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Framing of the new CSDP in militarily non-aligned Finland and Sweden: Promotion of national interests or a step towards a European security community?

Introduction

How do militarily non-aligned member states of the European Union approach European integration in defence, in particular the newly established Permanent Structured Cooperation? This is the question puzzling the article, which analyses the policies of Sweden and Finland towards the new Common Defence and Security Policy (CSDP) and especially the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in defence, which the participating member states adopted on 11 December 2017. Out of the EU member states, only Malta, Denmark and the United Kingdom decided not to join PESCO.

The period of analysis in this article starts from 2016, which allows examining the debates around the most recent defence policy documents in both countries, the Finnish white papers published in spring 2016 and 2017 and the Swedish defence reports in January 2017 and May 2019. Other empirical material includes government bills and letters, parliamentary debates and committee reports and statements on EU defence cooperation from 2016 to September 2019. The present article illustrates that militarily non-aligned states do not necessarily have uniform approaches in defence matters; instead, Finland and Sweden have framed PESCO differently both before and after its establishment. The article argues that the Swedish politicians in favour of PESCO frame the cooperation in terms of Sweden receiving more influence in CSDP, whilst the Finnish politicians frame PESCO as creating a European security community. The analytical tool informing the analysis lends from frame analysis, especially looking at *“the ways in which situation-specific framing may contribute to divisions among policy-relevant actors.”*¹

For the sake of brevity, the article utilises the term “military non-alignment” to describe the stances of Finland and Sweden, even though both countries often translate their official stances in English as *“not belonging to a military alliance.”* The 2017 Finnish Defence White Paper states: *“Finland is a country which does not belong to any military alliance,”*² whilst the 2019 Swedish Defence Commission report outlines, *“Sweden does not belong to any military alliance.”*³

It is fruitful to compare the approaches of the militarily non-aligned states in a changing environment. Finland was in the vanguard of establishing PESCO, but also the Swedish parliament approved Sweden participating in PESCO with a clear majority, though after a heated debate. The Swedish government explicitly framed PESCO to comply with Sweden’s military non-alignment in its Bill to the Swedish parliament.⁴ However, the Finnish Parliament did not hold a similar debate on the matter. Neither the government letters, committee documents nor parliamentary debates that touched upon PESCO

¹ Merlijn van Hulst and Dvora Yanow, “From Policy ‘Frames’ to ‘Framing’: Theorizing a More Dynamic, Political Approach,” *American Review of Public Administration* 46, no. 1 (2016): 96.

² Prime Minister’s Office Finland, “Government’s Defence Report VNS 5/2017,” 2017, 14.

³ Swedish Defence Commission, *Värnkraft: Inriktningen av säkerhetspolitiken och utformningen av det militära försvaret 2021–2025* (Ds 2019:8, 2019), 103.

⁴ Government of Sweden, “Regeringens Proposition 2017/18:44: Sveriges deltagande i det permanenta strukturerade samarbetet inom Europeiska unionen,” 22 November 2017.

discussed the relation between PESCO and the Finnish military non-alignment. This suggests that even politicians critical of PESCO did not oppose it due to it allegedly violating military non-alignment.

In addition to an analysis of the framing of PESCO, the article provides an account of the political debates related to the dynamics of integration in the field of defence. The aim is to trace justifications for further integration in the field of defence and to compare the approaches between national decision-makers in the two countries. The references to PESCO were categorised based on the frames in which the views appeared, be they in favour or against PESCO.

Previous studies on Finnish and Swedish military non-alignment mainly focus on the period from the late 1990s to the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty.⁵ Scholars, however, have hardly analysed the contemporary situation and approaches towards PESCO. This may be accounted by the fact that serious debates on the topic and the establishment of the cooperation took place only in 2017, as illustrated in the following section, which briefly introduces the process leading up to the establishment of PESCO and beyond. I then discuss the Swedish and Finnish political debates on PESCO separately and analyse the potential reasons for the observed differences. Finally, I present my conclusions on the approaches of these two militarily non-aligned states towards European defence cooperation.

Finland and Sweden and the CSDP – from reluctant to active partners

Both Finland and Sweden reformulated their previous neutrality policy as military non-alignment before they joined the European Union in 1995. When the countries joined the EU, they became only observers in the defence alliance attached to the EU, the Western European Union (WEU), and Finland and Sweden did not support the integration of the WEU into the Union. In order to prevent this from occurring, the countries proposed the Union to integrate only the crisis management tasks of the WEU into the Union, something that took place in 1999. Preventing full integration may not have been the only reason, though. Finland and Sweden also received more influence in the WEU.⁶ Eventually, the Common Foreign and Security Policy established with the 1993 Maastricht Treaty came to encompass the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) launched in 1999, although mainly dealing with crisis management. However, this was not the end of the defence integration process. The Union *de facto* incorporated the WEU in the 21st century. Although the envisioned Constitutional Treaty did not become a reality, the Lisbon Treaty, adopted in 2007 and in force since 2009, contained defence clauses similar to the constitutional draft, including those concerning Permanent Structured Cooperation, mutual assistance and solidarity.⁷

The mutual assistance clause obligates member states to assist each other in case of an armed attack, whilst the solidarity clause requires them to provide help in case of natural or man-made disasters. After critical comments from the militarily non-aligned states, the mutual assistance clause (42(7) of the Treaty

⁵ Hanna Ojanen, *Neutrality and Non-Alignment in Europe Today*, 2003; Hanna Ojanen, Gunilla Herolf, and Rutger Lindahl, *Non-Alignment and European Security Policy: Ambiguity at Work* (Helsinki : Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2000); Teemu Palosaari, *The Art of Adaptation: A Study on the Europeanization of Finland's Foreign and Security Policy* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2011); Inger Österdahl, "The Use of Force: Sweden, the Jus Ad Bellum and the European Security and Defence Policy," *Nordic Journal of International Law* 79, no. 1 (2010): 141–88; Fredrick Lee-Ohlsson, "Sweden and Development of the European Security and Defence Policy: A Bi-Directional Process of Europeanization.," *Cooperation & Conflict* 44, no. 2 (2009): 123–42.

⁶ Palosaari, *The Art of Adaptation: A Study on the Europeanization of Finland's Foreign and Security Policy*, 12; Ojanen, Herolf, and Lindahl, *Non-Alignment and European Security Policy: Ambiguity at Work*.

⁷ See also Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Saira Heinikoski, and Pirjo Kleemola-Juntunen, *Demilitarisation and International Law in Context: The Åland Islands* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

on European Union) came to include a provision outlining that “*This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.*” The Irish politicians who needed assurances of maintaining their policy of neutrality raised the problematic in particular,⁸ and the treaty came to encompass a Protocol on the concerns of the Irish people on the Treaty of Lisbon. The Protocol stated that the (renamed) Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) “*does not prejudice the security and defence policy of each Member State, including Ireland, or the obligations of any Member State.*”⁹ Eventually, ever since the mutual assistance provision and the solidarity clause entered into force in 2009 along with the Lisbon Treaty, all the EU member states have fully committed to them.

In addition to the mutual assistance and solidarity causes, the possibility to establish Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) introduced in Articles 42(6) and 46 TEU provided a new measure to cooperate in the field of defence, though limited to a group of member states voluntarily cooperating in defence matters. The Lisbon Treaty even provided the possibility for establishing a common defence (as enshrined in Article 42(2) of TEU). However, this does not mean that the Union would turn into a military alliance; as reminded in a Resolution of the European Parliament, “*certain EU Member States’ non-membership of NATO should mean that they have different European Defence Union obligations.*”¹⁰ Despite the tools enabling deeper defence cooperation in the recent decade, the militarily non-aligned member state have not considered these steps to violate their military non-alignment.

The Swedish approach to deeper defence cooperation seems somewhat reserved in light of the attention paid to the country’s military non-alignment. However, it appears that the Finnish approach has changed from a reluctant state to an active promoter of European defence cooperation. For example, in 2016, Finland started to promote the establishment of Permanent Structured Cooperation, beginning with a joint declaration with France.¹¹ In November 2016, EU member states jointly called for the launch of the Permanent Structured Cooperation,¹² and the European Parliament also proposed adopting the PESCO and implementing the 2016 Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy.¹³ Ahead of the June 2017 European Council meeting, Finland underlined the need to launch PESCO,¹⁴ also repeated by the European Council, which agreed “*on the need to launch an inclusive and ambitious Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).*”¹⁵ In autumn 2017, the Finnish media also reported that Finland requested the addition of an entry on the mutual assistance clause into the notification on Permanent Structured Cooperation by the participating member states.¹⁶ In a parliamentary debate on 22 November 2017, the Prime Minister also stated that Finland had announced to participate in PESCO among the first countries, contributed to the preparation with seven other countries and managed to pass the initiative on mentioning the mutual assistance clause.¹⁷ Indeed, one of the recitals of the notification

⁸ Karen Devine, “Neutrality and the Development of the European Union’s Common Security and Defence Policy: Compatible or Competing?,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, no. 3 (2011): 354.

⁹ “Protocol on the Concerns of the Irish People on the Treaty of Lisbon,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, March 2, 2013.

¹⁰ European Parliament, “European Parliament Resolution of 13 June 2018 on EU-NATO Relations (2017/2276(INI)),” 2018.

¹¹ France and Finland, “Declaration on Strengthening the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy,” June 15, 2016.

¹² Council of the European Union, “Implementation Plan on Security and Defence,” November 14, 2016.

¹³ European Parliament, “European Parliament Resolution of 22 November 2016 on the European Defence Union (2016/2052(INI)),” November 22, 2016.

¹⁴ Finnish Government, “EU-ministerivaliokunnan kokous linjasi kantoja Eurooppa-neuvostoon,” June 20, 2017.

¹⁵ European Council, “European Council Meeting (22 and 23 June 2017) – Conclusions,” June 23, 2017, 5.

¹⁶ Anniina Luotonen, “EU:n uuteen puolustusyhteistyöhön lisätään pykälä avunannosta,” *Turun Sanomat*, October 19, 2017.

¹⁷ Finnish Parliament, “Täysistunto PTK 122/2017 vp,” November 22, 2017.

reads as “*Recalling the obligation under Article 42(7) TEU of mutual aid and assistance,*”¹⁸ which links PESCO with the obligation to provide military aid, at least in the view of the leading Finnish politicians of the time.

Both Finland and Sweden signed the PESCO agreement on 11 December 2017 and participated in various projects. The two countries participate in the project on military mobility, the so-called Military Schengen, but Sweden seems to be even more active in terms of actual participation: Sweden co-leads with France the project on EU Test and Evaluation Centres and also participates in projects on European Medical Command and European Union Training Mission Competence Centre. In December 2017, Finland outlined its intention to join also the projects on European Secure Software Defined Radio and cyber security.¹⁹ In addition to the projects outlined in its plan in December 2017, Finland decided to participate in the project on Integrated Unmanned Ground System, but unlike Sweden, it does not lead any of the projects. This seems a bit surprising given Finnish enthusiasm in establishing PESCO.

The national approaches during the time of the establishment of PESCO reveal differences in Sweden and Finland. The Swedish Parliament held a full-scale debate on the matter and approved the Swedish participation in PESCO, framed to bring influence for Sweden and not to affect its military non-alignment. In Finland, in turn, the government wanted to link PESCO to mutual assistance and wider defence cooperation, but still did not consider the issue significant enough to require a parliamentary approval. The main frames in Sweden and Finland are summarised in the table below, and the following sections examine the Swedish and Finnish approaches separately in more detail.

| | Finland | Sweden |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Main frames in favour | EU becomes a security community | More effective defence spending and Swedish influence |
| Threat frames related to PESCO | May lead to federalism and loss of Finnish influence | Erodes military non-alignment and militarises the EU |

Table 1. Main frames in Finland and Sweden with regard to PESCO.

Swedish frames related to European defence cooperation: efficiency vs. military non-alignment

The Swedish security policy doctrine relies on three issues, as outlined by the Foreign Minister Margot Wallström in spring 2019: “*that we continue to be militarily non-aligned, that we develop our cooperation foremost with Finland but also with many other countries and even with NATO and that we strengthen our national defence capacity.*”²⁰ As already visible in this statement, defence cooperation with the European Union is not a primary issue for Sweden, but cooperation with Finland is the priority.

¹⁸ “Notification on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to the Council and to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,” November 13, 2017.

¹⁹ Ministry of Defence of Finland, “Pesco - National Implementation Plan of Finland” 1, no. December (2017): 1–10.

²⁰ Swedish Parliament, “Riksdagens protokoll 2018/19:52 – § 1 Utrikespolitisk debatt,” February 13, 2019, 8.

In contrast, as we observe in the following section, the Finnish approaches emphasise EU cooperation over bilateral cooperation with Sweden.

Despite Sweden joining PESCO, the cooperation also continues to raise criticism. Much of the discontent presented in the Swedish parliamentary debates on PESCO consists of the opposition parties criticising the government initiatives, usually referring to the eradication of military non-alignment because of Swedish involvement in PESCO. The documents suggest that the frames in favour of PESCO rely on the expected Swedish influence in the EU foreign and security policy, i.e. based on pragmatic interests. However, we can see that the politicians who oppose to PESCO do so by relying on opposite frames: joining such a military cooperation scheme is allegedly in contradiction with the Swedish military non-alignment.

The Swedish government rarely brought up PESCO in the Parliament before publishing a Bill on the Swedish participation in Permanent Structured Cooperation on 22 November 2017, stating: “*The Government deems that participation in PESCO provides Sweden with better requirements to widely influence the formulation and implementation of the EU’s common foreign, security and defence policy. The Government further notes that the cooperation is intergovernmental and in accordance with the Swedish military non-alignment.*”²¹ The Swedish Parliament held a vivid debate on the Bill on 6 December 2017, and the debate started with concerns from the Sweden Democrats and the Left Party, who objected PESCO based on it eroding Swedish non-alignment.²² In addition to the said parties, even pro-NATO Liberal People’s Party was worried about the erosion of the military non-alignment, as was visible in the comment by the defence policy representative of the party, Allan Widman. He stated: “*I am not saying that this integration is incompatible with upholding military non-alignment – it is very possible that it is all right – but I am worried that the Government does not understand how all this integration we have and we are planning affects how the world understands our military non-alignment.*”²³ Eventually, only the Sweden Democrats and the Left Party proposed motions against the Bill and voted against it, resulting in 65 votes against and 241 in favour.

After the establishment of PESCO, the Parliament has published two defence policy reports, one in 2017 and the other one in 2019. The Swedish Defence Commission, which includes members from all eight parliamentary parties, drafted the reports. The largest parties, the Social Democrats and the Moderate Party each have three members – whilst the other parties have one member. Sweden held parliamentary elections in between the two reports, in 2018, but the political balance did not change much as it is the Social Democrats and the left-green block that held the power during the publication of both reports. The first one is called *Resilience: The total defence concept and the development of civil defence 2021–2025*, which was published on 20 December 2017.²⁴ The second one, in turn, published on 14 May 2019, relates more directly to defence already in the title *Defensive power: the security policy direction and the development of military defence 2021–2025*.²⁵ The first report is a partial report focusing on civil defence, whilst the second one is a comprehensive defence policy report, also discussed in the Swedish Parliament. All eight parties provided dissentient opinions regarding certain issues, but signed the first report. What

²¹ Government of Sweden, “Regeringens proposition 2017/18:44: Sveriges deltagande i det permanenta strukturerade samarbetet inom Europeiska unionen,” 10.

²² Swedish Parliament, “Riksdagens snabbprotokoll,” December 6, 2017.

²³ Swedish Parliament, “Riksdagens snabbprotokoll,” December 6, 2017.

²⁴ Swedish Defence Commission, *Motståndskraft: Inriktningen av totalförsvaret och utformningen av det civila försvaret 2021–2025*.

²⁵ Swedish Defence Commission, *Värnkraft: Inriktningen av säkerhetspolitiken och utformningen av det militära försvaret 2021–2025*.

is remarkable, however, is that only the government parties signed the 2019 report, and even this time all parties submitted a dissenting opinion on certain issues. The official explanation of the opposition parties for not signing the report was that they claimed that the government would not commit to the budgetary measures required in order to fulfil the requirements of the report, as they outlined in the parliamentary debate on the report.²⁶

The parliament published the 2017 Resilience report only a couple of weeks after it had approved the participation in PESCO, which may explain the absence of discussion thereof. The report merely stated that the EU has decided to launch such cooperation.²⁷ The report neither mentioned military alignment, but the dissentient opinions from all opposition parties dealt with the topic. The centre-right parties (Liberals, Moderate Party and Christian Democrats) lamented the omission of military alignment from the report in their dissentient opinions. They stated that it is not credible to state that Sweden would not remain passive in case of an attack against EU or Nordic countries and expect similar actions from the other countries without being part of NATO. Their conclusion was that Sweden should apply for NATO membership.²⁸ Sweden Democrats, in turn, considered that the government should clearly state that EU and NATO cooperation shall not threaten military non-alignment, as they considered that the recently approved PESCO does.²⁹ The Left Party also declared that military non-alignment should be defended, which they considered the best guarantee for Swedish peace and security.³⁰

The 2019 Defensive Power report included more insights on PESCO, but only the dissentient opinions framed PESCO as a threat for military non-alignment, which also came up in the parliamentary debate on the topic on 10 June 2019. According to the report, the *“Defence Commission deems that it is significant that the EU’s ability to act is strengthened and that Sweden has more active influence in its further development.”*³¹ The frame attached to PESCO dealt primarily with the defence industry: *“the member states will ensure that the funded PESCO projects strengthen the competitiveness of the European defence industry and avoid unnecessary overlaps.”*³² In the dissenting opinions, only the Left Party discussed military non-alignment, deeming it important to maintain the credibility of military non-alignment and stated that the *“Left Party opposes to the recurrent initiatives of militarising EU cooperation through e.g. PESCO and military funds.”*³³

Interestingly enough, the parliamentary debate on the 2019 report did not touch upon the subject of PESCO, and there was only a short debate about military non-alignment between MPs of the Left Party and the Liberal Party. The Left Party representatives considered that neutrality and military non-alignment had guaranteed peace in Sweden, whereas the Liberal Party representative claimed that the exceptions to neutrality have actually been the measures guaranteeing peace.³⁴

Another document that is of relevance in the Swedish approach is the Statement of Government Policy in the annual parliamentary debate on foreign affairs. Unlike in the 2017 Finnish Defence White Paper, the 2017 Swedish Statement or debate thereon did not mention PESCO but referred to Sweden supporting

²⁶ Swedish Parliament, “Riksdagens snabbprotokoll § 1 Aktuell debatt om försvarsberedningens förslag,” June 10, 2019.

²⁷ Swedish Defence Commission, *Motståndskraft*, 22.

²⁸ Swedish Defence Commission, *Motståndskraft*, 221–22.

²⁹ Swedish Defence Commission, *Motståndskraft*, 224.

³⁰ Swedish Defence Commission, *Motståndskraft*, 233.

³¹ Swedish Defence Commission, *Värnkraft*, 307.

³² Swedish Defence Commission, *Värnkraft*, 306–7.

³³ Swedish Defence Commission, *Värnkraft*, 352.

³⁴ Swedish Parliament, “Riksdagens snabbprotokoll § 1 Aktuell debatt om försvarsberedningens förslag.”

the European security and defence policy.³⁵ In 2018 Statement, PESCO was considered to strengthen the operative capability and effectiveness of Sweden,³⁶ but the Foreign Minister was the only one to bring PESCO up in the debate.³⁷ The parliament held the most recent debate on 13 February 2019, and the only entry about PESCO in the statement is *“We are contributing to the Permanent Structured Cooperation, which strengthens operational capabilities and effectiveness in the area of defence.”*³⁸ The parliamentary debate was also mostly about other foreign policy issues, but the Foreign Minister pointed out that participation in four PESCO projects is not meagre, as some opposition politicians had claimed, but the number of projects is the same that Finland participates in.

It thus seems that the Swedish governments have considered PESCO to make defence spending more effective without representing a threat to the country’s military non-alignment. It is mainly those critical of PESCO and the government policy that suggest that military non-alignment is at risk. The government parties do not even appear to want to bring up military non-alignment when discussing EU defence cooperation. This may also relate to the framing of military non-alignment as more of a foreign policy issue rather than as a defence policy issue.

Overall, it seems that the Swedish debate on PESCO and military alignment in the European context has been relatively minor, and the politicians frame PESCO mainly as enhancing cooperation in military procurement, which appears economically beneficial. It is primarily the Left Party that opposes militarising tendencies and the populist Sweden Democrats that bring up the question of military non-alignment, though in a different light. The Left Party seems to want to have a credible non-alignment policy in order to promote peace worldwide, whilst the Sweden Democrats choose to emphasise Swedish sovereignty and thus oppose closer security policy cooperation with the EU and NATO. To sum up, most parties argue in favour of PESCO with frames based on efficiency, whilst a couple of opposing parties considered that PESCO is not compatible with the Swedish military non-alignment. The story, however, is a bit different in Finland, where military non-alignment rarely comes up with regard to PESCO. Instead, the politicians frame the risk of participating in PESCO in terms of federalism, as we observe in the following section.

Frames related to European defence cooperation in Finland: security community vs. federalism

As outlined before, Finland was very eager to promote the establishment of PESCO from 2016 onwards. Already in the 2017 EU Influence Strategy of the government published in December 2016, it was stated that *“According to the Finnish view, [permanent structured] cooperation can deal e.g. with investments related to defence tools, and concrete measures strengthening the usability, cooperation ability, flexibility and operational readiness of troops.”*³⁹ Also the Finnish White Paper on Defence published in February 2017 outlined that *“Finland promotes the development of defence cooperation within the European Union and supports the Union’s permanent structured cooperation and strengthening its crisis management planning and C2 [command and control] capability.”*⁴⁰ As we can see in these entries, the

³⁵ Mrs Margot Wallström Minister for Foreign Affairs, “Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs Wednesday 15 February 2017,” 2017.

³⁶ Mrs Margot Wallström Minister for Foreign Affairs, “Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs Wednesday 14 February 2018,” 2018.

³⁷ Swedish Parliament, “Riksdagens protokoll 2017/18:72”, February 14, 2018.

³⁸ Mrs Margot Wallström Minister for Foreign Affairs, “Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs Wednesday 13 February 2019,” 2019.

³⁹ Finnish Government, “Valtioneuvoston EU-vaikuttamisstrategia 2017,” December 7, 2016.

⁴⁰ Prime Minister’s Office Finland, “Government’s Defence Report VNS 3/2017.”

government brought up the support for PESCO long before it was actually established. The Government framed PESCO in terms of general defence cooperation instead of merely a defence procurement issue.

Since February 2017 and the planning of PESCO within the European Union, the Finnish Government has also provided so-called Foreign and Security Policy (UTP) letters to the Finnish Parliament on the development of the CSDP and the European defence cooperation, but many of the letters and attached memos are not publicly available. In May 2017, a memo appended to a letter stated, *“The objectives and commitments required for joining PESCO need to be sufficiently ambitious in order for the cooperation to produce added value.”*⁴¹ We can observe that the Finnish Government was more ambitious in developing defence cooperation and considered PESCO only the first step. The following memo issued in June 2017 ahead of a Council meeting outlined, *“Finland supports ambitious progress in developing EU defence cooperation. The Finnish aim is that the concrete initiatives pave the way for a strong security community. The basic treaties enable deep-going cooperation in defence matters. Permanent Structured Cooperation is in accordance with Finnish long-term objectives and Finland hopes for the immediate launch of PESCO.”*⁴² Despite such framing of PESCO as part of an ever-deepening defence cooperation, it is remarkable that the parliament did not hold a debate on PESCO nor approve the participation therein, but the government only brought the issue to the Parliamentary Grand Committee, which includes representatives from all government parties. The stance of the government was that it is in accordance with the Finnish interest to launch PESCO as soon as possible.⁴³

Permanent Structured Cooperation was discussed in parliamentary debates only a couple of times before its establishment. On 22 November, the Prime Minister announced topical EU matters in a plenary sitting, which included a couple of remarks on PESCO. There was a debate about PESCO and federalism, as the Finns Party and the Left Alliance claimed that PESCO is a step towards federalism and a common army and the government party assured that the cooperation is intergovernmental and does not reflect federalist tendencies. For example, the Europe Minister responded to a Left Alliance MP: *“You brought up that Finland is committed to common defence and its development. Yes, because citizens wish it, and it is the government’s stance and a good stance. You brought up that the defence spending will rise. Yes, it is good. But you were factually wrong, as has already been mentioned, since this is not federalist development, but this permanent structured cooperation is cooperation among member states.”*⁴⁴

The tone remained similar also after the establishment of PESCO. The Finnish Government did not frame PESCO only as a manner to make defence procurement more effective but as a step towards deeper defence cooperation. This was also visible in a memo appended to the government’s EU Foreign and Security Policy letter on 22 February 2018: *“Launching PESCO is a significant step in deepening EU defence cooperation and thus in accordance with Finnish long-term objectives.”*⁴⁵ The fact that many of such memos are not public and the minutes of the debates in the parliamentary committees for foreign and defence policy are not public suggests that PESCO is indeed considered to be a core defence policy issue that requires confidentiality.

⁴¹ Prime Minister’s Office Finland, “Yhteisen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikan sekä puolustusyhteistyön kehittäminen; Eurooppa-neuvoston 15.12.2016 seuranta; UTP-jatkokirje,” May 12, 2017.

⁴² Prime Minister’s Office Finland, “Yhteisen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikan sekä puolustusyhteistyön kehittäminen; Kesäkuun Eurooppa-neuvoston valmistelu; UTP-jatkokirje,” June 16, 2017.

⁴³ Prime Minister’s Office Finland, “EU:n yhteisen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikan sekä puolustusyhteistyön kehittäminen; Neuvoston päätös pysyvistä rakenteellisesta yhteistyöstä,” December 4, 2017.

⁴⁴ Finnish Parliament, “Täysistunto PTK 122/2017 Vp,” 27.

⁴⁵ Prime Minister’s Office Finland, “EU:n yhteisen turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikan sekä puolustusyhteistyön kehittäminen; Neuvoston päätös pysyvän rakenteellisen yhteistyön projekteista,” February 22, 2018.

Since PESCO was established, the Government's EU influence strategies have referred to it, also the latest published in 2017, which outlines Finnish aims for 2018 and 2019. The 2019 aims were also further specified in the government programme of the new government. The 2018 strategy states: "*PESCO strengthens, in accordance with Finnish long-term objectives, the EU as a security community and deepens practical defence cooperation. Finland's aim is that in the future PESCO also strengthens the mutual commitments of the member states to mutual assistance, crisis resilience and emergency supply.*"⁴⁶ It is remarkable that the Finnish Government connects PESCO to the mutual assistance clause, which seems rather unique in the EU.

Instead of being subject to a parliamentary debate, only parliamentary committees discussed the strategy. The Defence Committee hoped that PESCO cooperation leads to strengthening of the mutual commitments and solidarity between the Union countries.⁴⁷ The representative of the Left Alliance was the only one to attach a dissentient opinion to the statement, criticising the costs of increasing defence cooperation and objecting to the militarisation and deepening of EU integration in defence. The main fear connected to PESCO seemed to relate to the cooperation being a step in a federalising process.

Alongside the different frames related to PESCO, another interesting difference with regard to Sweden is that Finland decided early on to participate in the French-led European Intervention Initiative (EI2). The cooperation was launched on 25 June 2018 among nine countries (France, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Estonia, Portugal and the United Kingdom), and Finland joined as the tenth partner on 7 November 2018. Sweden, in turn, only joined the initiative on 20 September 2019. So far, the countries have signed a letter of intent and "*Terms of Reference*", instead of a Memorandum of Understanding as planned in the letter of intent. The initiative has a permanent secretariat in Paris and according to the terms of reference, "*EI2 will not duplicate activities within the EU, NATO, UN, the OSCE or ad hoc coalitions, but will be complementary to them*".⁴⁸ EI2 was not debated nor presented to the Finnish Parliament, but only to the Defence and Foreign Affairs Committees, and the decision was made by the Finnish Government and President after meeting with the French President and Defence Minister in Helsinki on 30 August 2018. Even though the document only expresses mutual political understanding, it is significant that as a militarily non-aligned state, Finland was one of the ten EU countries to join such cooperation early on. When all ten EI2 countries participated in the Bastille Day Celebrations in Paris on July 14, 2019, the Finnish President further hoped for a deeper cooperation and anticipated that more states would join the initiative.⁴⁹ The Swedish Government, indeed, joined the initiative on 20 September 2019, justified by the Swedish Defence Minister as strengthening their "*possibilities of impacting the European security policy direction and policy development for crisis management*".⁵⁰

Although the actual actions with regard to defence cooperation do not differ much in Sweden and Finland, it seems that whereas the Swedish frames related to PESCO focus on the economic benefits of PESCO, Finnish leaders expect much deeper defence cooperation from PESCO. The Finnish frames

⁴⁶ Finnish Government, "Valtioneuvoston EU-vaikuttamisstrategia 2018," 2017, 23.

⁴⁷ Finnish Parliament Defence Committee, "Statement of the Defence Committee PuVL 2/2018 Vp— E 106/2017 Vp," 2018.

⁴⁸ "Terms of Reference Regarding the implementation of the European Intervention Initiative (EI2)," September 20, 2019.

⁴⁹ President of the Republic of Finland, "President Niinistö at the French National Day Celebration – European Security Was Discussed in Paris," July 14, 2019.

⁵⁰ Government Offices of Sweden, "Sverige deltar i försvarssamarbetet European Intervention Initiative," September 20, 2019, accessed November 27, 2019, <https://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2019/09/sverige-deltar-i-forsvarssamarbetet-european-intervention-initiative/>.

represent PESCO as a step towards a security community, whilst such aspects do not appear in the Swedish frames. Again, in contrast to the Swedish Government's view, the (few) critical frames related to PESCO in Finland rely on the fear of federalism; that Finland could not decide autonomously on its defence spending. As discussed in the beginning, the frames related to EU defence cooperation in the two countries seemed to be more in line before the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, and the next section further analyses the observed differences.

Finnish and Swedish politicians discuss PESCO on diverging levels

If Finland and Sweden appeared to be in the same boat in the early 21st century in relation to the increased military cooperation in the European Union, this situation is no longer the same. Swedish politicians consider it important to ensure that their policies are *not* in contradiction with the Swedish military non-alignment, though especially the opposition politicians arguing the contrary. In Finland, in turn, military non-alignment describes mainly the state-of-affairs of not being in NATO and it thus seems irrelevant to discuss it with regard to PESCO, or to have even a parliamentary debate and approval for the participation, for that matter. One should also be aware that Finland received a new centre-left government in spring 2019, and we do not know whether the policy will change in the coming years. We do not anticipate this based on the government programme, which states, "*Finland actively participates in developing EU defence cooperation. Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is a central project related to EU's defence dimension.*"⁵¹ The government programme also reiterates that Finland is not a member of a military alliance, but ensures the credibility of its defence, inter alia, through security and defence cooperation within the European Union.⁵² The Swedish government statement from spring 2019 in turn, states, "*Our military non-alignment serves our country well. Sweden will not apply for membership of NATO.*"⁵³ These entries reveal that the governments of these countries, both currently led by the Social Democratic Party, also frame their military non-alignment differently; it seems to constitute a beneficial instrument for Sweden, whilst merely a declaration of the state-of-affairs for Finland. Unlike the Swedish Government, the Finnish one also mentions EU defence cooperation in the government programme first, even before bilateral cooperation with Sweden. In contrast, Finland constitutes the primary defence cooperation partner for Sweden, instead of European defence cooperation at large.

Even though both Finland and Sweden decided to participate in PESCO, we can see that the employed frames are completely different. In both countries, the Left parties are the ones most vehemently opposing to the participation in EU defence cooperation, in addition to the strong opposition by the populist Sweden Democrats Party. This may relate to the differences in foreign policy stances. In Sweden, military non-alignment is still something that the governments uphold and reiterate in their policies, and it is thus safer to frame PESCO as an economically beneficial and strategically rational policy. The opponents, in turn, use the frames where one cannot uphold military non-alignment fully in such cooperation, being entirely aware of the importance of military non-alignment to the national foreign policy.

In Finland, the situation is different. Even though the recent government white papers uphold military non-alignment, it does not have a similar historical trajectory as the Swedish one, and the politicians have not even mentioned military non-alignment in connection with PESCO. Instead of military non-alignment representing an ideological view incompatible with PESCO, the opposing politicians frame federalism as taking place in such a defence cooperation. Rather than being incompatible with military non-alignment, federalism thus represents the negative ideological view to use in the criticism against

⁵¹ Finnish Government, "Government Programme," June 3, 2019, 72.

⁵² Finnish Government, "Government Programme," 56.

⁵³ Swedish Government, "Statement of Government Policy 2019," January 21, 2019, 15.

the policy. In contrast, the *positive* ideological view connected to PESCO seems to be the participation in the ever-deepening European security community.

From the perspective of framing, the differences seem interesting. Swedish politicians frame PESCO in terms of national interest; the cooperation benefits defence economy and policy influence, or endangers the crucial interest of military non-alignment. This resembles the liberal intergovernmentalist idea of European integration furthering state interests.⁵⁴ The Finnish framing, in turn, focusing on the increased defence integration as a positive or a negative issue, comes close to the idea of neo-functional integration spilling over to new fields.⁵⁵ They thus seem to reflect differing frames of the integration process, at least in the field of defence.

Conclusions

I have argued in the article that even though both Finland and Sweden participate in PESCO, the politicians in the countries frame the cooperation differently. For Swedish politicians, PESCO seems to constitute cost-efficient cooperation in defence procurement, whereas Finnish politicians frame PESCO as a step towards a European security community. The Swedish Government explicitly mentioned that PESCO is not in contradiction with the Swedish military non-alignment, even though some opposition parties claim so. In Finland, however, military non-alignment does not come up related to PESCO, but the opposing politicians rather see the risk in PESCO leading to federalism. Overall, it seems that military non-alignment is of much importance in Sweden, which may explain why the government politicians do not want to contrast PESCO with military non-alignment but rather focus on defence procurement. The opposition politicians, in turn, know that defending military non-alignment is still a valid argument to employ when opposing PESCO. Finnish politicians, in contrast, seem to think that military non-alignment is not a very efficient argument in trying to politicise the participation in PESCO, which is why the opponents try to frame PESCO with the fear of federalism against the government's normative frames related to building a European defence community.

⁵⁴ Andrew Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe: social purpose and state power from Messina to Maastricht*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

⁵⁵ Ernst Haas, *The uniting of Europe: political, social, and economic forces 1950-1957*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Framing of the new CSDP in militarily non-aligned Finland and Sweden: Promotion of national interests or a step towards a European security community?

Biography

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Abstract

The article discusses how Swedish and Finnish politicians frame deepening defence cooperation in the European Union, in particular the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in defence. The empirical material consists of political documents and parliamentary debates from 2016 to mid-2019. By utilising frame analysis, the study illustrates that these two militarily non-aligned states frame PESCO in very different manners. The Swedish Government frames PESCO as an economically rational cooperation in defence procurement, whilst the opposing politicians see it as a threat to the Swedish military non-alignment. The Finnish Government, in contrast, frames PESCO as a step towards a European security community, which the opposing factions consider a step towards federalism. Swedish politicians thus frame European integration in terms of national interests, but Finnish leaders discuss the process of European integration.

Keywords: European Union, Finland, Sweden, Permanent Structured Cooperation, Common Security and Defence Policy, military non-alignment, frame analysis, political discourse, defence cooperation