early 1990s. 1994 saw the first institutional developments in NORDAC (see section 3.1.1). The defense ministers of each Nordic country did not attend a Nordic Council session until 1997, when the Nordic Council hosted a seminar focusing on regional security.\textsuperscript{148}

Once again, this is a result from a mix of different factors coming into play. As was highlighted earlier, the Nordic states experienced a significant financial crisis in the early 1990s. Defense budgets were already shrinking since the end of the Cold War, and the immediate agenda of the Nordic states was recovery. It would make sense then, that the first institutional agreement (NORDAC) had a key economic element. By focusing on savings, the Nordic countries took the most pragmatic approach to cooperation. With defense budgets shrinking and costs rising, streamlining armament is crucial to maintaining a deployable armed forces.\textsuperscript{149} With economic interests directly at play, the immediate material factors that pushed the Nordic states towards cooperation at the end of the Cold War was the ending of the Cold War itself (systemic change) and economic concerns (shrinking defense budget, rising costs).

While a Nordic identity played a key role, some saw the idea of a Nordic regional identity as “receded into the background”.\textsuperscript{150} National identity had common Nordic traits that they could be separate, but still find a common foundation to build cooperation on. Still, even national identity posed a problem in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. Any notion of defense cooperation was an issue for Finland and Sweden, as they still strongly identified as neutral. However, this would shift to a position of military non-alignment, as both countries joined the European Union but did not apply for NATO membership. Still, both Finland and Sweden are key partners to NATO, so even military non-alignment is in name only. This also

\textsuperscript{148} Forsberg (2013): 1167.

\textsuperscript{149} Saxi (2011): 9.

\textsuperscript{150} Forsberg (2013): 1175.
leaves both countries flexibility to choose how they participate, while still adhering to the military non-alignment attached to their identity, which has geopolitical implications. Full membership to NATO would certainly be perceived as a threat to Russia, especially in the case of Finland. In turn, Nordic cooperation is the less threatening of the two options, and there is always the possibility to join in the future.¹⁵¹

Strategic culture, much like identity, can be both shared and separate. Section 3.2.2 goes into detail about national strategic culture, but some common aspects are present in each, and can be seen as the early foundation to a developing Nordic strategic culture. For the purposes of this thesis, these are important common themes to each of the Nordic state’s separate strategic cultures that push them towards defense cooperation. The major point is activism in peacekeeping and crisis management operations. Each of the Nordic states has contributed to EU, NATO, and UN operations since the end of the Cold War. All countries were active from the onset the post-Cold War world from Bosnia and Herzegovina the UN, and later NATO, to Chad with the EU.¹⁵² Besides supporting shared Nordic values in taking part in peacekeeping, this has important material implications as well. Mainly in the form of modernizing armed forces for rapid international deployment, and ideally the capability to work seamlessly not only with other Nordic states, but also NATO and EU partners.

Effective cooperation in areas of international peacekeeping and crisis management operations requires coordination on education, training, procurement, and command structure. These are all tasks that NORDEFCO has incorporated under its various COPAs since its founding in 2009 (coordinating international operations was originally under NORDSUPS). Indeed, there were already Nordic battalions used in peacekeeping operations in This stems from the Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden’s desire to maintain an active role in international operations abroad.¹⁵³ This is the most common theme between the strategic cultures of the Nordic states, and a major factor that pushes defense cooperation.

The institutional orientation of the Nordic states is one clear divergence in strategic culture. Denmark and Norway are clearly oriented towards the Atlantic, as key partners to the United States and involvement in NATO. On the other hand, Finland and Sweden are more


Baltic oriented, given their strong relations with the Baltic states. These both overlap, as Denmark and Norway have not been absent from relations with the Baltic states, and Finland and Sweden are key partners with the US and NATO. All Nordic states have and continue to work with international organizations it is not an official member of (Norway with the EU, Finland and Sweden with NATO). However the scale of activity of both the EU and NATO might make putting more effort into cooperation with these organizations more appealing. NORDEFCO accounts for the varying membership obligations of each country, and the non-obligatory cooperation structures gives the Nordic states flexibility.154 Because of this, institutional memberships do not act as hinderance against Nordic defense cooperation, especially because all Nordic members have effective relations with organizations they are not official members of.

On the other hand, there are individual aspects of strategic culture that might pull states away from defense cooperation. Finland is reluctant to overhaul its territorial defense focused armed forces and abolish conscription, despite the heavy costs of these practices.155 As noted, a key aspect of Finland’s strategic culture remains territorial defense. Finland’s history of defending its territory remains a vital component of its armed forced strategy, and is demonstrated in its large reserve of military personnel (340,000).

Overall, defense cooperation in the Nordic region is driven by multiple factors. Studying this cooperation in a framework that accounts for both rationalist and constructivist perspectives gives proper attention to all the key factors in pushing the Nordic states towards closer cooperation. It is difficult to separate each factor and state which specific factor pushes cooperation the most, and which the least. Instead, it can be determined where interactions of ideational and material take place. Two points in time saw important interaction of ideational and material factors: the end of the Cold War, and the financial crisis in the 2000s (both of which have been discussed at length in this thesis). These are not the only time interaction took place, but they are major steps in pushing Nordic defense cooperation to the next level.

However, there is one key factor that drives defense cooperation, and falls somewhat outside of the realm of the specific ideational and material factors discussed in earlier sections. That is tangible results. Since the beginning NORDEFCO, an annual report has


been released that discusses the successes of defense cooperation that NORDEFCO facilitated, as well as goals for the coming year. It should come as no surprise that producing tangible results gets noticed by officials in each country, and they will be more inclined to take cooperation seriously, and carry the momentum forward by supporting more cross-border initiatives. It also signals to those outside the region that Nordic cooperation is alive and well, and the Nordic bloc can be an effective partner through varying contexts within NATO and the EU.

Indeed, Nordic cooperation has taken place within the context of NATO more broadly. For example, from 2010 the Nordic states present in Afghanistan operate joint flights to and from Afghanistan to save on personal transit, despite not every country participating in operations there. This “freedom of operation” also contributes to deepening Nordic defense cooperation. There is no strict formula to facilitate cooperating, but instead, many different combinations in both participating states, and the specific area of cooperation within defense and security.

The intension of this section was to highlight the factors that push the Nordic states either towards defense cooperation, or pull them away from cooperation. Over the time span from the conclusion of the Cold War until the present day, there have been many instances of this cooperation in the Nordic region, attempts at defense cooperation, and situations where the Nordic states diverged. It is a difficult task to pinpoint the exact reasons why each outcome occurs, but by focusing on the ideational and material factors that influence the outcome, a clear picture starts to emerge about what factors interact to facilitate cooperation.

Material factors like the international system play a vital role, especially in the beginning of Nordic cooperation. Opportunity for cooperation at the end of the Cold war was also the case for the rest of Europe, and it can be argued that Europe as a whole has not been as successful at the Nordic states in defense cooperation. Granted, Europe includes many more states, meaning more levels of commitment to balance. Still, other sub-regions of Europe did not attain the success of the Nordics right after the Cold War, even France and the United Kingdom needed most of the 1990s to come to an agreement on defense cooperation in Europe. Quicker development of Nordic defense cooperation, then, can be attributed to the shared Nordic identity and culture of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Finland. The factor cannot be discounted, as its pulling the Nordics states to cooperate in defense is natural, and

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is attributed as such by officials From the Nordic countries.157 These close connections led to small successes in cooperation, and from there, the Nordic states expanded the project of cooperation greatly. It is on small accomplishment that it has come this far while navigating a policy field of overlapping organizations and institutions.

IV. Conclusion

This thesis attempted to draw upon a pluralistic theoretical approach to analyze defense and security cooperation between the Nordic countries since the end of the Cold War. In doing so, it was able to combine ideational and material factors to come away with a better understanding on the driving factors of cooperation. While both ideational and material factors play important roles, it is sometimes the interaction of the two which drives cooperation. By not marginalizing one or the other, a more complete picture was painted.

In the first part of the thesis, defense cooperation was examined through the lens of mainstream International Relations theories, specifically looking at how the development of European integration in security and defense policy was seen by realism and constructivism. This set the foundation for the theoretical approach that the thesis would take. Modernist constructivism was outlined in a number of studies, and the merits of applying a pluralistic approach to problems in International Relations were argued. Furthermore, the main ideational and materials that would not be prioritized over the other were briefly overviewed. In other words, factors both ideational and material or structural in nature would be of equal importance to the analysis. As a brief example, both types of factors were used to explain the end of the Cold War. This example bridged both sections by showing the benefits of incorporating both material and ideational into analysis of explaining a major event that made the Nordic defense cooperation analyzed in the next section possible.

The second part shifted focus to the main topic of the thesis, that is, Nordic defense cooperation. First, by outlining the cooperation efforts that have taken place since the end of the Cold War in northern Europe. The following sections split up the ideational and material as separate factors all together, and looked at how each as individual drivers of defense cooperation. The final section attempts to combine both types as interacting factors, discerning how they interact to push or pull the Nordic states towards or away from cooperation on defense policy.

The theoretical framework proved fruitful, because the analysis was not constrained by one particular perspective. The intricacies of Nordic cooperation are quite complex and involve many different layers. The ability to view cooperation from levels and taking into account many different factors creates a more clear picture of what drives Nordic defense cooperation. With that being said, because of these complexities, it can be overwhelming to consider so many factors at once, and difficult to discern to the extent in which each factor
has an impact on driving defense cooperation. While the framework tried to pick the “best of both worlds” from rationalist and constructivist thought, an important lesson to draw is that there is no perfect approach when studying problems in International Relations.

Another avenue of future research would be to look into the national debates that occur in each of the Nordic states when defense and security policy is discussed. This thesis intended to focus on cooperation that has already taken place, and to analyze the main driving forces of that cooperation. Continuing on this path of inquiring, but shifting gears towards elite discourse and public opinion in each country, would add further veracity to the findings. For example, the debate of Finland and Sweden joining NATO received renewed attention in 2014. The renewed “NATO debate” in the two traditional non-aligned Nordic states was triggered by Russian interference in Ukraine. Attitudes of the public have changed again, as the debate enters public sphere once again.158

The point is that an analysis focusing on the discourse of security and defense cooperation in the Nordic states would be able to see which driving forces have a significant presence in the debate, and to see how each driving force is perceived within each country. Because this could vary from country to country, it would give a better indication as to which factor pushes a country towards further defense cooperation, and which factor pulls a country away from further defense cooperation. This investigation might require a better grasp on the languages of the Nordic states, which was one reason that it did not fit into the current thesis. However, the debate among the political parties would be a telling venture on where each country stands on Nordic defense cooperation, and would add another level of understanding to how domestic policy forming has shaped regional cooperation.

Over the course of writing this thesis, events took place in the world that had a dramatic impact on the European security landscape. The post-Cold War world that was visualized in the early 1990s did not exactly come to fruition, and if it did, it has certainly taken a dramatic turn. While it was not always possible to keep up with events as they happened, the main takeaways from this thesis can still be relevant to future efforts of cooperation, even beyond the Nordic countries. The ebb and flow of cooperation portrayed in the case of the Nordic countries is certainly unique in its own right, but should not be taken as impossible to obtain in other regions.

Still relating to the Nordic region, there have been efforts by the Nordic states to incorporate the Baltic states within the structures of cooperation efforts. There has always been constructive relations between the Nordic and Baltic states, but with tensions with Russian on the rise, Nordic-Baltic cooperation makes more sense than ever, as Russia increases military activity in the Baltic Sea, and European airspace in the region.

There remains the opportunity going forward, and in many cases it has already taken place, for European states to pursue cooperation with regional partners, and using historical connections, strong diplomatic relations, and economic benefits (to name a few) as a foundation to build from. The Nordic states might have a unique identity, culture, and shared history, but as this thesis has shown, there are many other factors in play that drive defense cooperation. Geopolitical and economic realities in Europe should be the main driving forces motivating countries to cooperation on defense, and then less obvious ideational factors can help stimulate cooperation in the right direction. This can all be done within the context of NATO and the European Union, as both continue to work towards developing sensible and affordable defense and security practices in response to changing global security issues.


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