

Solidarity and Sovereignty – The Two-Dimensional Game of Swedish Security Policy

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Introduction

The purpose of this article is to analyse and interpret the Swedish security policy discourse related to the Defence Bill of 2009 (*inriktningspropositionen*)¹. The Defence Bill could be regarded as a key policy document for the development of the Swedish defence over the following decade. One of the most puzzling features of it is the emphasis of solidarity in the EU and Nordic region, also in military terms, while maintaining the policy of avoiding NATO membership. This has stirred a debate about the interpretation of the Swedish policy.² How could we understand this militarily non-aligned country that declares military solidarity to its neighbouring countries? The conclusion of this analysis is that the Swedish security policy discourse currently could be interpreted as a two-dimensional game of solidarity and sovereignty, and that this perspective challenges the notion that a change of identity is necessary for a lasting change in security policy.

The fundamental framework of this article is that every country has a strategic culture.³ The interest in strategic culture is motivated, not least, by the fact that the end of the Soviet empire triggered quite different security policies among the countries in the Nordic-Baltic area. What is considered to be a serious defence proposition in Helsinki is regarded as something of a joke in Copenhagen.⁴ Thus, systemic change is not the only interesting approach.

However, the analytic components of a strategic culture are far from obvious. There are several challenges for the study of cultures in general as well as strategic cultures specifically.⁵ This article takes with the theoretical assumption that strategic culture is both structure and process. Individuals live in a strategic culture, as well as using strategy culturally for different purposes.⁶ Change in a strategic culture is not a spontaneous process since, in the hermeneutic words of Hans-Georg Gadamer, “the process of construal is itself already governed by an expectation of meaning that follows from the context of what has gone before.”⁷ The methodological logic following this is that language, with its symbols and codes, is a reflection of

¹ Regeringen, *Ett användbart försvar* Prop 2008/09:140.

² Two examples include Bo Hugemark, “Sverige måste kunna försvara sina grannar” *Svenska Dagbladet* 29 January 2009, and Claes Arvidsson, “En värld – två alternativ” *Svenska Dagbladet* 18 February 2010.

³ Strategic culture is introduced in Jeffrey S. Lantis & Darryl Howlett, “Strategic culture” in John Baylis, James J. Wirtz & Colin S. Gray (eds.), *Strategy* 3rd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 84-103. The relationship between strategic culture and more established research traditions is covered in John Glenn, Darryl Howlett & Stuart Poore (eds.), *Neorealism versus Strategic Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). Note that the assumption of strategic culture on a national level does not mean that strategic cultures are national per definition.

⁴ For an overview of Nordic strategic culture, see *Cooperation & Conflict* Vol. 40. No. 1, 2005.

⁵ This is mirrored by the Gray-Johnston debate. On the one hand strategic culture is regarded as context that shapes and provides meaning to strategic actions, on the other hand strategic culture is regarded as one variable among several that explain strategic actions. For an introduction and comment on the Gray-Johnston debate, see Stuart Poore, “What is the context? A comment on the Gray-Johnston debate on strategic culture” in *Review of International Studies*, 2003, p. 279-284.

⁶ This approach to culture is in line with the hermeneutic historians at Lund University, see Klas-Göran Karlsson & Ulf Zander (Eds.), *Echoes of the Holocaust – Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), p. 32.

⁷ Quoted in, *ibid.*, p. 13.

meaning.⁸ In this way the study of the debate following the Defence Bill of 2009, or indeed in the words of philosopher Paul Ricoeur “any discourse fixed by writing”⁹, is a method to trace meaning of strategic language in the Swedish strategic culture.

Thus, for the purpose of this text the term discourse is defined as “a system for the formation of statements”¹⁰ about security issues. The key structure of this text is the Defence Bill of 2009, which together with the Defence Commissions (*Försvarsberedningen*), constitutes the focal point for the analysis. The Defence Bill is the official policy of the Swedish government, and the Defence Commission is a preparatory forum with representatives from experts as well as all political parties in the parliament. It must be noted that the security policy discourse feature elements of both defence policy as well as foreign policy.¹¹ However, I will not devote myself to discursive practices, which include capability development or policy implementation in the security policy field. In this sense, the findings of this article are completely related to the conditions for strategic action. In other words, to get the whole picture one must also study strategic practices.

The structure of the article is as follows. Firstly, I will describe the theoretical elements of two-level or two-dimensional games. The hypothesis introduced in this section is that the Swedish government is involved in a two-dimensional game in order to protect its perceived interests internationally while avoiding the political controversies associated with alliance policies in the Swedish strategic culture. Secondly, I will analyse the discourse of the Defence Bill of 2009 related to the concept of solidarity. I show how the declaration of solidarity is a result of conceptual stretching that is beneficial for flexible foreign policy action as well as satisfying traditionalists in the Swedish strategic culture. Furthermore, this section displays how this conceptual stretch challenges the traditional understanding of solidarity and the policy implications of this. Thirdly, I will analyse the discourse of the Defence Bill of 2009 related to issues of sovereignty. We will see how the government engages in a game that tries to maintain the image of sovereignty as a traditional national concern, while simultaneously widening the meaning of sovereignty to fit an international context. Lastly, I will summarise the main conclusions regarding the Swedish security policy discourse as a two-dimensional game. The findings of this article challenges the notion that a change in identity is necessary for a long term change in security approach.

Two-dimensional games

One of the traditional features of Swedish security policy theory is the analytic differentiation of the Siamese twins domestic and foreign policy. Admittedly, in the seminal study *Säkerhetspolitik (Security Policy)* maestro Nils Andrén notes that it is

⁸ The roots of this approach could be traced to Gadamer, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1993).

⁹ Quoted in Karlsson & Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Iver B. Neumann & Henrikki Heikka, “Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice” in *Cooperation & Conflict* Vol. 40. No. 1, 2005, p. 11.

¹¹ This heuristic divide is inspired by Kjell Engelbrekt & Jan Ångström (eds.), *Svensk säkerhetspolitik i Europa och världen* (Stockholm: Norstedts Juridik, forthcoming). Engelbrekt & Ångström argue that security policy is defined by the activities at the Defence Ministry and the Foreign Ministry.

difficult to make a clear distinction between the two.¹² Not only can foreign policy initiatives undermine defence policy, but defence policy can have consequences on foreign policy as well. There are many cases where the domestic agenda and the foreign policy agenda challenge each other.

Back in 1988 political scientist Robert Putnam offered a theoretical approach to deal with the questions of *when* and *how* domestic policy influences diplomacy.¹³ Following his study of the Bonn Summit in 1978 he noted the appearance of what he called a two-level game. He concluded something rather obvious: that international negotiations could involve *more* negotiation efforts domestically than internationally, which challenges the view of the state as a unitary international actor. However, among other things, this opened up for a better understanding of ratifications of international agreements. A state can be forced to make an involuntary defection from international agreements, caused by a failure to convince domestic actors.

Arguably, since Putnam based his article on game theory it was difficult to handle situations that were not clearly negotiations or bargainings. Thus, to him the metaphor “game” firstly related to the meaning of “match” or “gambling”. However, it is quite possible to imagine a perspective in which “game” has the simultaneous meaning of “drama” and “play” as well. The argument is that games could have a double meaning related to interests as well as identities. This latter perspective opens the possibilities for a study of how national strategy can be used to communicate with several purposes and motives.

The Danish scholars Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen have developed the metaphor of what they call sovereignty games.¹⁴ Due to globalisation and, among other things, the use of military capabilities outside state territory “what emerges is an expansion of the playing field relating to sovereignty.”¹⁵ This, Adler-Nissen and Gammeltoft-Hansen argue, creates a situation where core functions of the state are outsourced while diplomats and statesmen enter a tricky political game “to simultaneously allow international cooperation and communicate a sense of sovereignty to the domestic audience”.¹⁶ Thus, the games become “strategic maneuvers”¹⁷ motivated by both interest and identities. This framing invites a dual understanding of a discourse; one related to an international arena and one related to the domestic arena.¹⁸

The key characteristic of the international game is policies that disconnect state power from sovereign territory. In the present context this process has often had the label “Europeanisation”, and it has related to everything from migration control to foreign

¹² Nils Andrén, *Säkerhetspolitik – Analyser och tillämpningar* andra upplagan (Stockholm: Norstedt Juridik, 2002), p. 30.

¹³ Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games” *International Organization*, Vol. No. 3, (Summer 1988), p. 427-460.

¹⁴ Rebecca Adler-Nissen & Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, “An Introduction to Sovereignty Games” in Rebecca Adler-Nissen & Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen (Eds.), *Sovereignty Games – Instrumentalizing State Sovereignty in Europe and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁸ Note that these dimensions are not synonymous to “horizontal games” and “vertical games” used by Adler-Nissen and Gammeltoft-Hansen.

policy. The key dynamic in this game is that “states engage in conceptual stretching”¹⁹ since there are both domestic and international constraints for policies.

The key characteristic of the domestic game is policies to enhance autonomy in an international environment. In the Swedish context this is related to the core tasks of Swedish defence and security policy as well as the search for legitimacy for policies. The key dynamic of this game is that “national executives are playing on the legal and symbolic arsenal provided by the conceptual framework of sovereignty”.²⁰

In her case study comparing Danish and British opt-outs from the EU integration process, Adler-Nissen used these two dimensions as different aspects of a sovereignty game.²¹ Both countries have exceptions from the Maastricht treaty and this has put pressure on state representatives to circumvent these opt-outs with reference to national interests while maintaining respect for public opinion. The driver of this double-edged process when state officials circumvent opt-outs is “to reduce their exclusionary effects, so the figure of an autonomous state is preserved at home despite its entanglement in the European integration process.”²²

The hypothesis is thus that the traditional lack of alliance policy in the Swedish strategic culture represents such an “opt out” from the European integration process. According to the Lisbon treaty, its mutual assistance clause “shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.”²³ This opens similar opportunities for a two-dimensional game like the ones described by Adler-Nissen. The Swedish government tries to protect its perceived interest in the international process of security integration, while maintaining the domestic image of Sweden as a militarily non-aligned country with full freedom of action. The political rationale for this hypothesis is that the Swedish government wants to be a part of the continued security integration process, while avoiding the political controversies associated with alliance policies in the Swedish political context. Developing a study of the Swedish security policy from this perspective fits with earlier calls for research on the frequent conceptual stretching of neutrality and development of national identity as well as political language.²⁴

This discursive operation does not have to involve an Orwellian “double speak” since the same rhetoric can have double meaning. In other words: a two-dimensional game does not necessarily turn an actor into a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde character. The official policy can have one meaning in a domestic debate about defence, and a rather different connotation during international discussions in Brussels and Washington. The importance of this is that security doctrine does not necessarily need to be a trade off between domestic and international dimensions.

¹⁹ Adler-Nissen & Gammeltoft-Hansen, “An Introduction to Sovereignty Games”, p. 14.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

²¹ Rebecca Adler-Nissen, “Organized Duplicity? When States Opt Out of the European Union” in Rebecca Adler-Nissen & Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen (Eds.), *Sovereignty Games – Instrumentalizing State Sovereignty in Europe and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 81-104.

²² Ibid., p. 100.

²³ Consolidated Treaty on the European Union, Article 42(7).

²⁴ See Johan Eliasson, *Traditions, Identity and Security: The Legacy of Neutrality in Finnish and Swedish Security Policies in Light of European Integration* EIoP Vol. 8 Nr. 6 2004, p. 13.

The two game dimensions could be identified in the Defence Bill of 2009. The tasks that the Swedish government poses for the defence are expressed in it. From 2010 the tasks of the armed forces are “to defend and promote security, alone and together with others, nationally and internationally.”²⁵ Analytically this creates four strategic cases: to defend the country alone, to act alone abroad, to defend the country together with others, and to act abroad together with others. Since the Defence Bill of 2009 features tasks that demand singular defence as well as action with others, it displays the inherent duality for a militarily non-aligned country engaged in a process of security integration. The tasks relate clearly to the issue of sovereignty (the ability of a state to defend and control its territory) as well as the issue of solidarity (the musketeer principle of all for one and one for all).

In the two coming sections we will study these two game dimensions in the security discourse. In the first we will look closer at the solidarity dimension. We will see how this game is influenced by conceptual stretching that serve as circumventions as well as refuge for actors with an interest in maintaining military non-alignment. However, the changing meaning of solidarity also poses many challenges for policy. After that we will turn to the sovereignty dimension. Here we will note the recurring patterns of reassurances for a domestic audience.

The solidarity dimension

The conceptual stretching of solidarity

One of the most striking features of the Swedish Defence Bill of 2009 is the declaration of solidarity. It states that “Sweden’s security is built in solidarity and cooperation with other countries”²⁶ and “The security of the country is not just protected on our own borders.”²⁷ Following the report of the Defence Commission of 2008 the government declared:

Sweden will not remain passive if a catastrophe or attack should hit another member country or Nordic country. We expect these countries to act similarly should Sweden be hit. Sweden should have the ability to give and receive military support.²⁸

Already back in 2004 the Defence Commission declared a solidarity that could include military support after a terror attack or catastrophe.²⁹ The Commission referred explicitly to the declaration made by the EU Council in March 2004 after the terror attack in Madrid. This solidarity is expressed in the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) as Article 222. Interestingly, in the Defence Bill of 2004, even if the same declaration of solidarity was made, there was no reference to military support.³⁰ Both documents concluded that there was no contradiction between solidarity in crisis management and military non-alignment.

²⁵ Regeringen, *Ett användbart försvar*, Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 33.

²⁶ Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 9.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29. Authors translation. Regarding giving and receiving military support the term “shall” is used on page 35. See also Regeringen, *Försvar i användning*, Ds 2008:48, p. 16.

²⁹ Regeringen, *Försvar för en ny tid*, Ds 2004:30, p. 39-40.

³⁰ Regeringen, *Vårt framtida försvar*, Ds 2004/05:5, p. 23.

However, even though the Defence Commission and the Defence Bills of 2004 introduced a declaration of solidarity, it is misleading to draw the conclusion that the concept of neutrality was absent from the discourse. The Left Party used neutrality as an argument against any further military developments in the EU.³¹ It is also interesting that it was the representative from the Left Party that highlighted a lack of analysis of the constitutional EU clause on mutual assistance in the event of an armed attack. How could there be no contradiction between solidarity and military non-alignment if solidarity was to include *also* armed attacks?³² This latter clause is expressed in Article 42(7) of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the European Union.

The Defence Commission of 2007 expanded the declaration of solidarity to the Nordic countries Iceland and Norway, but still had a reference to the events in Madrid 2004.³³ Thus, the text still connected solidarity to the growing threat of terrorism. The Defence Commission of 2008 used the same declaration of solidarity but with no reference to the events in Madrid. The meaning of solidarity was expanded so that “Sweden can contribute with military support in catastrophies and conflict situations.”³⁴ Thus, in the Defence Commission of 2008 there was no longer any explicit reference to solidarity in the meaning of Article 222. Rather, the meaning had changed so that it had a range from crisis management to conflicts involving the use of military forces and a scope that included also NATO countries.

The Defence Bill of 2009 referred to the ratification of the Lisbon treaty that was made by the parliament on 20 November 2008.³⁵ It concluded that the declaration of solidarity means that “Sweden will receive and give military support in another way than previously.”³⁶ So even though the phrases of the declaration had been established, the using of them was announced as change. Thus, the discursive patterns challenged the established meaning of the declaration of solidarity. The connection between solidarity, military support and Article 222 within the EU was expanded and supplemented by solidarity, military support and Article 42(7) within the EU and Norway and Iceland.

The confusion that followed in the debate on the Defence Bill of 2009 shows how this continuing process of conceptual stretching between 2004 and 2009 served as both tool and refuge for different actors in the Swedish strategic culture. Defence analyst Stefan Ring has written an interesting analysis that points to a general tendency to make two different interpretations.³⁷ The first interpretation is based on the notion that Sweden can keep full freedom of action in foreign policy. The meaning of the declaration of solidarity is that it refers strictly to terror attacks according to Article 222.³⁸ The second interpretation is based on reciprocity and that credibility for a

³¹ Regeringen, *Säkerhet i samverkan*, Ds 2007:46, p. 51-52. Expressed by Left Party representative Gunilla Wahlén.

³² Ds 2004:30, p. 178-179. Expressed by Left Party representative Berit Jóhannesson.

³³ Ds 2007:46 p. 11.

³⁴ Ds 2008:48, p. 16.

³⁵ Ds 2008/09:140, p. 9.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁷ Stefan Ring, “Solidaritetsförklaringen”, Speech at the AFF and People and Defence conference on the declaration of solidarity 3 March 2010, (<http://aff.a.se/20100303.pdf>)

³⁸ See for example statements by Nils Daag on the topic “The Lisbon Treaty – What is Changing?” at *People and Defence annual National Conference 2010*.

declaration of solidarity lay in practical preparations also for armed attacks according to Article 42(7).³⁹

This ambiguity of the declaration of solidarity in the Defence Bill of 2009 has the function to allow a flexible Swedish foreign policy rhetoric. In the parliament on 17 February 2010 the foreign minister presented the Swedish security policy doctrine that avoided the negative definition of military non-alignment:

The membership in the European Union means that Sweden is a part of a political alliance and takes a solidaric responsibility for the security of Europe. Sweden will not remain passive if a catastrophe or attack should hit another member country or Nordic country. We expect these countries to act similarly should Sweden be hit.⁴⁰

It is notable that the wording on the ability to give and receive military support was absent. This statement is, among other things, an emphasis of the civilian aspects of the Swedish doctrine while avoiding disturbing those in the Swedish strategic culture believing in full freedom of action and solidarity according to Article 222. In Helsinki on 4 March 2010 the Swedish foreign minister presented his view on the ongoing process to form a future strategic concept of NATO:

First - let me just stress how important the Article V commitment that is at the core of the Alliance is for all of Europe. There is no doubt that it was of outmost importance during the most critical period of that dark phase of Europe's history that come to an end in 1989. Let us be clear: this was of fundamental importance also to Sweden during those decades when our aim was to make it possible for us to remain neutral in a new European- or world-wide conflict. And let us also be clear about how important this remains to all of Europe also today. The security it gives to the members of the Alliance contributes to stability of a much wider area - including the entire Nordic and Baltic area. Thus, when I hear that there will be a renewed emphasis also on the Article V commitments in the strategic review underway I can only welcome this.⁴¹

This is, among other things, an emphasis of the importance of military solidarity in the Euro-Atlantic area. Sweden's policy of neutrality was always dependent on military alliance commitments across the Atlantic and the statement underlines the continued importance of the stability provided by military alliance commitments.

But the declaration of solidarity also provides a policy refuge for those that embrace security integration within the EU while stressing the continued freedom of action in a crisis response. Using the EU as a security cooperation platform does not restrain Sweden's foreign policy. According to this logic, participation in deeper military cooperation is important for the general influence it gives Sweden, while defence planning of other countries is categorically out of the question. The spokesperson for the Social Democrats argued in 2004 for the importance of military cooperation within the EU:

³⁹ Se for example Bo Hugemark & Johan Tunberger, *Trovärdig solidaritet? Försvaret och solidaritetsförklaringen* (Stockholm: Stiftelsen Den Nya Välfärden, 2010).

⁴⁰ Regeringen, *Regeringens deklARATION vid 2010 års utrikespolitiska debatt i Riksdagen den 17 februari 2010*, UD 2010, p. 2.

⁴¹ Carl Bildt, "Common challenges ahead" Remarks at *Seminar on Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management within the Debate about NATO's New Strategic Concept*, Helsinki, 4 March 2010.

If there is a crisis and the EU has to provide troops, the question is passed around the table. Any nation that does not raise its hand will be regarded as lightweight – also in other political issues.⁴²

In 2010 the same spokesperson made a passionate case for *not* participating in the defence planning of the Baltic states.⁴³ Thus, Sweden should continue to be an active player on the European security arena, while maintaining its military non-alignment. There have been many signals from the Social Democrats that the declaration of solidarity does not mean any commitments in military terms.⁴⁴ Solidarity in military terms is a choice, not an obligation.

The consequences of conceptual stretching

As noted before, the use of solidarity in military terms has been in the official discourse since 2004. However, the public debate and controversy regarding the declaration of solidarity did not start until five years later, when the government put forward the Defence Bill of 2009. This sequence is curious: the introduction of solidarity in the discourse in 2004, conceptual stretching in 2007 and 2008 that made the concept wider and deeper, ratification of the Lisbon treaty in 2008, and a public controversy about the declaration of solidarity in 2009 and 2010. Despite this controversy we can note that there was no involuntary defection of the Lisbon Treaty in Robert Putnam's terms, and logically this fit the interpretation that the conceptual stretching provided leeway in policy for different actors. But the *timing* of the debate is nevertheless interesting.

The declaration has an interesting genealogy.⁴⁵ It is a story of how solidarity replaced neutrality as the key concept in the Swedish security doctrine starting around 1992. The traditional policy was challenged mainly by the political Right and Liberals, and the Cold War history as well as any adjustments to the traditional doctrine of "military non-alignment in peace, for the purpose of neutrality in war" became more of an issue for political confrontation during the 1990s. Around the turn of the century the Social Democrats became open for doctrinal change, and the concept of neutrality was abandoned in the official rhetoric.⁴⁶ After 2004 the conceptual stretching of solidarity, studied above, commenced.

One way of understanding the relative absence of early public debate could be euroscepticism.⁴⁷ Entering the EU was a painful process for the mainly pro-EU

⁴² Mikael Holmström, "Försvarets bantning ger stort manfall" in *Svenska Dagbladet* 28 November 2004.

⁴³ TT, "Het debatt om försvarspolitiken", 17 February 2010.

⁴⁴ Socialdemokraterna, Miljöpartiet & Vänsterpartiet, *En rättvis värld är möjlig – Rödgrön plattform för Sveriges säkerhets- och försvarspolitik* 18 January 2010, p. 14. Note the connection between the declaration of solidarity and the Madrid terrorist bombings 2004. The socialist-green platform was presented at People and Defence annual National Conference 2010. Spokesperson Urban Ahlin clarified that the declaration of solidarity did not challenge the Swedish doctrine.

⁴⁵ This story was covered in Magnus Christiansson, "Solidaritet och suveränitet" in *Kungliga Krigsvetenskapsakademiens Handlingar och Tidskrift* nr 1 januari/mars 2010, p. 96-106.

⁴⁶ One example leading up to the security policy of 2002 is Sverker Åström, "Dags att slopa neutraliteten" DN-debatt in *Dagens Nyheter* 8 February 2000.

⁴⁷ A reference could be Rutger Lindahl, "Den komplexa EU-opinionen", in Sören Holmberg & Lennart Weibull (red.), *Mitt i nittioalet* SOM Institutet (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1996), p. 371-394.

political establishment. It could be argued that the political establishment did not want a disturbing debate about security integration since the population had been reluctant Europeans. However, this simple explanation could be misleading since the development after the membership in 1995 has normalised the EU and has made it more of an accepted dimension in policy.⁴⁸ Both Social Democrats and the non-socialist parties have made the EU a central tool in Swedish foreign policy.

A supplementary interpretation is that the relatively consistent negativity towards NATO⁴⁹ and solidarity in military terms made the EU the only forum for continued security integration. While many other European countries could handle military alliance commitments in NATO and a military crisis management concept in the EU, Sweden focused on the EU only. The Social Democrats could buy it and the non-socialist parties could buy it. According to this interpretation, the growing consensus on the EU as an indispensable part of Swedish policy hampered any questioning that moved the EU debate into forbidden policy territory. The EU was the main arena, but it could not be branded as an alliance project in military terms. Nevertheless, in different ways, the development of the doctrine challenges the understanding of solidarity in the Swedish discourse.

Before the conceptual stretching phase from 2004 onwards the term solidarity had never been used in a military meaning. To use the two terms “solidarity” and “military” in the same reasoning does not have any credence in the Social Democratic discourse. Solidarity is used in a civilian context and is, in the words of the poet Gunnar Ekelöf, about “seeing oneself in others”.⁵⁰ On the contrary, the traditional amalgamation of terms was always “international solidarity”. This concept guided the foreign- and aid policies during the Cold War. Through an international outlook an ideological connection could be made between the internal development of a welfare state and the struggle for decent conditions for people in foreign nations.⁵¹ Furthermore, a central aspect of international solidarity during the Cold War was justice (*rättvisa*). Justice referred not least to economic conditions, but it was also used to underline the right to self determination for all people.⁵² This latter

However, Lindahls conclusion is rather that the Swedish population more than anything else seems confused about the membership.

⁴⁸ See Sören Holmberg, “EU alltmer accepterat” in Sören Holmberg & Lennart Weibull (red.), *Svensk höst* SOM Institutet (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 2009), p. 299-314.

⁴⁹ Political scientist Ulf Bjereld has monitored the Swedish public opinion on NATO. One article that covers the trend during the 1990s is Ulf Bjereld, “Trendbrott i svensk Nato-opinion” in Sören Holmberg & Lennart Weibull (red.), *Ljusnande framtid* SOM Institutet (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1999), p. 363-370. However, since the 1990s there has been a slight decrease in NATO scepticism, see Ulf Bjereld, “Nu minskar motståndet mot Nato-medlemskap” in *Dagens Nyheter* 4 April 2009.

⁵⁰ Gunnar Ekelöf, *Natt i Otočac* (Stockholm, Bonniers, 1961). The phrase is a point of departure also for Sven-Eric Liedman, see Sven-Eric Liedman, *Att se sig själv i andra: Om solidaritet* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1999).

⁵¹ However, the idea that “solidarity between the small states would seem to be the only effective measure against the arrogance of the great powers” is arguably older than Social Democracy, see Arne Ruth, “The Second New Nation: The Mythology of Modern Sweden” *Dædalus* 113:2 (Spring 1984), p. 69. Ever since the inter war period “the policy of internationalism has indeed had the status of national ideology in Sweden. It has become an integral part of of the mythology of the Swedish model. Equality at home and justice abroad have come to be regarded as complementary and mutually supportive values”, *ibid.*, p. 71.

⁵² In the words of Olof Palme: “We have condemned intervention and interference in the internal affairs of other states...As a small state we have as our goal a world in which the principles of

interpretation came to amalgamate international solidarity with the defence for international law. The argument is plainly that Social Democracy is embedded in an ideological cosmology in which “international solidarity”, “justice”, and “international law” are inter-linked concepts.⁵³ This is likely to be one of the most durable ideological inheritances from Olof Palme.

Quite contrary, the non-socialist political parties do not have any traditional attachment to solidarity. The term did not have the same meaning or even any place in the political language. When used in discourse today it is often closely associated with Europe and the EU.⁵⁴ From this perspective, solidarity is a natural consequence of the membership in the EU as well the political declarations about closer defence cooperation among the Nordic states. The declaration of solidarity, it’s been said, has not created a new situation but has confirmed something already established.⁵⁵

As has been displayed above, the current status of solidarity in the Swedish political discourse is that of a heterotopia.⁵⁶ Most actors like it but for very different reasons. This makes it apparent that the Swedish declaration of solidarity does not have any clear meaning in the discourse. The ideological caveats are indeed different: for left wingers⁵⁷ solidarity is a civilian term with no strings attached, for the non-socialists it is a logical continuation of the EU membership. Thus, the established phrase “security is built in cooperation with others” has an ideological ambiguity. There is great difference in interpretation between a leading Social Democrat who claims that the declaration of solidarity does not mean anything new in military terms, via the top bureaucrat at the Defence Ministry who claims that the declaration of solidarity represents a historical point of refraction, to the open activism represented by certain Liberal Conservatives.⁵⁸ This central component of the doctrine could thus potentially become problematic in a situation when solidarity is to be realised in practise.

sovereignty and non-intervention are fully respected.”, see Olof Palme, “Sweden’s Role in the World”, in Bengt Rydén & Willy Bergström (Eds.) *Sweden: Choices for Economic and Social Policy in the 1980s* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 244-45.

⁵³ One clear example of the links in this cosmology is found in Olof Palme, *Speech at the Stockholm Workers Commune*, 12 January 1980.

⁵⁴ An early example includes Ann-Sofie Dahl, “Nato är ett solidaritetsprojekt” in *Svenska Dagbladet* 18 September 2001. More recent examples include Marit Paulsen, Cecilia Malmström, and Carl Bildt, see <http://www.folkpartiet.se/Vara-politiker/Ledamoter-av-Europaparlamentet/Marit-Paulsen/Artiklar/Det-handlar-om-solidaritet/>, Cecilia Malmström, Tal om Global solidaritet, at the Congress of the Liberal Party, and <http://carlbildt.wordpress.com/2007/07/24/europeisk-solidaritet/>. As foreign minister Carl Bildt used solidarity as the key concept for dealing with the financial crisis in Greece 2010, see SVT Aktuellt 6 May 2010.

⁵⁵ Stated by defence analyst Robert Dalsjö at the launch of *Trovärdig solidaritet?*, Hotel Sheraton, Stockholm, January 2010.

⁵⁶ Heterotopia is a term elaborated by Michel Foucault in his work *The Order of Things*. In this context it could describe a political ideal with many meanings. Regarding the use of heterotopia in international relations, see James Der Derian, “Critical encounters in international relations” *International Social Science Journal* 191 March 2008, p. 71.

⁵⁷ A similar interpretation of the term is made by Claes Roxbergh, Åsa Domeij & Maria Wetterstrand, ”Solidariteten är vår grundpelare” *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 2002.

⁵⁸ The foreign policy spokesperson for the Social Democrats Urban Ahlin, Johan Raeder of the Defence Ministry and the parliamentarian for the Moderate Party Göran Lennmarker fit these descriptions. A central piece is Johan Raeder, *Solidaritetsförklaringen och dess betydelse* Promemoria Försvarsdepartementet 11 November 2009.

The sovereignty dimension

The legal and symbolic arsenal of sovereignty

This section of the article will focus largely on how the Swedish defence and security discourse deals with the tasks that relate to national defence. The traditional role for the armed forces in Sweden was always connected with these tasks. However, ever since the mid-1990s the armed forces have been undergoing a series of reforms with the explicit purpose of adapting them to a strategic environment of the 21st Century. In this respect Sweden is deeply integrated in a transformation process that is recognised in large parts of Europe. This process started during the 1990s and has been marketed with anglo-saxon slogans such as *go out of area, or out of business and use it or lose it*.⁵⁹ The aim for the development of the armed forces is to become a flexible operations-defence (*flexibelt insatsförsvar*)⁶⁰

Nevertheless, the tasks for the armed forces include the capacity to act without foreign support related to national security. Hence, we can note that the Defence Bill of 2009 states that:

Thus, the Government does not exclude that Sweden alone will need to handle threats to our security where the military defence is concerned. Accordingly, such capability must exist.⁶¹

The transformation of the armed forces with focus on availability and flexibility is coupled with a parallel consideration of upholding capabilities that could also be used for singular military defence. The armed forces still has the task to defend Sweden without foreign assistance.⁶²

Interestingly, this task is a key aspect of the very purpose of Swedish defence policy. The argument has two components: security and sovereignty. According to the government, security is defined as a *means* to achieve a number of ends. In the Defence Bill of 2009 it is claimed that: “The maintenance of our country’s sovereignty is a precondition for Sweden to achieve the aims of our security.”⁶³ Note the grammatical mixture in the sentence: there is a distinction between the sovereignty of the country, and the aims of security. However, the two concepts are linked as sovereignty is a *precondition* for security. Already the Defence Commission of 2008 sets the focus to “Swedish sovereignty” and that maintaining it serves as a means to the aims of security.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ In the Swedish context the term “adaptation” (*omställning*) is often chosen, see Sten Tolgfors, “Utgångspunkterna för den framtida inriktningen av försvaret” *Dagens Nyheter* 10 June 2008.

⁶⁰ The formal process for this could be traced in the following propositions, Regeringen, *Förändrad omvärld – omdanat försvar* Prop. 1998/99:74, Regeringen, *Det nya försvaret* Prop. 1999/2000:30, and Regeringen, *Fortsatt förnyelse av totalförsvaret* Prop. 2001/02:10.

⁶¹ Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 34.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶⁴ Ds 2008:48, p. 26, p. 39 and p. 48.

The official doctrine regarding defence cooperation is that there are no limits as long as national sovereignty is guaranteed.⁶⁵ The government has sometimes argued for common capability development in the Nordic context, while maintaining separability of Swedish military units and capabilities.⁶⁶

The interpretation of this discursive pattern is crucial. In the Defence Bill of 2009 sovereignty is defined as its “established meaning in international law”.⁶⁷ The combination of the key task to defend the country without foreign help, the maintaining of singular military capabilities and sovereignty as precondition for security could be interpreted as a reassurance of a preserved national defence system. One could get the impression that the nation state will continue to hold its guard for any future threats to the territory. Thus, one interpretation of the sovereignty dimension is that the connections between defence, sovereignty, and security serve as a chain of inter-linked concepts that deal with the traditional function of military defence. A major function of this game is that the building of a domestic image of the centrality of national sovereignty is that the government can maintain an ideal of *independence* rather than *interdependence*.

However, the use of sovereignty is also marked with other connotations. The Swedish government’s use of sovereignty is far from uniform. The Defence Bill of 2009 elaborates on the subject in the following:

The strategic development in our immediate surroundings leads to a need for a military capability for proactive national action to promote the aims of our security, Swedish sovereignty, sovereign rights, and national interests.⁶⁸

This notion of a “military capability for proactive national action” is not traditionally linked to sovereignty. The traditional territorial defence was rather a *reaction* than *proaction* to foreign aggression. Furthermore, the Defence Bill of 2009 clarifies that the precondition for security (sovereignty) is not enough to achieve the aims of security: “The aim of the military defence is not achieved only through the maintaining of the country’s borders and territorial integrity.”⁶⁹ And accordingly, during the confusing debate about the declaration of solidarity in the Autumn of 2009 the government made a clarification: “The defence of Sweden shall not only be conducted within our borders.”⁷⁰

Thus, the precondition for security is also achieved through military proactive national actions. Nonetheless, this is not enough to reach the aims of military defence – defence of the country should also be conducted outside of the country. In an analogy, but actually with completely reversed direction, Sweden must also be prepared to develop military capabilities in international cooperation:

⁶⁵ Stated, twice, by defence ministry official Peter Göte at the XIII Suomenlinna Seminar in June 2010. This has been the official position since defence minister Mikael Odenberg.

⁶⁶ Sten Tolgfors, ”Gemensamma förband med Norge en lösning” *Dagens Nyheter* 10 juni 2008.

⁶⁷ Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 34.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁶⁹ Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 35.

⁷⁰ Raeder, *Solidaritetsförklaringen och dess betydelse*, p. 4.

Capabilities that firstly have a national direction and are considered to be demanded in a long term perspective should be evaluated from the possibility of finding solutions based on international cooperation which leads to maintenance with limited resources.⁷¹

In this interpretation sovereignty and defence are not linked exclusively to a national concern. Military proactive national actions necessary for security could be done in other countries as well as together with other countries. The capabilities to maintain the precondition for security are created together with other countries. Sovereignty and defence are linked via international cooperation. This is recognition of *interdependence* rather than *independence*.

Sovereignty as national or international concern

The context for the different images of sovereignty used by the Swedish government must be taken into consideration. The development after the end of the Cold War has been marked mainly by two major changes in the official Swedish security policy discourse: how threats are constructed and how the role of the armed forces is regarded. These changes are notable in the sense that they represent the official discourse and other perspectives tend to be alternatives to the official system of statements on security policy.

The changing construction of threats is related to the growing tendency of “europeanisation”, covered by many scholars.⁷² As noted before, the European Union became central for Swedish security initiatives in the 1990s. Furthermore, the full meaning of europeanisation in the Swedish case is that the analytical category of power politics is very weak, marginalised or absent in official documents. There is a clear tendency to emphasise a wider security concept.⁷³ The Swedish government hardly elaborates on power politics in the Nordic-Baltic context.⁷⁴ This change is visible in the way the Swedish government analyses Russia. The policy during the decade after the Soviet collapse seems to have been dictated by the balance between democratic critique and encouragement, an act that did not change much from the Social Democrat or bourgeoisie governments. However, since Russia under Vladimir Putin has acted in ways that depart from the assumptions of Europeanisation, the Swedish government has developed a differentiated view of its Eastern neighbour: one that on the one hand was flexible for the uncertainties in the development, while on the other hand provided policy space for a continued faith in Europeanisation. After the crisis in Georgia in August 2008 this diversification became visible in a clear way. According to the government the Russia that acts militarily in the Caucasus

⁷¹ Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 54.

⁷² In research the term “europeanisation” covers a condition “when something in the domestic political system is affected by something European”, see Maarten Vink, “What is Europeanization? and Other Questions on a New Research Agenda” Paper for the *Second YEN Research Meeting on Europeanisation*,

University of Bocconi, Milan, 22-23 November 2002. This argument is elaborated in a Swedish defence policy context by Arita Eriksson, *Europeanization and Governance in Defence Policy. The Example of Sweden* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2006).

⁷³ Explicitly in Regeringen, *Totalförsvaret i förnyelse – etapp 2* Prop. 1996/97:4, p. 21.

⁷⁴ Expressed by a senior official from the foreign ministry at a closed diplomatic conference at the Estonian Embassy, February 2010. This is a general tendency in the Nordic region, as emphasised in Olav F. Knudsen, “Looking to the Future: Security Strategies, Identity, and Power Disparity” in Olav F. Knudsen (ed.) *Security Strategies, Power Disparity and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 180.

is something else than the Russia that acts in the Baltic Sea region or the Arctic region.⁷⁵

The defence implications related to the uncertainties in Russia provides a clear illustration of the second fundamental change: the role of the military instrument. During the Cold War the role of the military defence was that of insurance. This rhetoric is quite elegant: an insurance premium had to be paid to create safety if an accident should happen. The central element of this metaphor is that there is no point in itself to make a claim on the insurance. To pay for security was a routine that did not entail any active service in return. Military capabilities had an inherent value in themselves, because they could be one of the factors that stopped a military attack from occurring. The fundamental function of a military force was connected to deterrence towards foreign powers. According to this logic, the reaction to insecurity was to strengthen the credible capabilities for deterrence. The major change in the defence debate after the Cold War is that military forces are no longer considered to have a value in themselves. The development of a flexible operations-defence means creating more *available* military units. Thus, a consequence of this reasoning is that military systems that for some reason do not have high availability lose value and priority.⁷⁶

However, these two discursive changes are far from uncontested. There are several influential critics that argue for the continued relevance of power politics as well as the deterrence role of military forces. The underlying point of departure for the analysis is: what happens if Russia becomes a major power that poses a military threat once again? The implicit and explicit military concern is: can Sweden defend itself? According to the staunch critics Sweden hardly makes any efforts to take on a major confrontation single-handedly. There is a tension towards defence supporters of the old guard that tends to criticise the lack of capabilities for national defence.⁷⁷

These somewhat overlooked consequences of the europeisation (and its counterreaction) make it much easier to understand the different images of sovereignty used by the government in the Defence Bill of 2009. On the one hand there is a need to assure a domestic audience that sovereignty is secured alone, which means that it essentially is a national concern. However, both the Social Democratic and the current non-socialist governments argue that Sweden should not focus

⁷⁵ Before the Georgian crisis the Defence Commission declared that “the Russian actions towards countries that used to be a part of the Soviet Union will be a litmus test for the path Russia is taking.” and “Russia’s relationship and actions towards these countries will define our view of Russia. The solidarity between Nordic and EU states is important in this respect.”, quoted in Ds 2008:48, p. 23. The Defence Bill was delayed because of the Georgian crisis, see Mikael Holmström, “Försvarsbeslut kommer först nästa år” in *Svenska Dagbladet* 9 September 2008. After the Georgian crisis the Government concluded that the Russian willingness to use force “varies with the political and strategic situation in each case” and that the “willingness to take political risks and the willingness and ability to act militarily is much higher towards CIS-countries than countries that are members of the EU and NATO.”, quoted in Prop. 2008/09:140, p. 24.

⁷⁶ See for example Ds 2008:48, p. 14.

⁷⁷ For critical remarks regarding a national reserve, see Olof Santesson, “Försvara landet med ett kompani. Mellan nätverkets löften och krigets väsen” i *Kungliga Krigsvetenskapsakademiens Handlingar och Tidskrift* nr. 2 2007, p. 99-106. For critical remarks on lack of national defence capabilities, see Lars Bergquist, Carl Björemann & Karl Erik Lagerlöf, “Bildt driver en farlig utrikespolitik” in *Svenska Dagbladet* 3 February 2008, Bo Pellnäs, “Sveriges trovärdighet är i fara” in *Svenska Dagbladet* 18 January 2009.

exclusively on territorial defence, even if the capabilities should be maintained. Therefore, on the other hand there is a need to introduce the domestic audience to the notion that sovereignty is secured in cooperation with others, which means that it also is an international concern.

Some critics have pointed out that this line of reasoning is built on the assumption that foreign powers will always assist Sweden and that this could result in wishful thinking in a crisis in the Baltic Sea region. Analysts that have pointed out that the capacity to receive foreign military aid have largely been neglected.⁷⁸

Be that as it may, the main point is that the use of sovereignty marks the fundamental national concern, while it also serves as an ambition for the international cooperation. It can be not only “established”, “Swedish” and a point of departure, but also “proactive”, and resting on international cooperation. There are two conflated consequences from this: the dual uses of sovereignty obscure its meaning in the security doctrine, and the domestic audience has a hard time figuring out how to act upon it.

An example of obscurity is the aim to maintain separability of Swedish military units. On the one hand it could be argued that national military capabilities are what give sovereignty its very meaning. There is no point in stressing sovereignty as a requirement in international cooperation if one does not have any units to command. On the other hand the ambitions of Swedish defence go beyond its borders and its sovereignty partly relies on the status of others.

These remarks are not just hypothetical considerations. Actors in the domestic audience find it difficult to act on these different signals. For example, when the armed forces conducted a relatively small scale exercise for the local defence of Gotland in September 2009, the responsible general gave explicit instructions that all orders should be given in Swedish.⁷⁹ Was this right or wrong? If Sweden should be able to handle military threats alone it might seem reasonable. However, if capabilities for national defence are to be developed in international cooperation and if defence of Sweden takes place also across the Baltic Sea then it might be problematic. One could note that the general’s decision suddenly nullified more than a decade of preparations for “interoperability”.

The two-dimensional game of solidarity and sovereignty

The purpose of this article is to examine how we can understand a militarily non-aligned country that declares military solidarity with its neighbouring countries. The perspective of two-dimensional games has showed us this “ambiguity at work” as the

⁷⁸ See for example Hugemark & Tunberger, *Trovärdig solidaritet?*, p. 26-27, Bo Ljung & Karlis Neretnieks, *Nordisk försvarspolitik samverkan – fortsättningsstudie. Strategiska mål och operativ – nationella eller gemensamma?* FOI-R—2734—SE (Stockholm: FOI, 2009), and Wilhelm Agrell, *Fredens illusioner. Det svenska nationella försvarets nedgång och fall 1988-2009* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2010).

⁷⁹ This refers to “Exercise Dagny”.

saying goes.⁸⁰ As we have seen, the conceptual stretching of solidarity has created a hétérotopia in Swedish security policy. Different actors can use solidarity for quite different purposes – both as a sign of Sweden’s active involvement in the Euro-Atlantic integration and as fully compatible with *status quo* for military non-alliance. We have also studied the differentiated use of sovereignty by the government. It becomes understandable how sovereignty simultaneously can mean self-reliance and interdependence if put into context of the Swedish defence debate.

The use of a two-dimensional game approach challenges an established perspective of security integration as process of socialisation in an EU context.⁸¹ According to the theory of socialisation an integration process potentially moves a discourse of a country from instrumental adaptation to a change in security identity and learning. This idea is based on the assumption that change of identity is necessary for a stable and long term change in security approach.⁸² Thus, international integration demands adjustments in identity.⁸³ Accordingly, changes in a discourse becomes one-dimensional and Sweden has, compared to its Nordic neighbours, been described as having “undergone a more stable and enduring change in security policy.”⁸⁴

However, this one-dimensional learning perspective makes it difficult to explain the peculiarities of the Swedish case. If there really is a change of identity and learning has happened, why is the idea of collective security in Europe so controversial? If the Lisbon treaty was fully integrated in the security identity, why is the meaning of solidarity so multiplied and controversial? Or furthermore, why does Swedish membership in NATO seem just as unlikely today as it was 20 years ago?

It seems fair to say that the theory of socialisation provides us with a narrow view of a strategic culture. Such a one-dimensional perspective fails to comprehend the full potential of the political terminology that is under study. It might be that the security policy discourse in Sweden has become more uniform, but as this study has shown the process of conceptual stretching makes it possible to use the same discourse for audiences with potentially different preferences.

One of the major advantages with using the approach of two-dimensional games is that it becomes easier to understand the peculiarities of the Swedish case. Instead of having the idea that Swedish officials are socialised from neutrality to a euro-atlantic discourse, it becomes easier to follow the use of terms like solidarity and sovereignty if applied in a game framework. Rather than challenging public opinion in the security and defence area, a sophisticated discursive game has been developed to stretch the meaning of solidarity and sovereignty.

⁸⁰ Hanna Ojanen, Gunilla Herolf & Rutger Lindahl, *Non-Alignment and European Security Policy: Ambiguity at Work*. (Helsinki and Bonn: Ulkopoliittinen instituutti and Institut für Europäische Politik, 2000).

⁸¹ This argument is applied to the Nordic context in Pernille Rieker, “Europeanization of Nordic Security” in *Cooperation & Conflict*, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 369-392

⁸² Pernille Rieker, *From Nordic Balance to Europeanisation? The EU and the Changing Security Identities of the Nordic States* Paper prepared for “Fagkonferanse for NFE”, 28-29 August 2003, p. 19.

⁸³ Regina Karp, “The Conditionality of Security Integration: Identity and Alignment Choices in Finland and Sweden” in Olav F. Knudsen (Ed.), *Security strategies, Power Disparities and Identity*, p. 70.

⁸⁴ Rieker, “Europeanization of Nordic Security”, p. 385.

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