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PLAN B

A comparative study of how the Norwegian and Swedish states relate to the international organization they cannot be members of.

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Abstract

The purpose of the thesis is to reconsider the Norwegian non-membership of the EU and the Swedish non-membership of NATO. The premise of this extensive in-depth study is to contribute to our understanding of how state sovereignty can be pursued either individually or collectively. Empirically, I compare the strategies to approach these organizations as non-members, and moreover what the implications are for these strategy choices. The theoretical definition of plan A is that a country applies for membership in the international organizations. Norway's plan A was to join the EU but since the Norwegian elite lost the 1994 referendum, the EEA agreement became plan B. I furthermore argue that Sweden never had a plan A of joining NATO and brought about plan B directly, which was the NATO Partnership. The political leadership has, through suboptimization, negotiated this plan B since the membership strategy is not possible. The thesis builds on the theoretical perspectives of Multi-Level Governance and bounded rationality, since rational decisions of maximizing are difficult where there are multiple sets of preferences, actors, and levels of governance. The main assumption is that sovereignty is maintained by collective action through this plan B.

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1 Introduction: Nation-states and international organizations

Governance is predicated on the capacity of a society to make decisions and pursue collective goals (Peters and Pierre 2009: 91). The chief structure in society for that pursuit is the sovereign state. Sovereignty implies that a state has the authority to govern itself and the concept is important when explaining the origins of the nation-state. The concept of sovereignty was previously formulated in Western Europe in the sixteenth century, at a time when state structures were weak. The states had small and ineffective bureaucracies, armed forces they could not control, and they had to deal with all kinds of strong local authorities and overlapping jurisdictions. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 established a minimally institutionalized interstate system that had taken over a century to accomplish (Wallerstein 1999: 22-23). The Westphalian system was based on an agreement to respect the principle of territorial integrity. The typical sovereign state, as theorized since the seventeenth century, was endowed with strong boundaries (Piattoni 2010: 27).

The modern state is a peculiar creation, since the states are so-called sovereign states within an interstate system (Wallerstein 1999: 22). The structure of the sovereign state has persisted over a long period of time. How far the states can proceed without fully giving up their sovereignty has always been a matter of consideration. The European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) came about as products of the World War II and these organizations are thus new kinds of cooperation. The accession processes have had their challenges based on states' reservations about losing sovereignty and some states even remain outside these organizations. Norway is not a formal member of the EU and Sweden is not a formal member of NATO.

The Nordic countries have a history of shared resistance toward organizations of supranational character. Regional integration among European community members and the end of the Cold War led Nordic governments to pursue a strategy of integration instead of autonomy. Integration occurs when the elite perceives that certain economic or security issues cannot be solved by national means alone and they consequently agree to joint policymaking in supranational institutions (Ingebritsen 1998: 5, 6, 10). The idea, today, among states is that important goals are achieved through cooperation rather than pursuing autonomy. There is internationalization through Multi-Level Governance (MLG) since issues, such as economic development and national security, are solved collectively by transferring some sovereignty from national level to supranational level. In the cases of

Norway and Sweden, sovereignty is maintained by collective action either through full membership or “half membership”.

Both costs and benefits with the memberships of the EU and NATO and the public opinion are matters of consideration for the Norwegian and Swedish leaderships. “To join or not to join” is thus a matter of an elite-mass evaluation. Consequently, this evaluation has developed into cooperation as non-members and the Norwegian and Swedish elites are still considering how far they can get into the cooperation without crossing the line between non-membership and membership. The countries cannot join the respective organization since public opinion does not give legitimacy to a membership strategy. To stand alone as a self-determining state would be an alternative to an EU membership and a NATO membership. However, that will not happen. Therefore, they have to find other strategies for approaching the respective organization when they do not have such legitimacy and when there is a practical and economic need for political cooperation.

The European Economic Area (EEA) agreement was signed and ratified by the Norwegian Parliament (Storting) in 1992, and it entered into force in 1994. The EEA was established as a response to the wish from the EFTA countries to access the single market, and Norway’s relation to the EU is thus mainly organized through the EEA agreement (Sverdrup 2004: 3). Sweden’s relationship with NATO is based on a longstanding national consensus on the policy of military nonalignment. Sweden joined the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994 and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997 (NATO 2016). Sweden’s relation to NATO is mainly organized through the partnership agreement and partly through bilateral agreement with NATO countries. There is a nation-state paradigm since the countries aim for self-determination at the same time as they are dependent on political cooperation through organizations of supranational institutions.

In the language of institutional theory, the formative moment for Norway was in the 1980s when Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland pushed for membership and association with the EU. Plan A was then that Norway would formally join the EU. However, since the elite lost the referendum of 1994 plan B was to continue with the establishment of the EEA agreement. This is an example of a strategy which I will refer to as suboptimization. Similarly, the formative moment for Sweden was in the 1990s when Sweden joined the NATO PfP. I argue that the elite did never carry through plan A, to formally join NATO,

and that it seized on plan B directly with the NATO Partnership and bilateral agreements. The suboptimization leaves them halfway inside the organization.

1.1 Why are the cases of Norway and Sweden interesting to study?

The issue regarding Norwegian EU membership has been one of the largest controversies in Norwegian politics in the postwar period and the EC/EU referendums of 1972 and 1994 mobilized the voters in a very different way. The matter has consisted of an underlying tension in Norwegian politics, capable of splitting governments and parties before, during, and after the two referendums (NOU 2012: 269). Similarly, the issue regarding NATO has had the capacity to trigger severe attacks of political struggle in Swedish politics and few matters have been that surrounded by taboos as the relationship to NATO (Dahl 1999: 7).

The thesis is relevant since it compares two rather unique countries considering their “half-membership” in the organization they cannot formally join. It takes departure in a theoretically interesting puzzle of how to understand the elite’s decision-making in order to pursue state sovereignty. From a societal point of view, it is important to understand what explains this strategy choice and what the implications are for the society. Other small states have joined both the EU and NATO despite reservation toward supranational institutions. Norway and Sweden are therefore special cases since there has either been an attempt of joining the EU but with outcomes that do not allow for a membership, or to not even consider a NATO membership as an option. On the other hand, Norway chose to become a NATO member but not of the EU and Sweden chose to become an EU member but not of NATO. Through these specific memberships, the states have realized that sovereignty can be maintained under collective action. How come that the states have not joined the other organization as well?

It is furthermore interesting why the Norwegian and Swedish elite is working toward a closer cooperation with the EU and NATO while membership is not on the political agenda and at the same time as the knowledge in society of the implications of the complex relationship is low. The cooperation can be seen as ambiguous, in both cases, since the policy adaptation has occurred at an elite level while there has been a broad resistance toward the respective organization at a public level.

Both the EU and NATO have successively become more relevant for the states, both for economic and practical reasons, although this relevance has been fluctuating slightly at times due to various world events. Joining these international organizations formally comes

with choices that are irreversible, because once the country is in, it will be difficult to leave. Norway has chosen an agreement that in theory should be easier to resign. The same applies to Sweden's relationship with NATO. So the strategy implementation requires an analysis where joining the organization has a long-term benefit and not only when the state considers that a membership can solve some issues for a shorter period of time. From this point of view, it is important to study how Norway and Sweden act under such circumstances as small states. It is therefore interesting to study them parallelly to find similarities and differences in the way they approach this situation of "join or not to join".

The elite's decision-making, the public opinion, and the structure of the Norwegian and Swedish societies have defined the path for the countries and their approaches toward the respective organization. The decision-making can be seen through the lenses of bounded rationality since the solution is not fully optimal from an overall perspective.

1.2 Purpose of the study and research questions

The aim of this extensive in-depth study is to contribute to our understanding of how state sovereignty can be pursued either individually or collectively. Empirically, I compare the Norwegian non-membership of the EU and the Swedish non-membership of NATO and their strategy choices, and moreover what implications this has on the countries. It sets out to explain Norway's approach to the EU and Sweden's approach to NATO and what its consequences and advantages are, through the perspective of MLG. Previous research has studied the countries' relationships with the respective organization individually. The purpose of this thesis is to do a comparison in order to extend the understanding of the countries' path dependency, what explains the decisions and their involvement in the layers of MLG, and the pursuit of state sovereignty.

The Thesis will be guided by the following research questions:

- What are the strategy choices in terms of the Norwegian approach to the EU and the Swedish approach to NATO when a formal membership is not possible?
- What explains the Norwegian and Swedish strategy choices?

1.3 Outline

The first section outlines an overview of the theoretical perspective of MLG and decision-making. The second section provides an analytical framework that will guide the analysis. The third section presents the methodology of the study. The fourth section evaluates the

cases of Norway and Sweden and their approach toward the EU and NATO. The fifth section provides a comparative analysis of these cases, which is followed by the conclusion.

2 Understanding Multi-Level Governance

MLG should be defined as fluid, negotiated, non-hierarchical exchanges between institutions at the transnational, national, regional, and local levels. Hierarchical models are being replaced by a more complex model of intergovernmental relations in which subnational authorities engage in direct exchange with supranational or global institutions and vice versa (Peters and Pierre 2001: 131, Bache and Flinders 2010: 75).

The term of MLG emerged first in the study of the European Community and the EU (Bache and Flinders 2010: 107). MLG was proposed as a useful concept for understanding some of the decision-making dynamics of the EU. MLG quickly became a catch-all phrase that indicated phenomena taking place at three analytical levels: the ones of political mobilization, of policy-making arrangements, and of state structures (Piattoni 2010: 17-18).

MLG has a wider cast of actors than the traditional models of intergovernmental relations, and it should be expected that public as well as non-public actors are involved in governance. The diversity of actors tends to create multiple linkages between governance processes at different levels. Moreover, transnational institutions are in direct communication with subnational actors or vice versa, so MLG should not be regarded as a hierarchical order of governance (Bache and Flinders 2010: 82-84).

Countries nowadays are characterized by complex contingencies. Formal authority has gradually been dispersed from central states both up to supranational institutions and down to regional and local governments. The 1980s and 1990s have seen the creation of a large number of transnational regimes, some of which exercise supranational authority. Additionally, public and private networks of diverse kinds have multiplied from the local to the international level (Bache and Flinders 2010: 15).

The subnational governments have direct access to the European Commission, they mobilize directly in Brussels, they are formally represented in an European assembly, they interact with each other across national borders, and some participate in the Council of Ministers. The multiplication of channels for subnational mobilization is part of a broader transformation in the EU, from state-centric to MLG (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 81). MLG

should empower the regional entities but one has to take into account that the positive democratic nature of this type of governance should not be exaggerated. The development of complex MLG systems tends to strengthen the EU and national bureaucratic actors at the expense of subnational actors (Peters and Pierre 2009: 96).

The “actor-centeredness” of MLG emphasized how the different levels were traversed and linked by actors moving rather freely across formally still existent levels of government and spheres of authority. The new processes were not just multi-level but also multi-actor. MLG theory began to be applied to the exploration of the arrangements for the production of EU policies and to the functioning of the EU (Piattoni 2010: 20). In the context of negotiation, there is a mix of opportunity structure, money, and actors. The EU represents a dense set of interactions, and a sophisticated decision-making process, albeit one that is too complex to easily understand. Although third parties do not easily penetrate into the EU subsystem, it does happen. The US is the main “Trojan horse”, but Iceland, Norway, and Turkey also have inside tracks (Hill and Smith 2011: 470).

The MLG perspective is analytically important simply by the fact that Norway and Sweden are cases of MLG by internalizing EU and NATO norms and do in turn abide by other levels of governance. The states act through negotiations between the levels of governance, and additionally, there is a mix of MLG and global governance in both cases. Governance is a complex process involving multiple actors pursuing a variety of individual and organizational goals, as well as pursuing the collective goals of the society (Peters and Pierre 2009: 92). There is a general assumption that the best decision is the most rational. However, rational behavior is based upon purpose and rationality is an ability to link means to ends (Russett and Starr 1996: 222). Rationality designates a style of behavior that is appropriate to the attainment of given goals, within the limits forced by given conditions and constraints (Simon 1972: 161). Rational decisions are especially difficult in governance where there are multiple sets of preferences, and that is why the perspective of bounded rationality becomes important for this thesis.

The argument for plan A in this thesis is that the states apply for membership in the international organizations. In the Norwegian case, there have been two attempts to join the EC/EU. The second time, the elite lost the 1994 referendum but insisted that the European cooperation was crucial for Norway. Plan B, namely the EEA agreement, has been put into practice since the day after that referendum. In the Swedish case, I argue that the political

leadership did not consider the plan A and seized on plan B as a first move, namely the NATO Partnership.

MLG and collective action among sovereign states are closely connected. In order for collective solutions to work, sovereign states are required to cede parts of their autonomy to transnational institutions and systems. In both cases, there is a decision-making process on many levels where actors achieve their objectives partly through negotiation. They suboptimize through MLG in order to achieve their goals.

2.1 Decision-making in a MLG context

A decision-making process implies that a series of actions or assessments lead to action and implementation of a decision. A further step is to relate to the information and reach what is the best thing to do. And finally, one needs to choose an alternative of action and then implement the alternative. This is not an easy process but a process covering many considerations, many interests, much information and also uncertainty (Jacobsen and Thorsvik 2014: 285-287).

“When the limits of rationality are viewed from the individual’s standpoint, they fall into three categories: he is limited by his unconscious skills, habits, and reflexes; he is limited by his values and conceptions of purpose, which may diverge from the organization goals; he is limited by the extent of his knowledge and information” (Simon 1997: 323).

The idea that individuals act rationally is central in decision theories. The concept of rationality within decision theories implies how to make decisions about what should be done when faced with a problem. The ideal rational model implies that the individual can act fully rationally, by having clear goals and full information about the alternatives and does in turn choose the alternative based on the best alternative in order to reach the goal. However, in real life there are circumstances that make it harder for individuals to act according to the ideal of rationality (Jacobsen and Thorsvik 2014: 287-288).

“Rationality, then, does not determine behavior. Within the area of rationality behavior is perfectly flexible and adaptable to abilities, goals, and knowledge. Instead, behavior is determined by the irrational and nonrational elements that bound the area of rationality” (Simon 1997: 323).

The decision-makers, the individuals, are thus rationally bounded. They cannot act fully rationally since no one has full information of all possible solutions and their consequences, in order to choose the alternative that most certainly maximize the benefits (Jacobsen and Thorsvik 2014: 289).

The assumption that individuals are rationally bound implies that although they have goals those objectives may often be ambiguous and changing. One assesses some possible solutions and some consequences of these alternatives. Furthermore, one assesses the alternatives sequentially, gradually as one has the ability to examine them. Finally, one selects the first satisfactory alternative that appears. The type of decision behavior that is described as *satisficing* means that one chooses an alternative that is “good enough” without surely knowing whether it is the best alternative. Instead of maximizing, the decision-maker selects the first alternative that is satisfactory. Uncertainty and ambiguity become two central elements in all decisions that are based on bounded rationality. *Satisficing* means that the information one is exposed to, the sequence in which the alternatives are presented, and rules and norms for the choice between the alternatives are important elements for understanding which choice that is selected. In turn, it is important to study in which way one chooses to search for alternative solutions, in order to understand a decision (Jacobsen and Thorsvik 2014: 289-290, Simon 1957: 24).

How can the relationship between Norway and the EU and the relationship between Sweden and NATO be understood? Why has the relationship turned out this way and what are the consequences?

3 Analytical framework

This section provides an analytical framework that structures the analysis of the Thesis. It is necessary that the study possesses a proposed analytical framework in order to not be overly descriptive. The aim of this section is to define what will be explained and what is likely to explain the variation in the dependent variable. As mentioned above, the Thesis will analyze Norway’s approach to the EU and Sweden’s approach to NATO. The dependent variable is the choice of strategy and strategy implementation, in terms of Norwegian approach to the EU and Swedish approach to NATO. The first independent variable is the public opinion’s preference for individual action and the second independent variable is the elite’s perceived

need for collective action, in other words the leaders' analysis of the international political and economic situation.

None of the cases are simple and the trajectory to the present situation is complex. These relationships have to be placed in a wider context. The relationship between Norway and the EU and the relationship between Sweden and NATO of today are contingent on what happened in the past. Moreover, the decision-makers are surrounded by several layers of environment, both domestic and external, which constrain and limit the decision-makers of what they are able or likely to do (Russett and Starr 1996: 219). The decision-makers are constrained by the structure of opportunities, potential costs and benefits, and risks. They want to maximize the control, in terms of regulating and determining, that they have both within the state and internationally (Archer 2005: 11). However, the non-membership is arguably bound to affect the balance since both Norway and Sweden have fewer instruments with which to implement its tactics.

An institution is a relatively stable collection of rules and organized practices. Institutions are carriers of identities and roles and they are indicators of a policy's character, history, and idea. They provide links that tie citizens together regardless of the many things that divide them. Institutions shape, enable, and constrain political actors as they act within a logic of appropriate action (March and Olsen 2011: 160). In the decision-making process, the alternatives that are chosen are considered to be appropriate means for reaching desired ends (Simon 1997: 73). Organizations are best understood as acting rationally only within narrowed boundaries, with their range of rational action determined by their own routines, norms, and interests (Peters 2002: 7-8). Thus, bounded rationality advocates a lower degree of rationality and seeks outcomes that are "good enough" rather than utility maximizing (Simon 1957: 24).

The choices of strategy and the strategy implementation are set in a political and economic context, which varies over time. The importance of the EU in Norway has most likely increased successively, while the importance of NATO in Sweden seems to have fluctuated depending on Soviet/Russia's international aggression. In both cases, strategy has to relate to long-term objectives. Membership decisions are fundamental to essentially all policy areas and to the perception of the country by actors in its external environment. If Norway joins the EU, Norway cannot exit the organization after some years. Similarly, if Sweden decides to join NATO when Russian military aggression increases, Sweden cannot just leave

the organization this aggression decreases. The decisions are seemingly irreversible. This is certainly a cost-benefit evaluation that must be done in the choice of strategy and strategy implementation.

Given the long-term objectives and consequences of membership in international organizations we need to understand path dependency. A basic idea is that the policy choices, and especially decisions regarding membership in international organizations, made when an institution is being formed or when a policy is initiated will have a continuing and largely determinate influence over the policy far into the future. The term for describing this argument is path dependency, which implies that when a government program is launched those initial policy choices tend to persist (Peters 2005: 71). Small choices in institutional arrangements can have remarkable consequences at a later date and some policy choices may prove irreversible (Peters, Pierre, and King 2005: 1287).

Historical institutional theory will be used in order to understand the difference between the decision points and the continuity of the politics vis-à-vis the EU and NATO. There is a timeline with formative moments and path dependencies, with the postwar era as a starting point since the EU and NATO came about as a consequence of the World War II. The two cases are not synchronic but can anyhow be compared in parallel. Although these countries are not formally members of these international organizations, there is a close cooperation between the country and the organization. Plan B is thus about the elite's leeway in a path dependent state.

Institutions and their decisions are considered path-dependent. The fundamental concept of historical institutionalism is that conditions and ideas to the founding of an institution are crucial in order to understand its following behavior, and will continue to influence the types of policies that it will make (Peters 1998: 18). Moreover, one can observe the cases of Norway and Sweden through the perspective of the general problem of small states. Today's international organizations are complex and the countries have their path dependency of previous choices. Therefore, everyone cannot participate in everything all the time. As a consequence, there is a general challenge of how to relate to the "half-membership" or non-membership (Britz 2016).

The small state problem includes strategic suboptimization. The cooperation is not as perfect as it could be since some things just need to be accepted, such as the lack of influence and information. In other words, it is a situation that is less optimal. Choice, in so far as it is

rational and aware of its objective conditions, involves a selection of an alternative among several. The alternatives vary with regard to the consequences that come from them, and an analysis of decision-making in its objective aspects will refer primarily to these variable consequences of choice. Concentration on the rational aspects of human behavior should therefore not be interpreted as an assertion that human beings are always or generally rational (Simon 1997: 72). The model of rationality has high requirements and the countries are therefore suboptimizing since all requirements cannot be completed. The decisions are influenced by strategic choices and self-interest. However, these choices of self-interest are bound to not being fully maximized and mostly due to domestic politics where the elite is to relate to a relatively negative public opinion.

Plan B will be the second best option, thus a “good enough” outcome when a membership is not politically possible and the countries need to relate to the organizations, for practical and economic reasons. The political leadership has negotiated a plan B in order to achieve important collective goals through international cooperation. The theoretical definition of plan A is that a country applies for membership in the international organizations. Then whether there has been a plan A is an empirical question. Sweden did never plan to join NATO and implemented plan B directly by negotiating the partnership agreement in 1994 and other bilateral cooperation. Norway had a plan A, which was to join the EU. The EEA agreement became plan B the day after a majority of the Norwegian population rejected an EU membership in the 1994 referendum. Conceptually, plan B and what the political leadership did fit in the MLG model.

The institutional perspective and the emphasis of long-term objectives and path dependency are arguments for Simon’s bounded rationality. It is rather difficult to be a utility-maximizing actor in a context where the decision alternatives are shaped to such a high extent by the demand for long-term objectives and where the dependency of other actors’ decisions and behavior is considerable.

4 Methodology

This section introduces the research design of the study and thereafter the methods for analysis. In short, it is a qualitative study including both interviews and texts.

4.1 A comparative case study

In order to study the phenomenon of choice of strategy and strategy implementation when approaching the EU and NATO, a comparative case study is chosen as a representative research design. The case study can briefly be explained as a research design that facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using various forms of data.

The choice of a case study offers an in-depth analysis of a complex social phenomenon in an accurate and precise manner. One of the most prominent advocates of case study research, Robert Yin (2009: 18), defines it as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

There are different choices of research strategies and each is a different technique of collecting and analyzing empirical evidence (Yin 1989: 15). The case study involves process tracing, which means that it is not about establishing the size of effects but about connecting the cause to the effect.

There are preexisting theories that will help to explain the individual cases. In a theory-consuming study the specific cases are in the center (Esaiasson et al. 2004: 40-41). This case research provides with detailed information on the cases and insights into the real world of politics in the countries studied (Peters 2013: 190). It also allows for inclusion of a much wider range of information into the explanation of an outcome. The case method is thus suitable for interpretative analysis but not well suited for developing scientific generalizations (Peters 2013: 190).

Most critics on the case study research are based on the aspects of validity and reliability. Critics generally stress that single cases offer a scanty basis for generalizing (Yin 1989: 43). However, a case study does not have a larger universe and neither is the generalization the primary interest of this thesis since the choice of two cases is based upon the wish to do an extensive in-depth study. Many inquiries have limited ambitions when expressing themselves universally. This mainly refers to the theory consuming study whose analysis on historically specified cases is regarded as interesting in itself (Esaiasson et al. 2004: 171).

It is generally argued that it is problematic to make final conclusions on a basis of a comparative design. However, the carefully planned and executed study forms a contribution to the society's effort of securing knowledge (Esaiasson et al. 2004: 116).

Despite the choice of few cases, they can still be compared to similar cases such as Denmark or Iceland.

4.2 Material

In order to answer the research question of this study, two types of data are used. Firstly, data on Norwegian and Swedish strategies is collected as a consequence of the research itself and new data is thus generated by interviews. Secondly, secondary sources such as literature and documents provide important information for my research (Teorell and Svensson 2007: 87, Hellevik 2002: 100).

The first research method for this study is the secondary data analysis. Books and documents such as articles and reports are examined and analyzed for frequencies or contingencies. By using literature and documents, the study can track the political process of choices and strategies in Norway and Sweden. For instance, the Norwegian Official Report (NOU) of 2012 is a key document for the Norwegian case (Stake 1995: 68). Apart from texts, a radio interview from Sveriges Radio and a seminar at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs provide valuable information for the Swedish case.

In order to gain further insights about the cases and its strategies, additional material is required. The second research method for this study is therefore the self-made data generated by interviews. The key purpose is not to get yes and no answers but a description of an episode, an explanation, or a linkage. The interview is thus the main road to multiple facts and it is chosen based on the assumption that it is a generally safe way to obtain specific information (Stake 1995: 64-65).

Findings are based on three interviews held in Oslo and in Stockholm. In terms of informants, I have done a strategic selection since I wanted respondents that are experts on the topic. Ulf Sverdrup, the Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, is the informant of the Norwegian case. Anna Wieslander, the Deputy Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, and Malena Britz, researcher at the Swedish Defense University, are the informants of the Swedish case. I consider that they are good representatives for different aspects and areas of policy in the Norwegian and Swedish cases, due to their experience and in-depth information within the field of study. All interviews are recorded, after permission was granted, and transcribed in their full length.

The interviews are used as supplement to the literature and documents. The aim with the interviews is to gather information about the cases as well as an understanding for the informants' perspectives. The interviewees have therefore the character of being both informants and respondents (Esaiasson et al. 2004: 227-228). There are different ways of carrying through interviews and an important dividing line is the structure in the questions and its answers. The interviews are semi-structured for a broader understanding in order to explain the Norwegian and Swedish choices and processes. The interviews have thus a lower degree of structure in order to allow the formulation of the questions to vary depending on who is interviewed. They are initiated in a more informative way with general information, which follows by more specific information or perceptions for an understanding of possible challenges or opportunities for the future. It registers unexpected answers that would have been excluded if having a stricter set of questions. The ambition of the semi-structured interviews is to allow for reflection and it is also designed to be open for additional themes or perceptions (Teorell and Svensson 2007: 88-89, Esaiasson et al. 2004: 279).

A combination of these methods, data specifically collected for the purpose of this research and preexisting data, will provide information for the analysis and to answer the research questions.

5 Case: Norway and the EU

Norway is not formally a member country of the EU. At the same time, Norway is connected to large parts of the EU cooperation and has implemented much of the EU legislation. Norway is the third-party country that has joined up the closest to the EU, from Brussels' point of view. One indication of this is that Norway make a substantial contribution to the EU budget, and by paying €656 million to the EU and receiving back around €100 million it makes Norway a net contributor (Sverdrup 2004: 13, Open Europe 2015). This implies that Norway is both outside and inside the EU (NOU 2012: 35). Norway's relation to the European cooperation is perhaps the most important controversy in modern Norwegian politics. The issue dates back to 1961 when the proposal of Norwegian membership of the common market arose the first time, with a very heated debate and special alliances of supporters and opponents. The case was provisionally shelved in 1963, but remained on the political agenda through the upcoming period, both actively and inactively. The debate peaked with the referendums of 1972 and 1994 and the EU debate has

so far resulted in three government crises, in 1971, 1972, and 1990 (Narud and Valen 2011: 182-183).

5.1 The path to the ambivalent relationship

The geographical position at the outer edge of Northern Europe has traditionally defined Norway's foreign policy orientation. The leadership has intended to prevent involvement in wars and conflicts on the continent, while the westward contact toward the UK and later on the US has been more open. The cultural influence from continental European countries, especially Germany, has always been great although the political inclination has predominantly been Atlantic (Aardal and Valen 1995: 111). Norway struggled for its autonomy in the nineteenth century, first against Denmark and later against Sweden. But this autonomy was threatened after the independence of 1905, in the World War I and then more noticeably by the German invasion on April 9 1940. Joining NATO in 1949 provided some elements of influence for a small state that were missing in previous security policy. It was recognized that Norway needed external help to secure the defense. However, Norway steered its own course after the World War II in economic, social, and environmental policies (Acher 2005: 1-2).

A series of initiatives through cooperation and economic revival followed World War II, aiming to assure peace on the embattled European continent. At a starting point, the European integration process did awaken limited interest in the Norwegian political environment. Measures that could reduce tension between earlier enemies were seen as politically important, but it was at the same time declared that the continental European integration concerned Norway to a smaller extent. The lack of interest can be seen in the light of that Norway looked more to the UK and the US after the World War II (NOU 2012: 45). The reason for this is the fact that Europe was destroyed and the case of Norway was rather special due to the traumatic relations to Germany since the German occupation, and there was consequently an immense resent and fear toward Germany. Britain and the US were the prominent powers that had fought against Germany during the World War II. Additionally, the ties to the UK were special as the Norwegian in-exile-government was in London during and after the occupation, and the Norwegian royal family was also British since King Haakon VII was married to the Princess of the United Kingdom (Sverdrup 2016).

Norway had very close economic ties with the UK, its most important trade partner, and the UK was by then the economic power in terms of trade (Dinan 2004: 139, Sverdrup 2016).

Norway followed the path of the UK up to the 1972 referendum. This choice did initially mean an active support for the British proposal of a free trade area for all the members of the OEEC (former OECD). The proposal aimed to assure British export to the continent and was originally an attempt to prevent the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC). Additionally, the British proposal of an intergovernmental cooperation of industrial goods was very close to the solution that Norway wished for. However, Charles de Gaulle made it clear that the proposal would not get France's support. The foundation of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) reflects a reaction on this as a fallback initiative. The EFTA treaty was signed by the UK, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, and Austria in 1960 and it was an expression for a new British strategy (NOU 2012: 45-46). The main purpose was to increase pressure on the EEC to reopen negotiations for a free trade area (Dinan 2004: 91).

When the UK, shortly after the creation of EFTA, decided to apply for EEC membership the issue was raised on the Norwegian political agenda as well. At this point, the EEC membership raised an essential engagement in the population, especially on the no-side, and organizations were established with the aim of preventing membership. The opinion poll indicated that a majority of the population was in favor of a membership but France's veto against British membership in 1963 meant that there would not be any negotiations for the Norwegian application. The veto of the British application was due to Charles de Gaulle's opposition to the Nassau agreement. This deal to provide US missiles to Britain's independent nuclear force was, according to de Gaulle, a sign of British subservience to the US and that a British membership would pose political difficulties for France. Moreover, the British reservations were large and they remained skeptical of supranationalism, committed to the Commonwealth, and attached to an agriculture system mismatched with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Agriculture became the most controversial issue between Britain and the EEC (NOU 2012: 46, Dinan 2004: 101).

Britain needed to join for economic reasons but the issue continued to divide domestic opinion. However, Prime Minister Harold Wilson kept arguing the case for membership on solid economic grounds. De Gaulle wanted Britain to accept the CAP and distance itself from the US. Wilson was not able to convince Charles de Gaulle that British accession to the European Community (EC) was compatible with French economic and strategic interests. Wilson agreed to abide by the CAP but he was more guarded on the question of Anglo-American relations (Dinan 2004: 109-110).

Norway's second EEC membership application was submitted in 1967. The Norwegian key objective was to ensure markets for Norwegian export industry. The application was supported by an unanimous Storting but since France remained its position against British membership it was not on the map for Norway to apply without the UK, and there were no negotiations this time either for Norwegian membership (NOU 2012: 46).

In 1970, the Storting adopted a renovation of the Norwegian application of 1967 and the negotiations between Norway and the EC lasted from June 1971 to January 1972. The central issue of this application was the primary industries' conditions. The member countries of the EC could not accept Norway's demands for special arrangements. Nevertheless, the Norwegian negotiators still got considerable support and the EC accepted the special interests within the areas of agriculture and fishery, which resulted in a signing of the accession address in 1972. There were strong euroskeptical elements in Norway and the Norwegians liked to point out that having become independent from Sweden in relatively recent times, Norway was doubtful of joining another union of states. Farmers were worried that subsidies would fall if they participated in CAP; fishermen resented the common fisheries policy; and the conservatives were concerned about the social impact of accession. Those opposed to membership, from all socio-economic groups but representing especially agricultural and fishing interests, polled 53.5 percent in the referendum of 1972 and a Norwegian EC membership was thus rejected (NOU 2012: 46-47, Dinan 139-141). Moreover, the resistance was also part of a popular protest not least from the left and from the intellectuals. Most political parties were divided on the issue, except for the Conservative Party.

Norway's "new European policy" in the 1970s was not only directed toward the EC but to Europe as a whole. Thus, pursuing active politics toward the EC turned out to be rather challenging. On the one hand, many people in Norway perceived that pursuing these politics was an attempt to sneak Norway in to the organization. On the other hand, the EC countries were not that enthusiastic toward Norwegian accession as a consequence of Norway's rejection of membership in the previous referendum. For the government it was nevertheless an aim to strengthen the ties with the EC under the free trade agreement of 1973, between the EC and EFTA, negotiated by the Korvald's Cabinet (NOU 2012: 47).

Brundtland's Second Cabinet, a minority Labour government, declared in its "Europamelding" of 1987 that Norway's cooperation with the EC would have to be enlarged

and strengthened within the framework of the country's relationship to the Community. The message stated that Norway had to conform to the development regarding the implementation of the EC Single Market. The rationale of the Norwegian customization was to prevent new obstacles for the Norway's economic relationship with the EC. A development toward full political and economic union was not considered realistic from the government's 1987 perspective. The government was concerned that the "Europamelding" would not lead to a new membership debate and the Minister of Foreign Affairs rejected later the statement that the "Europamelding" was to be interpreted as a first step toward EC membership. The government's perception was that Norway would remain outside the EC for many years. At the same time, the EC became more careful to let the EFTA countries closer to the negotiations. The development of the single market was foremost the EC's own case and that only its members should benefit from it. The EC saw the importance of avoiding agreements that could enable non-members to interfere with the Community's internal decision-making process. The situation changed in the beginning of 1989 when the President of the European Commission Jacques Delors launched a more ambitious and well-prepared proposal how to organize the cooperation. He opened up for a more structured partnership between the EFTA and the EC (NOU 2012: 49-51).

The European Economic Area (EEA) was established as a response to the wish from the EFTA countries to access the EC Single Market. The EEA negotiations between the EC and the EFTA lasted from June 1990 to October 1991 (NOU 2012: 53, Sverdrup 2016). The EEA agreement was presented to the Storting in "Stortingsproposisjon nr. 100", advised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on May 15 1992 and approved in the Council of State the same day (NOU 2012: 60). It entered into force in Norway in January 1994, the same year that the agreement was established. The EEA agreement replaced the bilateral agreement of free trade in industrial goods between Norway and the EC with a multilateral agreement enabling Norway as part of a single market without physical borders, that apart from goods also included capital, labor, and services (NOU 2012: 44).

Prime Minister Brundtland, during her Third Cabinet, had emphasized in the beginning of 1992 that Norway would need to submit a new application for membership, regardless of the results of the EEA negotiations (NOU 2012: 59). The referendum took place in November 1994. Brundtland emphasized that the referendum did not ask about European integration but whether Norway should apply for Norwegian EU membership (Sverdrup 2016). The yes-side lost their second referendum despite the vast resources at its disposal, among them

support from central elites and from an almost unanimous media (Aardal and Valen 1995: 148).

Norwegian governments have, between 1962 and 1992, submitted four applications aiming to negotiate for an EU membership. The applications of 1962 and 1967 were stranded on French resistance for British accession. The first referendum took place in 1972 and resulted in a majority of 53.5 percent rejecting Norwegian accession (NOU 2012: 45, 47). The next and last attempt to join the EU was also rejected by a majority in the referendum of 1994 (NOU 2012: 44). The no-side polled 52.2 percent and the referendum had a high turnout of 89 percent (Narud, Hveem, and Høyland 2010: 351).

5.2 Political parties and public opinion

Norwegian politics are based on consensus and there is a general agreement between the political parties on a large range of policy areas. The EU membership issue, however, has created tensions and a turbulence that is in contrast to this peaceful image of Norwegian politics (Aardal and Valen 1995: 113). This issue has been one of the largest controversies in Norwegian politics in the postwar period and the EC/EU referendums of 1972 and 1994 mobilized the voters in a different way. The EU issue has consisted of an underlying tension in Norwegian politics, potential to split governments and parties; before, during, and after the two referendums (NOU 2012: 46, 269).

The question of EU membership involves the country's relation to other states and practically all domestic policy areas. The issue needs to be evaluated in an international perspective and analyzed in relation to the underlying national conflicts and interests. The core of the opposition toward EU membership consists of an alliance between the primary industries, the radicals from the cities, and the population in the periphery. A similar alliance formed the core of the left movement during the constitutional battles of the 19th century. The EU opinion relates to social structure, demography, and party affiliation (Aardal and Valen 1995: 110-111, 115).

The EU membership issue was put on the political agenda during the fall of 1989. The tension in the public opinion was moderate despite that the well-known political opposites appeared during the prior EEA negotiations. The main adversaries in the EU issue, the Conservative Party and the Center Party, formed government together with the Christian Democratic Party in 1989. It turned out that the EU issue was highly politically loaded and

the Syse's Cabinet split only a year after entering office. It was replaced by a Labour Party minority government (Aardal and Valen 1995: 108).

The EU issue was to dominate the national election of 1993 and some of the arguments and the political atmosphere of the EC debates from the early 1970s returned. The no-parties, especially the Center Party, concentrated this issue in their campaign while the Conservative Party and the Labour Party did not want to make it a campaign issue with the main argument that the upcoming referendum would decide about membership. Two out of three voters perceived the EU issue as important during the national election of 1993. The no-parties, the Center Party and the Socialist Left Party, advanced while the Conservative Party and the Labour Party declined (Aardal and Valen 1995: 108, 110).

With regard to the membership issue, the frontlines between the Norwegian political parties are relatively stable. That is to say that the Center Party and the Socialist Left Party are apparent no-parties while the Conservative Party is the most apparent yes-party. The Labour Party indicates positive interest, but wants to postpone the decision until further notice. The position of the Liberal Party and the Christian Democratic Party can be interpreted in the same general direction, while Progress Party stands neutral (Narud and Valen 2011: 162-163). The Red Electoral Alliance was a party collection of left-wing groups and took an apparent stance against Norwegian EU membership. It dissolved in 2007 during the founding of the Red Party. The party remains its opposition of both EU membership and the EEA agreement (Rødt 2016).

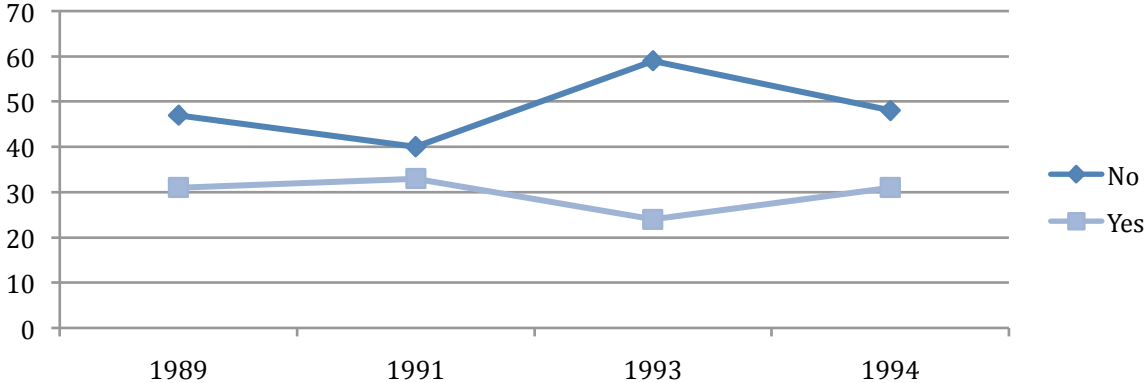
The Center Party and the Socialist Left Party are still perceived as credible opponents of the EEA at the same time as they have been in government and have worked with the EU on new areas. Similarly, the Conservative Party is perceived to be a credible party in favor of EU membership although they have not proposed membership during their government (NOU 2012: 272). Two parties, the Center Party and the Socialist Left Party, state in their political program that they wish to renounce the EEA and Schengen agreements. One party, the Conservative Party, has stated that they wish for a Norwegian EU membership. Moreover, the Labour Party believes that a membership should give Norway more political influence and more opportunities to promote Norwegian interests than what the EEA agreement allows for (NOU 2012: 273).

The European Movement and No to the EU are the principal interest groups advocating the EU issue, the former founded in 1949 and the latter was founded as an organization in 1990

(NOU 2012: 277). The central no-argument was that membership would, in different ways, weaken the Norwegian self-determination. The central yes-argument was that it was crucial to ensure duty-free access to the European market (NOU 2012: 46).

The European integration has in many contexts, not only in Norway, been declared as ruled by elites and where the population's participation and influence play a marginal role (Narud and Valen 2011: 182-183). Additionally, the neoliberal ideology that many saw in the EU institutions has been criticized to some extent.

Graph 1: The Norwegians' attitude toward EU membership 1989-1994 (percent)



Source: Aardal and Valen (1995)

There has been a considerable variation in people's attitude toward EU membership over time. There has almost always been a majority against EU membership although the percentage point difference has been smaller at times. The no-side had already in the start of 1989 a lead of 16 percentage points in comparison to the yes-side and the amount of resistance was over 20 percent. Toward the national election of 1993 there was an enormous fluctuation in the direction of no. The gap between yes and no was now 35 percentage points. The yes-side strengthened toward September of 1994 although the no-side had the lead. The no-side had the lead with a majority, but the gap decreased in the last phase of the campaign and there were finally 17 percentage points of difference (Aardal and Valen 1995: 129-130).

The development in the opinion can be seen in light of the character of the campaign. An information organization was established already in 1988 that pressed opposition toward the suggested EEA agreement, which later on formalized into the organization No to the EU. On the other side was the European Movement, which was a weaker organization. The campaign for the referendum started in 1989 when the Center Party and the Socialist Left Party officially announced their no-stance. The Conservative Party announced themselves as

EU supporters, however with a lower profile. On the other hand, the Labour Party, the Christian Democratic Party, and the Progress Party needed several years to clarify their stance. In sum, the no-parties and No to the EU did not miss their opportunity to lift their message while the yes-parties awaited the results from the negotiations between Norway and the EU (Aardal and Valen 1995: 130-131).

The no-vote in the Norwegian case can be reflected in the interaction of the politics, of interest groups, and of ideas and identity. The first explanation is that the government lost the vote by making some strategic mistakes. They started the yes campaign very late while the opposition had started to construct their organization already in 1989. The second explanation is the role played by the socio-economic groups, and the result of the referendum reflected the economic interest of the country. As a consequence of societal resistance, the elite could not fulfill the hope of joining the EU (Ingebritsen 1998: 143). The societal triumph was a response to the requirements of the leading economic sectors. The oil and gas sector had its own opt-out from the single market and the state-subsided agriculture and fishery sectors mobilized against the government cooperation with the EU. The oil revenue gave Norway the economic capacity to wait. Norway may have pursued a different track if the political economy had been less dependent on petroleum and more dependent on manufacturing (Archer 2005: 58-60, Ingebritsen 1998: 31, 182). The third explanation regards identity. However, the discourse in the EU debate of 1994 was more varied than in 1972 and it tended to focus on whether membership was the right form of linkage to the EU and on self-interest, rather than primarily about issues of national identity. The interest groups of agriculture and fisheries thought they would suffer from EC membership. They were able to capture an important part of the national discourse in the 1972 referendum. This was less necessary in the 1994 referendum since a sufficient section of the population was persuaded to vote “no” for their own interests, such as their welfare benefits, their standard of living, and their jobs (Archer 2005: 61-63).

The resistance toward EU membership has increased as for 2005 and onward. This could be influenced by short-term outcomes of economic conjunctures or contextual conditions of international character. The development of the EU could also have an impact on the variation, especially if it is on the media’s agenda. For instance, when Sweden rejected the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in the referendum of 2003, an improvement for the no-side could be observed in Norway. In sum, the public opinion has the last years moved in favor of the no-side while support of membership is a minority (Narud, Hveem, and

Høyland 2010: 351-352, 354). In the opinion polls of 2014, 70 percent were against an EU membership and 20.2 percent were in favor of a Norwegian membership (NTB 2014).

5.3 Norway's relationship with the EU

The relation to Europe made its first move in 1988 when the EEA negotiations were initiated (Aardal and Valen 1995: 108). Since the second no-vote, Norway's relationship with the EU has not only been based on the EEA but also the Schengen agreement and on an association with many aspects of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. The relationship has been ambivalent because Norway, in terms of the people, the politicians, and the civil society, has been torn between maintaining the country's autonomy and increasing its influence in specific areas internationally (Archer 2005: 1).

The EFTA gathers Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland (Sejersted, Arnesen, Rognstad, and Kolstad 2011: 32). It is an intergovernmental trade bloc that operates in parallel with the EU. In addition to the EFTA membership, Norway is an EEA member. The EEA agreement brings the EU member states and the three EEA EFTA states together (EFTA 2016). Through the EEA agreement and the Schengen agreement, Norway is tied to the formally supranational pillar of the EU. Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway are tied to the EU Single Market through the EEA, and the development of common regulations aims to remove obstacles to a free exchange of goods and free movement of capital, services, and people within the EU and the EEA. The EEA agreement does at the same time open up for matters within environmental protection, education, research, consumer issues, and social issues. The agreement does however not include the agricultural and fisheries policy (Christensen et al. 2012: 199).

The EEA agreement is dynamic in the sense that Norway undertakes to follow the EU legislation continuously in the areas that the agreement involves and it implies that sovereignty is transferred from national level to EU level (Christensen et al. 2012: 207-208, NOU 2012: 44).

Since the EU legislation, in terms of directives and regulations, can require law changes in Norway, the government needs to consult the Storting before giving consent in the EEA Joint Committee. As a consequence, the Storting established a consultative body where to discuss EEA issues in 1994, which today is named the European Committee. It consists of members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense and members of the Parliamentary Delegation to the EFTA and the EEA. However, since the legislative

decisions that the EU presents for the EFTA in the EEA Joint Committee are already decided and final from the EU side, it only remains a question of accepting or not accepting in the European Committee of the Storting. At this stage, there is therefore no chance to influence the outcome other than a possible vetoing (Christensen et al. 2012: 209-210). The EEA agreement is in theory of international law character, which implies that the EEA countries, in contrast to the EU countries, always need to consent before EU legislation is applicable in the EEA countries. But since vetoing can lead to that the EU, as a countermove, puts the EEA agreement or parts of it out of play, the veto has been considered but not used. The EEA is supranational in practice since all legislation concerning the single market, which is practically all EU legislation, is implemented in Norwegian legislation (Christensen et al. 2012: 199). This makes Norway, by 2016, very much EU adjusted.

Norway's special EU affiliation has a broader support in the public opinion. A majority of Norwegian voters were satisfied with the agreements and 64 percent perceived the EEA agreement as a good agreement for Norway (NOU 2012: 270). There are two different arguments with regard to the EEA agreement. Firstly, the ones that wish for an EU membership think that if Norway hold on to the EEA strategy then Norway will almost be an EU member and it will in turn be easier to join the EU. Secondly, the ones that are against an EU membership are divided into two groups. There are those stating that the best guarantee for non-membership is to continue with the EEA cooperation and there are those believing that the current cooperation is hopeless and that it cannot persist. There is a general consensus, even on the no-side, that the EEA is a good agreement because if Norway loses it, then there will be a referendum that will lead to a yes turnout. This is a difficult position since it is almost impossible to get away from the EEA agreement (Sverdrup 2016).

5.4 Plan B

The governments' approach toward the EU has been considered functional and anti-federal since the governments have emphasized the economic aspects of the European integration while there has been less of interest to highlight the integration as a political project. The Center Party, the Socialist Left Party, and the Red Party still state in their political programs that Norway should renounce the EEA agreement. However, no political parties have neither submitted a proposal of resignation of the EEA agreement nor proposed an alternative affiliation. The EEA agreement has established a stable and relatively wide political consensus on Norway's relation to the EU. In contrast to the EU that seemed divisive, the

EEA seems to have been more unifying and Norway's special association with the EU appears to have broader support in the public opinion (NOU 2012: 44, 270-271, Sp 2016, SV 2016, Rødt 2016).

Overall, the population and the elite did not reject the EEA agreement. In contrast, since Norway had this agreement one did not see the benefit of becoming an EU member. There was a wish to participate in the EU Single Market but the uncertainty whether the Euro was suitable for Norway dominated. Moreover, the rich oil deposits were discovered and developed in the 1980s leading Norway into a different financial track compared to elsewhere. In the 1994 debate there was thus a fear to lose control over oil resources and the national income, at least in the population if not among the political elite. Additionally, all the politically difficult policy areas, such as agriculture and fishery, were not included in the EEA agreement (Sverdrup 2016).

Since Prime Minister Brundtland and the political elite did not accomplish to carry through plan A, which was to formally join the EU, the EEA agreement became plan B. However, the decision has since 1994 been to have a uniform and dynamic cooperation with the EU. That is the current strategy (Sverdrup 2016).

6 Case: Sweden and NATO

Despite the non-membership of NATO, Sweden is connected to large parts of the NATO cooperation and is one of the partners that has joined up the closest to NATO. One indication of this is that Sweden has been identified as making particularly significant contributions to NATO operations and it was agreed at the 2014 Wales Summit that Sweden is one out of five "Enhanced Opportunity" partners with whom NATO will deepen the practical cooperation and dialogue (NATO 2015). This indicates that Sweden is both outside and inside NATO. Sweden's relation to the Alliance cooperation is one of the most important controversies in modern Swedish politics. A strong Swedish domestic political and public consensus in favor of nonalignment consolidated from the postwar era and the early Cold War onwards, and the consensus on nonalignment in itself became the most fundamental argument. By then, a significant feature of all neutral states was that the political and public attitudes reflected a view of NATO as embodying a number of "public bads" such as the great powers' pursuit of power politics, nuclear weapons, and militarism (Cottey 2013: 452).

6.1 The path to the ambiguous partnership

Toward the end and directly after the World War II, there was a hope among countries that the three victory powers, the US, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, would be capable of solving the world conflicts during the year of the establishment of the United Nations (UN). It was soon clear that it would not be possible to avoid mutual suspicion and bloc formations. NATO was established in 1949 as a consequence of the worsening of the relationship between the US and the Soviet Union after the peace circuit of 1945 (Kronvall and Petersson 2012: 19, Hovi and Underdal 2010: 62). This indicated an end to the expectations after the World War II and the Cold War was by then a fact.

Before the Cold War was a fact, Swedish politics of “building bridges” aimed to contribute to the status quo and bridge the superpower tensions (Kronvall and Petersson 2012: 19). These politics included elements of confidence-building in relation to the Soviet Union, although there were also elements of deterrence. The Swedish government took a stance with clear features of isolation toward the Western powers. It was considered important to not participate in a Western bloc formation, partly because it could be interpreted as directed against the Soviet Union and partly because Sweden’s national political leeway of action could decline. External pressure did also change Swedish security policy. The vision of “building bridges” was weakened as the superpower tensions gradually sharpened. The Soviet Union appeared as a more credible aggressor. Sweden’s approach toward the emerging Western security structures became more important and more sensitive, given the tense relations between the East and the West (Kronvall and Petersson 2012: 19-20).

Already during the negotiations of the North Atlantic Treaty, Sweden was clear with its neutrality policy and did not participate. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Östen Undén and Sweden’s policies of neutrality made it clear that NATO was not an alternative for Sweden (Wieslander 2016). Sweden tried to counteract the Norwegian, and partly the Danish, orientation toward the Western powers between 1948 and 1949. There was an initiative of establishing an important Scandinavian defense association, which could be seen as an attempt to achieve a common footing for a bloc-independent security policy in a context of gradually more apparent tensions between the Western Bloc and the Soviet Union. The attempt stranded on differences in problem identifications and needs, first and foremost between Sweden and Norway. Neutrality was still an unchangeable condition for Sweden. The experience from the neutrality policies was for Norway less compelling and the wish for some form of guarantee from the UK and the US was strong. Neither Norway nor Denmark

were capable of defending their territory and even less capable of offering Sweden efficient military support. The establishment of NATO clearly defined the alternatives and left the Scandinavian states over a more definite decision. Denmark and Norway joined NATO in 1949 and Sweden took a nonaligned position. Swedish security policy went from politics of “building bridges” and confidence in collective security to nonalignment and neutrality policy (Hovi and Underdal 2010: 104, Kronvall and Petersson 2012: 20-21).

Olof Palme took office as Sweden’s Prime Minister in 1969. He focused on neutrality and the role it would have within Sweden’s security policy. This did not point out something new but it rather consolidated the foreign policy guidelines that were to be conducted under different governments with shifting politics and political leadership up until the end of the Cold War. The doctrine of security policy was based on the generally accepted ambition that Sweden in the event of an outbreak of war, namely a conflict between the West and the East, would be neutral. In peacetime, nonalignment became the fundamental requirement for politics with the intention of neutrality in wartime. The nonalignment implied first of all a policy of not participating in military alliances (SOU 2002: 388-389).

There was an informal cooperation during the Cold War between Sweden and NATO and the US. This was in a sense unknown to the Swedish population. Arguably, there was a gap between the foreign affairs policies built on small state solidarity and neutrality policy and the real Security and Defense policies built on hidden military cooperation (Dahl 1999: 59). While Alliance members might have criticized the neutrals for being free-riders, it was nevertheless in NATO’s interest to boost their political, economic, and military independence in the Cold War context. Additionally, the Alliance had an interest in extending an implicit security commitment to the neutral states in order to deter Soviet aggression or pressure against them (Cottey 2013: 453). Even though the European neutrals were not members of the Alliance, they were part of the West.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 ended the Cold War and new peace was to be established. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs experienced a rather fast development, which included participation in the EU Security and Defense policy, closer cooperation with NATO, issuing far-reaching solidarity clauses in case of a potential attack, and putting peacekeeping missions and their interaction with development aid at the forefront of Swedish security policy. This indicates that the change of Swedish security policy was not only a change of direction but a new path was also defined. The changes involved a new

interpretation of the concept of neutrality and nonalignment, and foremost the relation to the EU as a political alliance and NATO as a military alliance. The changes have considered the threat and security risks for Sweden, and in connection with the usage of military resources and the perception of peace promotion. These changes have required, in a country with a tradition of neutrality and active peacekeeping politics, deep political discussions and principled stances, both within and between the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag), government offices, and the Defense Committee (Bjurner 2010: 37).

The fall of the Berlin Wall did not only lead to a shift in geopolitics and potential threats, but also new intergovernmental institutions and a change in already existing institutions. The enlargement of the EU was to successively involve more members, including Sweden, and the development of the foreign policies toward the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) did change both the conditions for and the management of Swedish security politics. This movement strengthened from 1999 with an European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and did in turn convert the EU into an operational security policy actor. It was renamed to the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, and it was given more instruments for military and civil capacities. New institutions have further on strengthened the EU with the creation of the High Representative of Common Foreign and Security Policy (HR), who represents both the European Council and the European Commission, and with the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) (Bjurner 2010: 40).

The policy adaptation to the NATO partnership has primarily occurred at the policymaking elite level whereas resistance to change remains a more powerful factor at the general public level. The fact that the Social Democratic and center-right governments have adapted Swedish defense to NATO with minimal public debate partly explains why the partnership is ambiguous (Cotter 2013: 447).

6.2 Political parties and public opinion

Historically, the nonalignment policy has been hard to question in Swedish politics (Wästberg 1998: 15-16). The defining feature of the European neutral states' relationship with NATO was their non-membership of the Alliance. The political distance between the neutrals and NATO was reinforced by the nature of the public debates on foreign and security policy in these countries (Cotter 2013: 452).

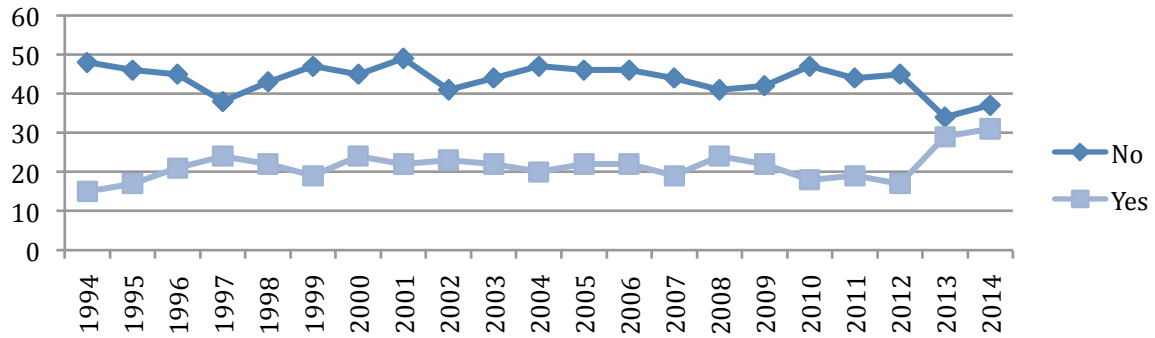
The statement by the Supreme Commander, Sverker Göransson, in January 2013 that Sweden would only have military capacity to defend limited targets of the Swedish territory during “a week on its own” became the starting point of a long and turbulent defense debate, and it is still going on (Bjereld 2014: 487). The defense issue has consequently taken more space in the Swedish domestic politics over the years. With regard to the December Agreement of 2014, the defense policy was pointed as a priority for achieving bloc settlements. Such negotiations were initiated in spring 2015 between the Social Democratic-Green government and the center-right Alliance.¹ They presented the document “Försvarspolitisk inriktning 2016-2020” in April 2015, where the Social Democrats, the Green Party, the Moderate Party, the Center Party, and the Christian Democrats expressed a consensus on the design of the defense politics and the resource allocation the upcoming years. The Liberals stepped aside of this settlement since they think that the armed forces should possess more resources than agreed upon (Bjereld and Ydén 2015: 289).

With regard to the membership issue, the frontlines between the Swedish political parties have been relatively stable. The Liberals has been the only political party clearly stating pro-membership. What has changed on the issue is that the Moderate Party, the Center Party, and the Christian Democrats are currently explicitly in favor of NATO membership (Dahl 2016). Thus, a NATO membership gains ground among the center-right parties while the Social Democratic-Green government and the Left Party remain opposed to a Swedish membership (Bjereld and Ydén 2015: 292). Additionally, the Sweden Democrats are clear opponents of NATO.

The defense issue receives more attention in the media and the debate has affected the public opinion. The percentage of the Swedish population who wants to lower the defense costs has decreased and more people are worried over the Russian aggression (Bjereld and Ydén 2015: 290-291). On the one hand, the yes-side wants Sweden to join NATO for security reasons. On the other hand, apart from the possible requirements on increasing the defense expenditure as a consequence of joining NATO, the opposition of a Swedish membership is also embedded in the “nuclear weapon option” and in the US dominance within NATO (Bjurner 2010: 43-44).

Graph 2: The Swedes’ attitude toward NATO membership 1994-2014 (percent)

¹ Constituted by the Moderate Party, the Liberals, the Center Party, and the Christian Democrats.



Source: SOM 2014. (Bjereld 2014).

The public opinion is currently changing and there is an increasing polarization on the topic. According to the 2014 SOM-survey, NATO resistance remains at a lower level than before. However, there is still a larger support for nonalignment than for a Swedish NATO membership (Bjereld and Ydén 2015: 292).

6.3 Sweden’s relationship with NATO

A NATO membership implies that member states collectively safeguard their territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Alliance obligation is triggered in a situation where one or more member states are subjected to a military attack. The core of the Alliance Treaty is Article 5, which regards collective self-defense. Article 5 asserts that if one of the member states of NATO would be subjected to an attack, then all member states “will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area” (NATO 1949).

The government and the Riksdag have since the early 1990s gradually transformed the security policy line in a more integrationist course, in which security is sought after in collaboration with other states instead of alone. The Swedish solution of its challenges in terms of security policy can be explained as a balancing act between three key alternatives. The first alternative is the traditional Undén-Palme line with neutrality policy that combined small state realism in the core of security policy with moralistic and idealistic politics in global issues where the UN had a special status. The second alternative is the European integration within the framework of the EU, including its dimension of security and defense. The third alternative is the integration within the transatlantic framework of NATO, via the PfP (Dalsjö 2010: 61). This solution of a balancing act started in the early 1990s and here is where the political leadership brought about plan B.

It is now two decades ago since NATO initiated the first partnership arrangements with non-members and the European neutrals. There are variations in how these countries engage with the Alliance. Sweden and Finland have adopted maximalist policies of everything but membership, while Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland have been more cautious in engaging NATO (Cottey 2013: 446-447). The Bildt Cabinet initiated the partnership with NATO in 1994 through the PfP. Sweden appeared as an enthusiastic participant especially during this period, but also during Carlsson's Third Cabinet and the Persson Cabinet (Dahl 1999: 92).

The NATO membership was not an issue during the 1990s, regardless of center-right government or Social Democratic government. There was no heritage of wanting such membership and there was therefore no political willingness to touch upon the membership issue. Sweden was not interested in a membership but to contribute to a pan-European security order, and the leadership saw a necessity to be more efficient in international operations led by NATO (Wieslander 2016). The concept of neutrality loosened up gradually but a new formulation came first in 2002 in the Foreign Policy Declaration that "Sweden is military nonaligned". The only expressed limitation that Sweden has imposed itself is to not be included in any binding defense obligations (Bjereld and Ydén 2015: 289).

NATO is intergovernmental in the sense that each member country has a veto. However, there is arguably, in practice, a division of influence within the organization (Hovi and Underdal 2010: 62, 67). NATO has three features that have a significant implication on its relationship with the European neutrals and make that relationship complex. The first feature is the multiple nature of NATO's identity and role, being both a defense alliance, an institutional expression of the West, and a collective security organization by taking on the mission of international peacekeeping. The second feature is the selective and differential way in which both members and partners participate in alliance activities, policies, and institutions. For instance, the decisions on defense policy remain under the national control of member states so the degree to which the countries contribute to NATO's military capacity varies significantly. Moreover, the concept of burden-sharing has created tensions within the Alliance. And the last feature is the dynamic nature of the Alliance. The organization has changed significantly over the years with the enlargement of new members, the establishment of partnerships, and the engagement in international peacekeeping operations (Cottey 2013: 450-452).

The cooperation with NATO and the participation in the NATO project PfP has given Sweden access to a new network and a channel to military resources for international peace promotion. However, Sweden cannot participate in NATO's planning for Article 5 missions since Sweden is not subject to Article 5 as a non-member. This limitation within the cooperation has implications for the opportunity to be informed of the planning and the execution of the peacekeeping missions under NATO leadership where Sweden participates. This lack of information has been a challenge of both practical and principled importance for Sweden, often together with Finland. This challenge has to some extent diminished over time. Sweden has, together with other EU countries that are not members of NATO, watched over so that they are not discriminated as EU members in the cooperation between the EU and NATO. This regards, first of all, the access to information and the consultations on participation and planning of a mission (Björner 2010: 46). This is an indication of the existence of different MLG layers, since Sweden can influence its non-member position through its EU membership.

Sweden fulfills NATO's aim of cooperation within 60 different fields, and in some cases even better than NATO members (Holmström 2011: 577, 580). Sweden has in 20 years adapted its defense to NATO standards. In the NATO language, there are two types of interoperability – military interoperability and political interoperability. This implies that the countries should be able to cooperate and adapt to NATO standards both militarily and politically. What Sweden has is a very high military interoperability but a lower political interoperability. For instance, Sweden can participate in the planning of international operations through a decision-shaping mechanism, although not when the decisions are made, but not in a case of territorial defense since that involves Article 5 (Wieslander 2016).

The NATO Partnership has enabled Sweden to cooperate with the Alliance on matters that the leadership has considered important for Sweden. While the NATO membership has been a disputed and difficult issue, the current agreements seem to characterize more unity than the membership issue itself, although being an ambiguous relationship. However, territorial defense is more important for NATO at the moment, which changes Sweden's relation to the organization and its non-membership since Article 5 regards territorial defense. There is a shift of focus, with less international operations and more territorial defense. Sweden's bilateral agreements are therefore even more important when NATO is closing itself inwards to prior territorial defense (Britz 2016).

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Host Nation Support was signed between Sweden and NATO at the 2014 Wales Summit and submitted for decisions to the Riksdag on May 25 2016. The entry into force of the agreement will enable Sweden to give and receive support, in terms of civil and military assistance, from NATO in Sweden or in the neighborhood in peacetime, conflict, or war. In addition, it means that Sweden can be a host for mutually planned military activities (NATO 2016). The Minister of Defense Peter Hultqvist has stressed that allied forces can only be located on Swedish territory with a Swedish invitation. The disputed issue of nuclear weapons is not stated in the proposal and Hultqvist declared that there will be no changes in the agreement but that nuclear weapons will under no circumstances be permitted (TT 2016).

As an additional extension of the bilateral agreements, the Social Democratic-Green government took an initiative in summer 2015 to deepen and increase the defense cooperation with the US. This move was based on the assumption among Social Democrats that NATO will be slow to act in case of a crisis in the Baltic Sea region and that bilateral arrangements with the US are the most crucial for Sweden's security (Wieslander 2016: 4). Additionally, The Swedish and Danish Ministers of Defense did on January 14 2016 sign an agreement for enhanced defense cooperation. This bilateral agreement implies that Sweden and Denmark will use each other's military infrastructure, with airbases and harbors, and they will exchange information of what is happening in the region of Öresund (Regeringskansliet 2016, Holmström 2016).

6.4 Plan B

The current Social Democratic-Green government maintains its traditional stand of keeping Sweden nonaligned. The official stand has been that a membership of NATO would jeopardize Sweden's possibilities to act constructively in the Baltic Sea region and it would reduce the credibility for Sweden as a conflict solver and mediator (Święcicki 1998: 100).

The tactics of adaptation implemented by Sweden is to be a good partner, and Sweden is keeping up a good job considering its non-membership position (Britz 2016, Wieslander 2016). What Sweden did between 1994 and 2014 was to gradually place its practical cooperation as close to NATO as possible without overstepping the Article 5 line (Wieslander 2016). Sweden's relationship with NATO is nowadays a new kind of cooperation since NATO's focus has moved much closer geographically. NATO's challenge is extensive in the Baltic Sea region and Russia has local military superiority of

conventional forces and has illustrated, through exercises and the war in Ukraine, its capacity to quickly mobilize troops. Sweden's relationship with NATO has thus moved much closer to the Article 5 (Wieslander 2016: 13, Wieslander 2016).

The government advocates the NATO Partnership and the aim of strengthening the Nordic defense cooperation (Bjereld and Ydén 2015: 292). The Minister of Defense Hultqvist has expressed that it is not on the political agenda to apply for a Swedish membership. The government will continue the bilateral cooperation with NATO and the Nordic countries, and aims for an extended national defense capability. Additionally, Sweden's security policy should be based on a long-term stability and the government will maintain this stability without changing the doctrine (Sveriges Radio 2015).

As mentioned above, the theoretical definition of plan A is that a country applies for membership in the international organizations. I thus argue that the political elite never carried through plan A because a Swedish membership was by no means on the agenda, despite the fall of the Berlin Wall (Wieslander 2016). Thus, there was no political voice for a membership strategy at the establishment of NATO, or when the Berlin Wall fell, and neither in the 1990s. Plan B was directly brought about with the NATO Partnership and other bilateral agreements. This approach was intensified in the 1990s and is the current strategy.

7 Comparative analysis

There are different costs and benefits with the memberships of the EU and NATO that should be reflected on. Moreover, the political leadership has to take the public opinion into consideration. The Norwegian and Swedish elites are still considering how far they can go without a formal membership and without giving up too much of their sovereignty, and also the degree to which sovereignty can be strengthened by joining international organizations.

What is common in both cases is that their strategy when approaching the organizations is everything but membership. Thus, the strategy for Norway is the EEA agreement and the strategy for Sweden is the partnership agreement – agreements that are good enough when the possibility of formal membership is not possible. Plan B in both cases is “don't rock the boat”. That is, do not upset the people by trying to change the situation. The decisions form the path for the countries, and the choices are bounded due to pre-existing conditions. Thus,

the choice of strategy clearly depends on the public opinion's preference and the elite's analysis of the international political and economic situation.

7.1 What explains the current strategy choices?

Norway assumed that the EEA agreement could work for five to six years and that Norway could become member of the EU later. The Norwegian leadership originally hoped that the EEA agreement would be brought in from the beginning of 1993 and after some years of "socialization" in the single market the public would come to accept full EU membership. These hopes broke down when the Swedish government, followed by the Finnish government, submitted their applications in 1991 (Archer 2005: 57). The Norwegian elite lost the 1994 referendum while Sweden joined the EU and Norway was trapped in a difficult situation. Brundtland had declared that she would not resign if they lost and held a meeting the day after the referendum in the Council of State declaring that Norway would govern with the new agreements from that point on. From day one, she traveled from one European country to another in order to guarantee that there was no doubt about the EEA. This was the big decision, so if it was a strategy it happened the first day after the 1994 referendum of November 29 (Sverdrup 2016).

Sweden has always been nonaligned and did not have the possibility of joining NATO. The neutrality policy has been weakened after 1989 and the opportunity of membership was possible. Sweden could have joined NATO up until around 2008 but there is a probability that a Swedish membership would have some costs and Russia's reaction on a membership would arguably have some effects. The choice of not joining may have had something to do with Sweden's path dependency and domestic politics, but today it may have something to do with Sweden's domestic politics and relation to Russia. There was a winning-opportunity but Sweden did not take it, and therefore the country is where it is today (Sverdrup 2016).

Sovereignty and neutrality are embedded in the countries' domestic politics and national identity and can be interpreted as path-dependent institutions. The path may be altered, but it requires a good deal of political pressure to produce that change (Peters 2005: 71). Larger external chocks are required for the political leeway of action to change. In the case of Sweden, the Social Democrats are much more bound since their underlying idea was the welfare state and the neutrality policy. If there should be a change, then they would need to change identity, and identity politics mean a lot for the political leeway of action (Britz 2016). In the case of Norway, the yes-side could change path in some years but that depends

on the development of the EU and the political climate on the domestic arena, and not least economic and political challenges that Norway has to take into consideration. If there should be a fundamental change in the public opinion, individual groups such as women and younger people, need to change opinion. This also requires changes in the regional cleavages. Moreover, the political parties are split on the issue. This, and disagreement within the government constellations, is possibly an explanation of the absence of an active EU debate in Norway over the last years (Narud, Hveem, and Høyland 2010: 354). The plan B strategy, in both cases, is a result of path-dependency.

One could argue that the Norwegian yes-side lost because the no-side prevailed in the debate all the time and because the yes-parties were split in their view of the EU and in turn incapable to lead an efficient campaign. There is a parallel between Norway and Sweden with regard to the success of the no-side. They have, in both cases, not missed the opportunity to express their message and their stance against a membership. The Norwegian Labour Party and the Conservative Party were discrete yes-parties until late in the 1994 campaign and the Swedish center-right parties have been discrete and arguably late in their stance of being in favor or against a NATO membership. It is very recent that the Alliance is unanimous on this issue. Thus, I would argue that the Norwegian and Swedish yes-side did not take their winning-opportunity when they had it and they failed to mobilize the population by not being clear, in contrast to the no-side.

Moreover, Norway had joined NATO because history had illustrated the demand for a strong defense. A Norwegian NATO membership did arguably lead to sovereignty since the country was not capable of defending itself alone after World War II. A Norwegian EU membership would on the other hand be a threat to sovereignty since the country has been protective due to its self-interest of defending its special economic track. Similarly, it is possible that a Swedish EU membership did lead to sovereignty because Sweden experienced a difficult economic crisis in which the manufacturing sector saw the single market as the solution. A Swedish NATO membership would on the other hand be a threat to sovereignty since Sweden has a history military non-alignment and the experience of a self-sufficient defense.

The political leadership has negotiated a plan B in order to achieve important collective goals through international cooperation. MLG and collective action among states are closely connected. Sovereign states are required to cede parts of their autonomy to transnational

institutions and systems in order to make collective solutions work. There is a complex relationship between two entities, Norway and the EU and Sweden and NATO, but what happens within them is a matter of consideration as well. The decision-making process and institutions involve many political actors and different levels of governance. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), representatives of interest groups, and regional voices join the government ministers, civil servants, and technocrats (Archer 2005: 5). Sovereign state governments, regional and local administrations, and EU institutions have become interlocked in MLG whereby national governmental control is weakened by the activities of supranational and subnational actors (Marks, Hooghe, and Blank 1996: 373).

MLG is an important tool for understanding the implementation of European directives in Norway (Peters and Pierre 2009: 91, 95). As the EU has developed, the EU treaties cover some of the core areas of the state activity, which affects non-members when they come to negotiate such matters. The EU structure implies that the relationship is not just intergovernmental. There are means for Norwegian involvement in the layers of MLG, and the EU will most likely interact with the various sections of Norwegian society as well (Archer 2005: 5). Regulations from Brussels and Luxemburg control the activity also in Norway, and Norway is committed to implement the EU directives and regulations both on national, regional, and local level. First of all because Norway forms part of the EEA and is therefore tied to the EU legislation. Secondly, the EU has little implementation capacity of its own and depends on the member states and their components in order to be able to put policy choices into effect (Peters and Pierre 2009: 96). Similarly, there are means for Swedish involvement in NATO and its layers of MLG, and NATO is likely to interact with the Swedish security and defense sections as well. Sweden is involved in these layers through the NATO Partnership, and additionally through the EU-NATO cooperation that Sweden is automatically tied to by being an EU member. For instance, Sweden has achieved a high military interoperability by internationalizing its defense capacity according to NATO standards. This internationalization is a requirement for Sweden to cooperate as a NATO partner, such as during the international operations, and it also enables NATO to interact with the Swedish defense section. Thus, both countries are involved in the layers of MLG to a higher extent by having adapted their systems to the respective organization. This automatically leads them to participation in the institutions of the EU and NATO, but not to the decision-making process since that is the line between a partner and a member.

7.2 What are the implications of the strategy choices?

The disadvantage of non-membership in the Norwegian and the Swedish cases is that the countries are bound by great parts of the regulation but without any vote on it, and by not participating in the decision-making they lack influence and information intake (Sverdrup 2016, Wieslander 2016). This makes the cooperation to a technical association on a low level conducted by experts. While the countries cooperate practically with the organizations, there is a great lack of political influence since the political leadership is not participating in the decision-making process. Sweden has a low political interoperability while the military interoperability is very high (Sverdrup 2016, Wieslander 2016, Britz 2016). Due to the asymmetric relationship between Norway and the EU in economic terms, partly because Norway's income from oil and gas is designated in dollars, a main advantage of non-membership is the benefit of having its own currency. During the negotiations for a possible EU membership in the early 1990s, the deal was different than for Sweden and if Norway joined the EU in 1995 it would have been tied up to the EMU automatically. The EEA had clear benefits for Norway as it opened up the EC market for its exports. Moreover, the advantage of non-membership depends on the sector and the agriculture sector is possibly the one benefitting the most from the EEA agreement since it would lose more with an EU membership (Sverdrup 2016, Archer 2005: 57). In the Swedish case, the political leeway of action is the principal advantage of non-membership (Wieslander 2016, Britz 2016).

There is a need for separating formal and real sovereignty and formal and real neutrality. One can say that the formal sovereignty in Norway is high while the real sovereignty is low, and the real sovereignty is much lower than the population perceives it to be. Similarly, one can say that the formal neutrality in Sweden is high while the real neutrality is low (Sverdrup 2016). There is cooperation on different levels where actors intervene. The MLG can thus explain why the difference of formal and real sovereignty and neutrality. The cooperation between Norway and the EU is each time broader, since the EEA agreement is dynamic and uniform, and the cooperation between Sweden and NATO is intensified, arguably due to Russian periodic aggression. There was a close cooperation with NATO and the US during the Cold War when both the formal and real neutrality was perceived high. Sweden was more integrated with NATO and the US than the people was aware of (Sverdrup 2016). Since there is an aim of maintaining sovereignty, it is important to point out that there is a gap in the understanding of how much sovereignty there actually is.

One may wonder what the Norwegian and the Swedish leaderships do in order to build knowledge and understanding in society to increase its own leeway for the possibility of moving toward more or less integration with the organizations. The situation for Norway is that the Norwegian government is doing little and the Norwegian society has a generally declining knowledge, which means that the population knows less about the real association with the EU. So the formal association is advocated in the public debate. Since the NATO issue is a very politicized and brings up a rather emotional debate, it is difficult to promote factual insight. There is a gap of understanding in both countries (Sverdrup 2016), and the perception is that the country is less affected by the organization than it actually is. The EU issue in Norway is not solely a matter of foreign affairs but an issue that regards many of the areas within the domestic affairs (Narud, Hveem, and Høyland 2010: 351). The EU issue in Norwegian media is a matter of foreign affairs, not domestic affairs, and EU is framed as “the others” (Sverdrup 2016). In Sweden, the NATO issue is a matter of domestic affairs, although being a foreign affairs issue. Moreover, the NATO issue is particular since the security policy is one of the larger foreign policy matters but driven primarily by the Minister of Defense and not by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Wieslander 2016).

Despite the limitations of the non-membership, one advantage can arguably be that both countries have their Nordic neighbors. The Nordic mutual culture, values, societal structure, geographic closeness, and good experience of cooperation in various policy areas can enable them to cooperate also on the non-membership issue (Doeser, Petersson, and Westberg: 47). Norway could use Sweden’s voice at the decision tables in the EU institutions and Sweden could use Norway’s voice at the NATO meetings. Additionally, there is possibly not a disadvantage that the social democrat Jens Stoltenberg is the Secretary General of NATO. However, it can be argued to what extent the Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström has taken advantage of this since she is a politician known for pushing for UN cooperation before NATO cooperation.

Despite the close political cooperation with the respective organization, both Norway and Sweden are at the end of the day formally outside and there are no guarantees for influence or support. For instance, NATO stressed after the annexation of Crimea that Sweden is a prominent NATO partner but Article 5 does not apply. Thus, there are no grey zones (Sverdrup 2016, Wieslander 2016).

Regardless of how far the cooperation advances in terms of EU adjustment, Norway can always resign the EEA agreement. That is the difference between the agreement and the EU membership. The EU membership is irreversible and so is the NATO membership. Sweden can always resign the Partnership agreement, regardless of the high military interoperability. However, there is a possibility that the Partnership undermines the status as a nonaligned state, which in turn could decrease the security for Sweden. But one could also question what signals as an economic partner Norway would send with a resignation of the EEA agreement. However, membership is not on the agenda and neither is a resignation of the agreements. The trajectory for both countries has thus been to approach the organization as close as possible without formally joining.

Opening up negotiations for membership would imply high costs since there is a resistance both in the public opinion and in the political parties. It is unlikely to believe that Norway is employing an informal pattern of political coordination as a strategy to bypass the question of membership. Although there are different points of view on the EU membership among the political parties, the matter of membership is not on the political agenda. The political leadership, the government, will be dissolved if a debate of EU membership is initiated again (NOU 2012: 271). A referendum will only take place again if the Storting decides to submit a new application for membership. Since Sweden is an EU member and since the ESDP made the EU a security policy actor, one may argue that it is not necessary to join NATO formally. Moreover, the Partnership and bilateral cooperation seems to upset people less. It is hard to think that Sweden would apply for a NATO membership bypassing a referendum, since it is a very politicized issue. The public opinion has changed and it remains to see whether it keeps changing or not. However, it is maybe not impossible that the center-right Alliance make it an election question for the next national election campaign. But that remains to be seen since they are currently opposition parties and have earlier, when being government parties, not stressed the issue as a priority. Moreover, there are other issues that are challenges for the parties in their campaign for votes.

It appears to be less willingness to consider a change from the Partnership link with the EU and NATO if a majority of politicians, public, interest groups see it as functioning cooperation. In the case of Norway, the EEA arguably gives the country freedom to operate its own policies according to its interests (Archer 2005: 177). There has so far been less willingness to change Norway's choice of cooperation and the EEA is generally seen as a successful agreement. Similarly, as long as the Swedish elite sees the NATO cooperation as

successful and the public opinion does not keep changing, then there will be less willingness to change the partnership relationship.

The Norwegian and Swedish political leaderships have, through suboptimization, negotiated a plan B, in the form of agreements, in order to achieve important collective goals. As long as the countries vote for a less compromising choice than membership, there will obviously not be a move toward more integration. A move toward more or less integration will depend on the mass-elite evaluation of how to maintain their sovereignty.

The findings of this thesis lead to some key questions for the future political leadership to answer.

- How can Norway and Sweden best confront their upcoming challenges with regard to their non-membership of the EU and the non-membership of NATO?
- How can they fill the gap of formal and real sovereignty?
- How can they balance the needs on the domestic arena and their role on the international arena?

8 Conclusion

The aim of the Master's Thesis has been to contribute to our understanding of how state sovereignty can be pursued either individually or collectively. Empirically, I have compared the Norwegian non-membership of the EU and the Swedish non-membership of NATO and their strategies in order to approach these organizations and what implications these have for the countries.

The theoretical definition is that plan A for a country is to apply for membership in the international organizations. Norway's plan A was to join the EU but since the Norwegian elite lost the 1994 referendum, the EEA agreement became plan B. I furthermore argue that Sweden never had a plan A of joining NATO and brought about plan B directly, which was the NATO Partnership. In both cases, plan B has been the strategy ever since.

Both Norway and Sweden are historically resistant countries toward supranational international organizations. The countries cannot join the respective organization since public opinion does not give legitimacy to a membership strategy. There is both a need to maintain sovereignty and for political cooperation, which explains why the leaderships have

had to find alternative strategies. Plan B is an example of a strategy which I have referred to as suboptimization.

It is challenging for Norway and Sweden to be utility-maximizing actors in a context where the decision alternatives are shaped by the demand for long-term objectives, and that is why Simon's bounded rationality applies to this study. The Norwegian and Swedish leaderships have been aware of what the special relationship with the respective organization means for the countries. Despite the consequences of less influence and guarantee for support, they obviously see benefits with it and apply a *satisficing* strategy. When comparing the Norwegian non-membership of the EU and the Swedish non-membership of NATO, it can be concluded that sovereignty is maintained by collective action through the plan B strategy.

In order for collective solutions to work, they have been required to cede parts of their autonomy to transnational institutions and systems. In both cases, there is a decision-making process on many levels where actors achieve their objectives partly through negotiation. They suboptimize through MLG in order to achieve their goals.

As an extension to this study, future research should focus on the development of these special relationships and the gap of understanding between formal and real sovereignty. Moreover, research should draw attention to what effect the Norwegian and Swedish non-membership strategy has on the opportunity to establish a more intense Nordic cooperation for a safer and richer region.

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- Wieslander, Anna, the Deputy Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. Interview on April 21 2016 in Stockholm.
- Britz, Malena, Assistant Professor at the Swedish Defense University. Interview on April 21 2016 in Stockholm.