FACTORS INFLUENCING SWEDEN'S CHANGING STANCE ON NEUTRALITY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Sweden's position on neutrality has changed over the past 25 years. This evolution has been prompted and supported by a variety of domestic and international events, and the way in which the political elites responded to each event. These events started with the Swedish financial crisis in the late 1980s, and continued with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Sweden's entrance into the European Union (EU). International crises, such as the Kosovo war and the September 11th terrorist attacks, have also impacted the concept and role of Swedish neutrality. Swedish neutrality was more than simply a philosophy on which the foreign and defense policies were built, it was also an integral part of the Swedish national identity. In order to understand how and why Swedish neutrality has evolved, various contributing layers were explored. For this reason, this research examined the definition of neutrality, how neutrality became a component of Swedish national identity, themes pertaining to the Swedish political process, important election issues, political parties, and voting trends before exploring contributing domestic and international factors. After the foundational background was established, in-depth investigation and analysis identified the most significant domestic and international events and pressures that ultimately influenced Sweden's changing stance on neutrality.

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SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION

> "Separated as we are from the rest of Europe, our policy and our interests will always lead us to refrain from involving ourselves in any dispute which does not concern the two Scandinavian peoples [Sweden and Norway]. At the same time, in obedience to the dictates both of our national duty and of our national honour, we shall not permit any other power to intervene in our internal affairs" - King Karl Johan of Sweden and Norway, 1818 (Cited in Barton, 1930, p. 326)

Swedish neutrality found its origins in the geographical and strategic realities referenced by King Karl Johan in the epigraph above. Though Sweden's last military engagement was with Norway in 1814, this declaration is one of the first recorded statements explicitly outlining Swedish neutrality. Neutrality as an "active internationalist neutrality" and part of its foreign policy emerged in 1834 as King Karl Johan attempted to mediate between Russia and England after the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars (Agius, 2006).

As a young adult living in Sweden in 1991, I was witness to political debate on the advantages and disadvantages of joining the EU. Political discussions during that time also focused on the changing realities of the post-Soviet global environment. Economic reforms also generated discussions among both the political elite and the general population. Since the early 1990s I have witnessed Sweden reach a number of foreign policy milestones in regard to its neutrality policy. These include joining the EU, playing an important role in the development of the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), strengthening its relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO),

deploying troops to Afghanistan in support of NATO, and most recently contributing fighter aircraft to the NATO-led mission in Libya in 2011.

Neutrality has been one of several core elements of Swedish national identity, just as freedom is a core element of American national identity. Over the course of the two decades, I have observed the evolution of Sweden's stance on neutrality. I found this change particularly interesting and wanted to increase my understanding of why and how this change had occurred. I realized that there was no clear-cut instance of one singular event, person, or action, resulting in the immediate change of its neutrality policy. Rather, the transformation was created, prompted and supported by a cascading sequence of events and a variety of political actors. This transformation represented more than just a shift in policy, but also represented a shift in national identity. Changes in identity, that manifest themselves in political ways, are more complex than simple changes to policy, and stem from multiple layers of political history, personalities, events, and ideas that have supported and triggered the change.

SECTION 2:

METHODOLOGY

After conceptualizing the thesis question “What factors have contributed to Sweden’s changing stance on neutrality?”, I initiated retrospective research in an effort to categorize as many contributing factors as I could identify. After conducting research into research planning and design, it became clear that a historical research study would best enable me to arrive at answers to my thesis question.

“Historical research deals with the *meaning* of events. … (it is) not the *accumulating* of the facts, but the *interpretation* of the facts” (Leedy, 1992, p. 223). A historical research approach would allow me to examine and correlate the currents and trends connecting past and present events, ideas, and actions, thus contributing meaning to the whole picture.

The study of ideas and principles that is closer to the heart of my research is more specifically identified as “conceptual historical research” and is “concerned not only with events and personalities but also with tracing the origin, development, and influence of ideas and concepts” (Leedy, 1992, p. 232). The origins and development of principles and ideas have tangible influences on the environment in which they exist.

For my conceptual historical research, I relied on a deductive style of research, also known as “ex post facto” studies, where the researcher begins with an observation and conducts regressive research, back through a period of time in order to locate the origins and contributing factors. As Leedy stated,

“Seldom is proof through data substantiation possible. Logic and inference are the principal tools of (the ex post facto) design” (p. 299).

Conceptual historical research relies primarily on qualitative analysis, which constitutes the bulk of my research. For this project I was also able to inject the quantitative study of exit poll data to support my qualitative analysis. I looked beyond *what* happened and tried to determine *why* it happened by providing factual support over a period of time.

Since history is dynamic, studying a variety of events can lead to the observation of trends and patterns that may not be apparent at first glance. A cascading sequence of events contributed to the cause and effect pattern that connected Sweden’s economic recession of the late 1980s to its more recent abandonment of its neutrality policy.

Prior to initiating this thesis research, as an observer of Swedish foreign policy and world affairs I first noticed that Swedish neutrality had definitively changed in 2011 when it sent combat aircraft to Libya jointly with NATO. In order to help understand this change I examined Sweden’s recent history with the hopes of locating an origin to the change. I additionally researched the definition of neutrality, what neutrality is to Swedish national identity, and why it is that way, to ensure those foundational concepts were firm.

Considering some of the factors that contributed to the change in Swedish neutrality, I hypothesized that Swedish voters reflected their foreign policy preferences in their voting patterns, thus ultimately dictating the direction of Swedish foreign policy and the role of neutrality. After quantitatively charting

voting trends and analyzing the issues voters indicated were most important to their vote, it became clear that voters were in fact not placing the amount of emphasis on foreign policy issues when casting their votes as I initially thought. Though it appeared that the Swedish electorate did not directly influence Sweden's changing stance on neutrality, understanding the voting trends and important issue areas does enhance the overall picture with background and contextual information.

With political factors in mind, I systematically examined recent European history in order to identify contributing elements to Sweden's changing neutrality. Some factors, such as the decline of the Soviet Union and Sweden's accession to the European Union were obvious places to start. Through that qualitative research I identified other factors I had not yet considered, such as the role of the Swedish banking crisis and the Kosovo crisis. After following all the leads and layering the historical events together, punctuated by my textual analysis of Sweden's annual Foreign Policy Statements, I was able to create a unique and complete picture of why and how Swedish neutrality evolved and definitively changed.

SECTION 3:

DEFINITION OF NEUTRALITY

> "Like many other commonly used political concepts such as 'democracy' or 'sovereignty', neutrality is an essentially contested concept – the content of the concept, with different emphasis on legal, political, ideological, economic and military dimensions and its 'proper' formulation and practice, can be interpreted antithetically and disputed" (Agius & Devine, 2011, p. 335).

When discussing and researching neutrality in an international relations context, several competing terms and ideas are used. In order to best understand the goal of this thesis and Swedish neutrality, it is important to understand first what is meant when referring to *neutrality*, *armed neutrality*, and *military non-alignment*, as all of these terms are closely related but bear subtle, yet significant, differences.

The policy of neutrality is a foreign policy position in which a state intends to remain neutral during a time of war. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2012), *neutrality* is the legal status arising from the abstention of a state from all participation in a war between other states, the maintenance of an attitude of impartiality toward the belligerents, and the recognition by the belligerents of this abstention and impartiality. Under international law this legal status gives rise to certain rights and duties between the neutral and the belligerents. The laws concerning the rights and duties of neutrality are contained, for the most part, in the Declaration of Paris of 1856, Hague Convention V, 1907 (neutrality in land war), and Hague Convention XIII, 1907 (neutrality in maritime war).

According to USLEGAL.com (2012), *armed neutrality* is a term used in international politics, describing the position of a sovereign state, which makes no alliance with either side in a war, yet maintains a military and holds itself ready to defend itself against attack by any party.

Non-alignment is a foreign policy position of a state during peacetime which implements neutrality by avoiding military alliances with other states, groups of states, or military blocs. According to the U.S. Department of Defense (2012) *non-alignment* does not preclude involvement, but expresses the attitude of no pre-commitment to a particular state or bloc before a situation arises.

To sum up the differences, *neutrality* is simply a state's policy of non-involvement in a war, while *armed neutrality* is a state's policy of neutrality with the capability to defend its sovereignty if attacked. *Military non-alignment* however is the *intent* to stay neutral by avoiding military alliances, but does *not rule out* involvement. The most accurate way to describe Sweden's foreign policy position of *neutrality* was *armed neutrality* since Sweden always maintained a capable military, with required military service for able-bodied males over 18 years old, and a robust military equipment production capability.

These differences are significant later in the thesis when attention is focused on the wording of the Swedish Foreign Policy Statements. Sweden shifted away from using the term *neutrality* to describe its foreign policy and replaced it with *non-alignment*. The current 2012 foreign policy statement in-fact does not include any of these terms. This omission is significant in its own right. A number of literary sources pertaining to Swedish neutrality do not make the

distinction between *neutrality* and *armed neutrality*. For the purposes of this thesis, all references to Swedish *neutrality* will in effect refer to its *armed neutrality*.

SECTION 4:

SWEDISH NEUTRALITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Just as understanding the definition of *neutrality* is important to this thesis, so is understanding how and why neutrality contributes to Swedish national identity.

The Origins of National Identity and Swedish National Identity

National identity is a form of nationalism. Nationalism as an imagined community found it roots in the concept of the nation defining the collective. As Benedict Anderson (1983) noted, nationalism has "proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyze" (p. 3). As religious communities declined during the reformation period in the 1500s and empires declined during the enlightenment period in the 1600s, European populations sought out new ways to identify with one another, and maintain social bonds. Nationalism filled that role, and became part of the European consciousness.

During the same general time frame that Europe came to embrace the concept of nationalism, Sweden established itself as one of the Nordic region's hegemonic powers. To provide previous historical context, the year 1523 was the last time Sweden was governed by a foreign monarchy or head of state. Under the leadership of Gustav Vasa, Sweden broke out of the Kalmar union, freeing itself from a union that had defined Scandinavia for the previous 130 years. Sweden maintained independence and remained the governing power of its own nation and at times ruling over areas of Finland and Norway for nearly 300 years.

In the mid-1800s, nationalism, as a social movement, made a huge impact on European countries as populations sought out new ways in which to identify collectively. The European revolutions of 1848 led to the conditions where individual European countries experienced “national awakenings” and nationalism was widely incorporated into their collective identities. Though Sweden was not affected by the European revolutions to the same degree as other European countries, nevertheless it was not “spared” a sense of nationalism. Sweden's involvement in the Napoleonic Wars took a toll on both its economy and national boundaries, as Sweden lost almost a third of its national territory when the area comprising modern-day Finland was ceded to Russia.

Neutrality and Social Welfare in Swedish National Identity

Under a new government led by Karl Johan, the Swedish constitution was created in 1809, and in 1814 Sweden engaged in its last military conflict against Norway, followed closely by Karl Johan’s declaration of neutrality in 1818. At the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, European military doctrine, strategy, and armies were revolutionized, primarily due to the application of mass conscription. Due to military and economic losses during the war, Sweden’s relatively limited size, and its physical isolation from continental Europe, Karl Johan determined that neutrality was the most effective way for Sweden to maintain its political and military autonomy in the new European military environment. This neutrality was based just as much on its desire to preserve its national borders and sovereignty, as its desire to safeguard its economy from future burdens of war. Sweden’s current external, national borders have been in

place since 1905 when the Sweden and Norway union was peacefully dissolved. The orderly break-up of the union was in part attributed to Sweden's commitment to neutrality and the perception that a nonviolent solution was the most prudent action.

The foundation for Sweden's welfare system was introduced in 1847. Between 1913 and 1918 Sweden reemphasized welfare and continued to establish what later became its modern welfare system, known as 'folkhem' in the 1930s. It is interesting to note that during this same timeframe (1848-1914), Europe was embroiled in revolutions, "in the grip of Nationalism" (van der Dussen & Wilson, 1993, p. 75). The combination of neutrality as one guiding principle during the creation of modern-day Sweden at the beginning of the 1800s, and the Social Welfare issue dominating the domestic agenda during the late 1800s into the early 1900s, led to both neutrality and social welfare as cornerstones of the Swedish national identity.

Neutrality Becomes Further Entrenched in Swedish National Identity

In 1912, as Europe prepared to enter into World War I, Sweden, along with Norway and Denmark, declared neutrality. Due to varying allegiances with the powers at play, namely France and Germany, the Swedish population favored a policy of strict neutrality and a strong defense of their rights as a neutral state. As a result, the Swedish government declared *absolute neutrality* six days after the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Though neutrality was not always an easy stance during the war, Sweden, along with Norway and Denmark, was able to maintain military neutrality through the armistice in 1918.

At the onset of World War II in 1939, Sweden, Norway and Denmark again declared neutrality. However, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway in April 1940 in order to increase its access to strategic port locations along the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean. Sweden was able to maintain military neutrality throughout the war, essentially due to its strategic insignificance. However, it acquiesced to Germany a small degree by allowing German troops to transit its northernmost territory from Norway to Finland. It also continued its iron ore trade with Germany, ultimately contributing to Germany's armaments manufacturing. Though its stance was officially neutral, some argue Sweden was not true to its neutrality during World War II since allowing troop transit and providing materials for arms technically violated the duties of neutral states as outlined by the Hague Convention. However, at the end of the war in 1945, Sweden's neutrality ultimately afforded it a relatively strong economy, and intact infrastructure, from which the population drew a great deal of pride.

Early Swedish nationalism centered on a significant inclination towards peace and neutrality and the social responsibility that comes with a welfare state. This conceptualization was also embedded with undertones of individual freedom and resilience as an inherent part of its Nordic national character. The fact that Sweden was able to remain neutral during both world wars only strengthened those ideals as part of its national image. Pride stemmed from the fact its economy did not suffer during the two world wars, when compared to its neighbors. The strength of its economy resulted partially from its neutrality, and allowed Sweden to continue to strengthen its own social welfare programs

throughout the post-war reconstruction period. Sweden was also in a position to aid its neighbors both during the war and during post-war reconstruction, which reinforced its sense of international social welfare responsibility and regional contributor.

The emphasis on Swedish neutrality as a central concept to identity continued through the post-war period and was reinforced by the Social Democratic Party, which dominated the political playing field through the mid-1970s, and most of the 1980s. Its interpretation of neutrality was one that was active, internationally involved, and did not necessarily fit the isolationist or self-interested policy mold dictated by the realist view. As noted by Christine Agius (2006),

> "Neutrality could be 'what states make of it'. Sweden's combination of neutrality and Social Democracy defined Sweden as a specific type of active neutral, one which went beyond the 'good offices' label commonly associated with neutrals, and was interested in translating Social Democratic norms and values to the international arena" (p. 90).

Sten Ottosson (2001) explored Sweden's role as a neutral power during that time period. He questioned whether Sweden's identity during the Cold War was one of neutral player on the "side lines", or a neutral player "in the middle" acting as a mediator between Russia in the East, and NATO and the US in the West. Ottosson based his findings on his research and examination of political speeches, political discourse, and public opinion. In his conclusion, he demonstrated that the strongest expressions of Swedish identity during the Cold War emerged during the 1969-75 period. At this time the Swedish welfare state and the Swedish policy of neutrality were both emphasized as models for

Swedish national identity. Swedish foreign policy makers envisioned Sweden as a moderator between East and West during this period of the Cold War. This important finding highlights how Sweden and its policy makers felt a sense of international responsibility within their region.

In sum, Swedish neutrality has a long history that can be traced through nearly two centuries. Its concept of neutrality is closely aligned with its concept of social welfare ideals. As Sweden emerged from World War II and continued through the Cold War, Sweden projected its own combination of neutrality based social welfare, further fusing the two ideals together.

SECTION 5:

POLITICAL BACKDROP TO THE ERA OF CHANGE

Knowledge of how neutrality and social welfare impacted Swedish national identity contributed to understanding how the population and political elites envisioned their role in the world and how they reacted to domestic and international events and pressures. The ensuing section enhanced understanding of the Swedish political process, parties, political ideologies, voting trends, and important issues to voters. These concepts provided background and contextual information that was crucial to grasp in order to fully understand the domestic and international factors influencing Sweden's changing stance on neutrality.

A. Swedish Political Process

This thesis discusses the dynamic between the political elite and the voting public, which include all Swedish citizens who are 18 years old by the day of the election. Voter registration is automatic, and though voting is not compulsory, Sweden's rate of voter turnout is statistically and consistently high, ranging from 80.1% and 86.7% over the past 25 years. For example, during the most recent 2010 parliamentary (Riksdag) elections, 84.63% of the 7,123,651 eligible voters cast votes in the election. The consistency of voter turnout coupled with exhaustive exit polls created a better analysis environment when trying to track public political opinion accurately over the most recent seven election periods. Of note, election terms have changed over the past 25 years.

Parliamentary election intervals were three years apart prior to 1994, and changed to four years after the 1994 election.

There are over 20 active political parties in Sweden and that number changes regularly based on a variety of factors. Sweden requires that a party reach a four percent threshold of the popular vote to earn seats in the parliament. There are 349 seats in the Swedish national parliament with 175 seats required for a majority. These numbers are important in a multi-party political system since a coalition is almost always required to create a government. The most recent parliamentary election was held in September 2010 and currently 8 parties are represented in the Swedish parliament.

B. Important Issues to Voters

Sweden's extensive national polling database provided a comprehensive set of data. This afforded a higher degree of accuracy and confidence when attempting to analyze which issues were most important to voters, thus influencing their election decisions year to year.

From 1988 through 2010, the Statistics Sweden polling group conducted the Swedish National Election Studies and collected data nationally during exit surveys conducted during each of the parliamentary elections. This information was provided by Sören Holmberg & Henrik Oscarsson (2012) from the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenberg in Sweden. Swedish election exit surveys capture a broad range of information. One section specifically focused on which political issues were important to the voters. During the most recent four elections, spanning 1998 to 2010, the political issue

focused question read: “How important were the following issues for your choice of party today in the parliamentary election? – Stated Issue” with the different issue categories listed after the question mark. Each responder had the choice of five responses for each question, indicating whether the issue was of “Very great importance”, “Fairly great importance”, “Neither great nor small importance”, “Fairly small importance”, or “Very small importance”. The data shows the number of responses to each of the 5 answers to all questions. The data from the answers was quantitatively represented in order to rank and analyze the important political issues. Table 1, found on page 55 in the Tables, Charts and Figures section, represents the data collected from the survey.

For this project I combined the number of responders who chose the very and fairly great importance categories, to represent the issues important to the voters. I turned those numbers into percentages to be able to analyze the data and compare the issues from year to year. The question and answers were presented differently in 1991 and 1994 and therefore the percentages appear significantly different from the four most recent election cycles. I included percentages from those years on the table to represent trends, in order to be able to show which issues were important during those years. The listed percentage averages only include the elections from 1998-2010. Percentages from the prior two elections distorted the averages. Exit poll data does not exist for these questions from 1988 elections.

Upon compiling and analyzing the data, it became clear that employment, schools and education, and the Swedish economy were consistently the three

most important issues to voters over the past 25 years. All three are domestic issues, as are the other top priority issues. In fact, issues relating to the concepts of foreign policy, security and defense, and neutrality ranked among the lowest five priorities for voters, according to the listed options. Issues pertaining to foreign and security policy averaged 60.96% importance with voters, while issues pertaining to the European Community (EC), the EU and the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) were important to 52.93% of the voters.

Significant to this thesis, the question pertaining to Swedish troops in Afghanistan was introduced in the 2010 poll. This is the one metric most closely aligned with projecting military power, which is on the conceptual opposite side of the spectrum from neutrality, and was only an important voting issue to a relatively meager 30.52% of the voters polled.

The data suggests that voters are basing their voting decisions on domestic issues that ultimately have little to do with foreign policy issues relating to neutrality. Regardless of the foreign policy public debate in Sweden, when voters take to the polls, they generally prioritize other issues over issues relating to the foreign and defense policies, and neutrality. Ultimately the political elite, belonging to the parties in power, make decisions about altering the neutrality policy, NOT the public dictating a change through voting behavior.

C. Political Parties and Political Blocs

Political parties provide a voice for the people. A multi-party system will allow more nuances to the voices heard. Understanding and examining the different parties will allow better understanding of how the population aligns

politically, and how the government may react to external and international pressures and events.

Two parties have dominated the Swedish political landscape over the course of the period covered in this study, the traditional center-left Social Democrat Party and the more conservative Moderate Party. They, along with alliances and coalitions formed to create a government, are the primary focus of this section. Politically speaking a 'coalition' is formed *after* an election when two or more parties form to create a government. An 'alliance', however, is created *prior* to an election by two or more parties in order to coordinate their campaign and create a unified message. Coalitions and alliances play a significant role in Swedish government. The distinction is important as we uncover the role both have played in the Swedish political landscape. The two primary alliances from the past 25 years are outlined at the end of this section. These alliances include parties that have traditionally supported each other and formed coalition governments, even when no formal cooperation agreement may have existed prior to an election (Aylott & Bolin, 2007).

Social Democrats (Sveriges Socialdemokratiska arbetarparti - S)

The Social Democrat Party is Sweden's oldest existing political party, and has shaped Sweden, its policies, its national identity and its position in the world over the past century. Its brand of democratic socialism provided the building blocks for modern day Sweden. Founded in 1889, the party was dedicated to the formation of an egalitarian society. The Social Democrats, at times in coalition with other left-leaning political groups, dominated the political scene from 1932 to

1976. By the time it lost control of the parliament in 1976, it had transformed Swedish politics, policy and society.

By the mid-1970s the Social Democrats experienced a decline in support, mostly resulting from high inflation rates and an increasing budget deficit, which made it difficult to maintain the country's significant welfare system. By the late 1980s, economic conditions were starting a noticeable decline, which began to lead to a loss of faith in the party and its ideals (Bergström, 1991). Statistically, the Social Democrat Party maintained control of the government for all but 6 years since 1932, or the preceding 55 years (89%). Only during the past 25 years have the Social Democrats faced any opposition significant enough to "unseat" them from their historic run, winning just 4 of the 7 elections since 1987. Chart 1, found on page 56, depicts the voting support trend for the Social Democrats over the past 25 years and its gradual decline.

During their tenure, the Social Democrats implemented policies focused on international activism, the Swedish economic model and the "Folkhem", which was a foundational element of the social welfare system (Devine, 2006). Folkhem, or "the people's home", was the idea that a government should ensure that its society provides a place of *security* for its population. The party viewed neutrality as the best way in which to provide national *security* for its population. The concept of neutrality combined with the emphasis on social welfare, resulted in a sense of responsibility to export its social normative values and the party embraced a policy of internationally activism. The party both aligned with and validated social welfare as part of Sweden's national identity; however, neutrality

was also a central policy for the party. The Social Democrats have been supporters of the EU and their current foreign policy places positive emphasis on EU and international engagement. Nonetheless, as of 2011 the Social Democrats were decidedly against a Swedish membership in NATO (Lödén, 2012).

The Moderate Party (Moderata samlingspartiet - M)

The Moderate party was founded in 1904. Foundational elements of the party policy revolve around lower taxes, a market economy, and a smaller government role in the economy allowing Sweden a stronger place in a global economy. The Moderate Party has historically been more skeptical of the enduring value of neutrality to Swedish foreign policy and has been an advocate for the evolution away from Sweden's traditional neutrality. The Moderate Party's current foreign policy places strong emphasis on global engagement and interaction. In 2011, the Moderate Party was in favor of Swedish membership in NATO (Lödén, 2012).

During its early history, the Moderate Party only comprised a minor part of the opposition. However, starting in the 1980s, the Moderate Party experienced a surge in support, especially as Sweden's economy suffered, and became the second largest party in parliament. After the 1991 election, the party formed and led a four-party coalition government with the same parties that would later form The Alliance. While in office, the Moderate Party promoted deregulation, the privatization of public services, government spending reductions, and austerity measures designed to reduce inflation and budget deficits. The Moderate Party

also promoted greater and faster integration into the EU. After spending 12 years in the opposition (1994-2006), the Moderate Party, along with The Alliance, earned the most parliament seats and again came into power during the 2006 elections. The Moderate Party and The Alliance partners remained in power after the 2010 election. Over the past 25 years as the Social Democrats have aggregately lost support, the Moderate Party in turn has gained support. This voting trend is portrayed by chart 2, found on page 56.

Remaining Six Political Parties

In addition to the two most predominant parties, the Swedish parliament currently includes six other minor parties. Their views on neutrality and foreign policy vary for an array of reasons. Tracking the nuances of their multiple positions on foreign policy, neutrality, the EU, and Swedish membership in NATO would be a complex task, and one better suited for a different study. However, the additional parties are listed below in order to provide a brief description of each additional party. The parties falling on the left side of the spectrum include the:

- Left party – a party based on socialist principles
- Green Party – a party with an ecological focus

The parties falling on the right side of the spectrum include the:

- Center Party – a traditional agrarian party
- Liberal Party – a party based on social liberalism
- Christian Democrats – a party based on Christian conservatism
- Sweden Democrats – a party with a focus on nationalist principles

The Alliance (Alliansen)

In 2004, the Moderate party created a formal alliance with three other center-right parties including the Liberal Party, the Center Party and the Christian Democrats, called The Alliance. The Alliance provided an official political bloc to oppose the Social Democrats on a formal platform of shared policy objectives. The creation of The Alliance provided the unity and strength for the Moderate Party to narrowly come into power during the parliamentary elections in 2006 and retain power in the 2010 elections. The impact of the Moderate Party, the impact of The Alliance, and the impact of their policy makers will become clearer as a number of domestic and international events are examined later in this thesis.

The Red-Greens (De rödgröna)

The Red-Greens was an alliance of the Social Democrats, the Left Party, and the Green Party formed in 2008 as a counterbalance to The Alliance, which had won the parliamentary election in 2006. Prior to 2008, the three parties had run separately but traditionally united to form a coalition government. The intent of the Red-Greens alliance was to provide a unified front on a number of key policy issues during the September 2010 election. This tactic did not work, however, and the coalition dissolved after the elections in November 2010. The tactic was important though, as it signified an acknowledgement that The Alliance posed a sustained threat to the Social Democrat Party.

D. Macro-Level Voting Trends

For the purpose of comparison, parties that had overlapping political ideologies, and traditionally supported each other, even when no formal

cooperation agreement existed, have been sorted into two groups. Deciphering the disparate trends of eight unique parties is neither simple nor beneficial to this thesis. The trajectory of the two primary groupings of parties is highlighted on Chart 3, found on page 57. The first is called the right group, and is comprised of the parties included in The Alliance. The second is called the left group and is comprised of the same parties that were members of the Red-Greens. Viewing the combined electoral trends of these parties creates better visual comparisons on which to base analysis.

Chart 3, depicts the combined percentage of the vote each group received during each voting year. The graph is isolated between 40 and 60% to better accentuate the fluctuation and represents each parliamentary election year. As depicted, since 1994 the left group has consistently lost support, while the right group has generally gained support. The fact that this graph does not account for 100% of the vote can be explained by the percentage of the vote other smaller parties received, not reaching the four percent threshold and therefore not represented in parliament. Each voting year will be discussed in the next section as part of the chronological discussion of factors contributing to Sweden's move away from traditional neutrality.

With the political baseline established, including the Swedish political process, the important issues to voters, the parties, and an overview of the voting trends, the next layer of domestic and international factors influencing Swedish neutrality can be explored, documented and understood. Knowing who is leading the government and their party's priorities will help facilitate an

understanding of why and how the policy makers respond to different domestic and international events. The next section will highlight domestic and international events that contributed to Sweden's changing conceptualization of neutrality in regards to its foreign and security policies, and will draw on political trends, ideologies and priorities established in this section.

SECTION 6:

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

A number of domestic and international events have occurred since the mid-1980s that have impacted Swedish neutrality. The parties in power as these events took place directly impacted the outcomes. Some of these events built off of one another, while other events happened independently, but still impacted Sweden's neutrality trajectory. The primary events are graphically presented in Figure 1: *Timeline of domestic and international events* on page 58 and encompass the past 25-years.

A. Mid-1980s – Early 1990s: Swedish Banking Crisis

The Swedish banking crisis of the 1980s was in some ways one of the earliest breaks precipitating the eventual shift in the way the Swedish population conceptualized and characterized neutrality as part of their national identity. It is important therefore to develop an understanding of the history of the economic crisis, and how it affected the population and sequential political events. Post World War II economic policies allowed social welfare policies to flourish. When this economic boon began to decline, the population looked to different political parties to reinvigorate their economy. These parties, in part, led to Sweden's shifting stance on neutrality. This section will delve into the crisis and its effects in greater detail.

Social Democrat Impact

From the end of the Second World War through the 1970s, Sweden enjoyed a golden economic era, also dubbed the *Swedish Model*. During this

time the bank and credit markets remained highly regulated, long after many other countries relaxed their economic policies. This period in economic history was characterized by close cooperation between the government, corporations, and labor unions. The Swedish economic model was identified by its universal social benefits funded by high tax rates. Social welfare was a cornerstone to Swedish national identity and neutrality complemented social welfare in two important ways during this time. First, neutrality during World War II allowed Sweden's infrastructure to remain in place. This put Sweden in a stronger position after the war to support its neighbors with their rebuilding efforts, ultimately leading to an economic gain. Second, maintaining neutrality did not require the same high level of defense spending as some of its European neighbors. Both of these factors, combined with high tax revenue, contributed to the economic means to support the welfare programs for which Sweden is known.

As mentioned in the previous discussion about the Social Democrats, from the mid-1970s through the 1980s, Sweden experienced higher inflation rates than most of its neighbors. Additionally, a number of industrial pillars, such as steel, paper, and shipbuilding, began to crumble due to new levels of global competition, and changing consumer behavior. Furthermore, the 1980s saw a housing bubble, and a financial bubble followed due to deregulation practices in the mid-1980s and then a credit expansion in the late 1980s (Englund, 1999).

During the parliamentary elections held in 1988, the Social Democrats were able to maintain status quo and control of the parliament, as the voting

public was not yet ready to abandon the party that carried the country through the depression, World War II, the post-war expansion, and undeniably shaped the current nature of Swedish politics and policies. However, a decline in support was noted, dropping over four percent from the previous election and yielding the lowest level of support since they lost control of parliament in 1976. A restructuring of the tax system in the late 1980s resulted in these bubbles bursting. The shortcomings of the old Swedish Model became more apparent, since it emplaced obstacles to economic flexibility and entrepreneurial initiatives. Thus, the Swedish Model had difficulties transforming to accommodate a more global economy (Schön, 2008).

Starting in 1990, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) began a drastic decline and unemployment skyrocketed, resulting in the most severe economic crisis Sweden had experienced since the 1930s (Blyth, 2001). The plummeting GDP and lower employment meant that the government could not feasibly sustain Sweden's welfare system without significant changes. This fissure opened up the political debate, allowing more support for other political philosophies.

The Moderate Party Impact

The crisis of the 1990s showed the vulnerabilities of the Swedish Model in a global open economy. In retrospect, it appeared that the strength of the Swedish Model was a result of Sweden's relatively strong economic situation after World War II, rather than a result of enduring economic principles and policies. Starting in the early 1990s, Sweden was faced with the task of creating

an economic system that could both preserve a majority of Sweden's welfare benefits, as well as survive in the global economy. By the 1991 elections, the Swedish electorate was ready to embrace a new economic model and the Moderate Party came into power, delivering the worst elections for the Social Democrats in over 60 years (Aylott, 1995). The Moderate coalition, led by Prime Minister (PM) Carl Bildt, presented a strong alternative founded on economic reforms, European integration, and alternatives for childcare, healthcare and education, many of the top priorities for voters.

However, during the Moderate Party's period in office, the economic reforms they promised were not realized. In fact, the economy continued to worsen before it bottomed out in 1993. Even though many economic reforms were initiated during their control of the parliament, the results were not immediate enough to convince the Swedish voters to keep the Moderate Party and its center-right coalition in power. During the elections in 1994, the Social Democrats came back into power in the parliament. However, many of the reforms initiated under the center-right coalition were maintained by the Social Democrats, ultimately contributing to Sweden's economic stabilization throughout the rest of the 1990s. In fact, Swedish growth accelerated quite vigorously when compared to many Western economies, from the mid-1990s well into the new century (Schön, 2008).

In addition to the economic focus of the Moderate Party and the center-right coalition, emphasis and attention were paid to broadening Sweden's international posture as they "fast tracked" the EU accession process, setting the

stage for Sweden's EU membership in 1995. Furthermore, the center-right coalition addressed a wide range of policy issues. In 1992, Sweden's security policy was summed up as, "Sweden's non-participation in military alliances, with the aim of making it possible for our country to remain neutral in the event of war in our vicinity, remains unchanged" (Lindh, 2001, p. 6). Even though restructuring Sweden's neutrality was a not a stated goal of the Moderate Party and its members, great strides were taken in reorienting its neutrality stance during their tenure. This was both a product of the international circumstances and the party's goals in regards to globalization. Sweden's growing global presence, aspirations, and involvement were advanced as its economy was further entrenched in the global market.

B. 1989 – 1998: The Collapse of the Soviet Union and Joining the EU

The Collapse of the Soviet Union

One principal event created the right conditions for Sweden to further its international role confidently. The 1989 collapse of the Soviet Union removed the security threat presented by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which in part had justified Sweden's neutrality during the Cold War. Its collapse also upset the bipolar international system present during the preceding 45 years. During the Cold War, the presence of the two superpowers in the bipolar environment and the consequential division of Europe made membership in the European Community (EC), the predecessor of the EU, impossible. This was due to Swedish apprehension that joining the EC would undermine the credibility of its neutrality and therefore create a potential rift with and vulnerability to the

USSR. As the entire definition of global security changed and one of the foremost realist arguments for neutrality vanished, some politicians and scholars argued that neutrality was irrelevant since the perceived threat of the USSR no longer existed (Agius, 2011). This concept was later formalized in the 1997 Foreign Policy Statement by Foreign Minister (FM) Hjelm-Wallén with the line: "Now that the Cold War is over we can to an increasing extent let civilian cooperation create security" (p. 7). Even a decade later this concept was echoed by PM Göran Persson when he suggested that neutrality was no longer relevant after the Cold War due to the new European security context (Miles, 2005).

How the Political Norm Changed

Beyer & Hofmann (2011) discussed the reasons why Sweden's shifting stance on neutrality was both challenging and significant. Political elites internalized a political norm, such as neutrality, more when it was institutionalized voluntarily, as was the case for Swedish neutrality, rather than if it was a coerced position. A coerced norm was much easier to let go should the opportunity arise. The duration of the norm also played a significant role to the internalization of a norm for both the political elites, and even more so for the public who had co-opted the norm into part of their identity and cared less with how the norm was initially implemented. The longer a country had practiced a political norm, in this case nearly 200 years for neutrality in Sweden, the more the public would want it maintained. As a democratic country, the Swedish political elites and policy makers needed a reason and a reasonable alternative when recasting neutrality so as to not alarm the public with what could be perceived as a "radical" shift

away from a sense of neutrality embedded in their identity. The ending of the Cold War provided the reason and allowed Sweden to pivot away from its policy on neutrality, while the EC provided the reasonable alternative to sustained security.

EU Membership

With the decline of the USSR, Sweden placed a strong emphasis on Western and European identity characteristics. Ottosson (2001) suggested that Sweden started to orient its foreign policy objectives towards the EC and conceptualize how its social policies could affect Europe in a positive way, while also broadening its identity to include a European orientation. In June of 1991, Social Democrat PM Ingvar Carlsson stated, “A Swedish membership in the EC is compatible with the demands of a policy of neutrality” (Karvonen & Sundelius, 1996, p. 248). This sentiment was echoed later that same year when the newly elected Moderate Partty PM Carl Bildt declared “in the light of our desire to fully participate in the work of the EU... ‘policy of neutrality’ is no longer appropriate as an overall description of our foreign and security policy. The ‘hard core’ of security policy is ‘non-participation in military alliances’” (Herolf & Lindahl, p. 178). The early 1990s saw a movement to reevaluate and question Sweden’s neutrality, while it re-imagined its foreign policy from “neutral” to “militarily non-aligned”. This seemingly simple shift in terminology altered the way the Swedish political elite conceptualized and discussed neutrality in relation to their identity. Further, it created the opportunity for cooperation in a European environment

built on consensus, cooperation and advancement derived from collaborative economic policies.

As Sweden began to open its economy in order to compete better globally, joining the EU seemed to be the natural next step. The initial accession process started when the Social Democrat government submitted Sweden's EU application in July 1991. In 1993 the Moderate led government began formal negotiations with Brussels and hastened the accession process during their term. Within four months of the Social Democrats regaining power in 1994, Sweden entered into the European Union. Sweden became an official member of the EU on January 1st, 1995.

The discussion in Sweden in regards to joining the EU revolved at least in part around Sweden's idea of neutrality and principles of non-alignment. In 1993, PM Carl Bildt framed Sweden's foreign policy position as a departure from the previous requirement to balance East – West tension and the policy's ensuing reorientation towards European values. Sweden embraced Europe's position and responsibility to the changing regional political environment as a 'clear voice of human rights, freedom and democracy'. These values closely aligned with the social welfare based values Sweden had been espousing in its active neutrality policies (Brommesson, 2010).

By 1998, Sweden was firmly committed to the path of global engagement and a fully entrenched member of the European Union. During the parliamentary elections that year, the Social Democrats maintained control of the government. However the separation between the two major coalition blocs narrowed as the

Moderate party regained some of its previous support. The Foreign Policy Statement presented in February of 1999 by FM Anna Lindh highlighted Sweden's commitment to the EU, when she specifically stated, "Sweden has a European identity and a European responsibility. … The (Swedish) Government wants to strengthen cooperation for democracy, security and development throughout Europe" (p. 4).

Joining the NATO Partnership for Peace

In addition to accelerating EU membership, the Moderate Party led center-right coalition had Sweden join the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) in May of 1994. This act is significant as it opened the door for military cooperation with a military alliance organization. Due to Sweden's longstanding neutrality – turned military non-alignment – the Swedish population has rejected the idea of Sweden joining NATO outright. According to a poll on Swedish trends conducted by the Society Opinion Media (SOM) Institute annually from 1994-2010, only between 15-24% of the Swedes polled thought that "Sweden should apply for membership in NATO". An overwhelming 37-49% responded that Sweden should not join NATO.

The PfP is a cooperation program between NATO and regional non-NATO countries extending from Western European through Central Asia. It provides coordination, preparation and training to ensure interoperability of forces for peacekeeping operations. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has increased its security-building role by incorporating tasks such as promoting peace and

stability, and facilitating international crisis management operations, both activities in line with Sweden's projection of neutrality and international activism.

Sweden's cooperation with NATO under the PfP was based on its military non-alignment, and included close and extensive cooperation in NATO-led peace-support operations. According to a Swedish Government web site, Sweden also had an interest in helping to build a "pan-European security order for a more stable and secure Europe" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009). Under the PfP, each non-member country could decide in which way it wanted to participate (Mölder, 2006). Therefore, even though this step was significant in strengthening Sweden's ties to a military alliance, the PfP allowed Sweden to choose missions that only aligned with its foreign policy objectives and its desire to play a militarily non-aligned role. The initial intent in 1994 was to allow Sweden a way in which to operate alongside NATO on matters of peace operations and international crisis, especially in regards to European stability and security while still requiring a UN Security Council mandate as an impetus for any military action. However, joining the PfP created considerable latitude for stronger military cooperation and action in the future.

C. 1997-2005: The Kosovo Crisis, and "Reinventing" Sweden's Foreign Policy and International Role

The Role of the UN Security Council on Swedish Foreign Policy

In 1997, FM Lindh published Sweden's first structured annual Foreign Policy Statement. In it, significant emphasis was placed on the role of cooperation with the UN as a cornerstone of Swedish Foreign policy. Special

emphasis was placed in 1997, since Sweden was a member of the Security Council from 1997 to 1998. In the Foreign Policy Statement, FM Lindh writes about the role of the UN Security Council.

> "The everyday business of the Security Council is about reacting more rapidly when crises flare up - for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sudan, Afghanistan, the Caucasus or the countries around Africa's Great Lakes. The Council's work requires close cooperation with all the parties concerned and a readiness for team work in a spirit of pragmatism."

She goes on to highlight Sweden's role in the Security Council:

> "Sweden is in a good position to help to give concrete shape to the work of (Security Council) reform. The Government agrees with the analysis of global development and the need for UN reforms expressed in the report 'Our Global Neighborhood' presented by the Commission on Global Governance" (p.2).

Here she placed significant emphasis on the role Sweden can play in ensuring the improved effectiveness of the Security Council. This reform will also complement Sweden's militarily non-aligned and neutral position with the ability to help ensure a Security Council mandate is the impetus to international intervention into a crisis area. Sweden was committed to the ultimate goal of neutrality as a foundational element of its foreign policy as the Foreign Policy Statement reaffirms that, "Sweden's policy of non-participation in military alliances with the aim of making it possible for our country to remain neutral in the event of war in our vicinity remains unchanged" (Lindh, 1997, p. 6).

The Kosovo Crisis

By 1998, Kosovo was in the midst of a civil and ethnic war. The genocide in Kosovo rocked much of Europe to its core. Here a union that prided itself as much on human rights as it did on economic integration was witness to genocide

literally at its doorstep. Few countries held human rights as dear to its central ideal as Sweden. In 1998, Swedish FM Anna Hjelm-Wallén remarked on core principles of the European Union, which were closely aligned with Swedish political ideology. “In terms of principled beliefs, democracy and human rights remain at the centre” (Brommesson, 2010, p. 237).

In 1999, NATO declared its intent to intervene, even though the UN Security Council could not come to a consensus on appropriate action. Based on Sweden’s official neutrality stance, the only acceptable international use of force was either as an act of self-defense or pursuant to a UN Security Council mandate. Without a UN mandate Sweden was unable to act or provide military cover for the Kosovo Albanians being slaughtered by the Serbs. Even with recent direct influence on the Security Council, and its membership in the PfP, Sweden still found itself obstructed by its own policies, and as a result, in the middle of a moral dilemma. As this genocide was unfolding at Europe’s doorstep, Swedes were left feeling generally helpless and constricted by their neutrality stance. In May of 1999, FM Lindh summed up Sweden’s official position as follows:

> “We regret … that it has not been possible for the international community to back a mandate by the Security Council. At the same time … we have pointed to the fact that the case of Kosovo constitutes a genuine dilemma. We cannot accept that the international community stands in silence in face of ethnic cleansing and the threat of genocide”.

The Kosovo war in 1999 provided Sweden one of the first instances it had to critically reflect on and assess its neutrality in a new global context and against new global threats. The experience of neutrality in the face of the Kosovo war

provided a glimpse of the negative side of neutrality. As highlighted by Agius (2006), “Not only did the Swedish Model rule out choice, but neutrality was turned form a moral principle, as it was broadly understood, to an immoral position” (p. 155).

Reevaluating Neutrality

This shifted the political discourse on neutrality. The Moderate Party was of the impression that Social Democrats had utilized neutrality in the past as a rhetorical tool to elicit an emotional response in the population and therefore direct public and political debate. As Ferreira-Pereira (2005) proposed, a departure from neutrality did not occur during the 1990s due in part to the Social Democrat elite’s traditional identification with neutrality and non-alignment, and their reluctance to abandon a central party concept, which was generally supported by the population. The Kosovo Crisis provided an opening to a critical debate on neutrality.

Political discussions started highlighting whether there was a moral “responsibility to protect” and militarily intervene even in the absence of a UN Security Council mandate (Österdahl, 2010). This was a major turning point away from Sweden’s strict interpretation of neutrality and a re-imagination of its role and its “responsibility to protect” for humanitarian purposes. After the experience with neutrality dictating its response in Kosovo, Sweden began to re-word its official security policy in February 2001. Sweden continued to highlight the important role of the UN, but also opened a discussion/debate in the parliament on its security policy. However, abandoning the policy of non-

participation in military alliances was not the main intention at that time. In February 2001 FM Lindh articulated Sweden's three foreign policy identities as: Nordic, European and global. In addition to preserving the goal of neutrality, the Foreign Policy Statement further outlined:

> "The policy of non-participation in military alliances is an asset for Sweden and has the strong support of the Swedish people. It allows us freedom of action. It helps reduce the risk of conflicts and tension in our part of Europe. It makes it possible for us to be proactive in the work for nuclear disarmament. All these factors form the basis for our choice of security policy" (p. 6).

September 11th Terrorist Attacks

By September 2001, the way international threat was perceived was permanently altered. States, or local groups tied to geographical disputes, were no longer the primary actors. Terrorist cells proved they had highly sophisticated global reach with the attacks in the US on September 11th. Non-state actors were brought to the front of the threat discussion. Not only was the world no longer a bipolar environment, non-state actors had been introduced into the new multi-polar environment (Manwarning, 2012). In response to the attacks of September 11th, Article 5 of the NATO charter was invoked for the first time in history. Article 5 essentially states that an attack on any member state shall be considered to be an attack on all. Under the auspices of a UN Security Council mandate, Sweden deployed troops to Afghanistan in late 2001 in support of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) forces and the Afghan government. Even though the Swedish mission in Afghanistan included non-combat missions such as intelligence, civic military cooperation, and later

provincial reconstruction, this action proved that Sweden was willing to leverage its military assets and project them to areas outside the European theater.

The Foreign Policy Statement, written by FM Lindh in February 2002, details the official Swedish thoughts on the attacks and the ways in which terrorism should be dealt with.

> "The appalling acts of terrorism on 11 September made it clear just how vulnerable the open society is and revealed the threats to which we are all exposed. It goes without saying that Sweden and the EU must take an active and vigorous part in the fight against international terrorism. This joint campaign demonstrates the power of coordinated action, but also shows up the shortcomings of our previous efforts" (p. 6).

Sweden's commitment to combating terrorism required further delineation of its foreign, security, and defense policies beyond the previous "non-participation in military alliances". Though Sweden stated that neutrality was its ultimate goal in the event of conflicts "in its vicinity", Swedish policy makers were starting to recognize that their security was best guaranteed by the community of states comprising the EU.

> "Looking to the future, it is more apparent than ever that security is more than the absence of military conflict. Threats to peace and our security can best be averted by acting concertedly and in cooperation with other countries. The primary expression of this conviction at global level is our support for the United Nations. As a member of the European Union, we are part of a community based on solidarity, whose primary purpose is to prevent war on the European continent" (Lindh, 2002, p. 9).

Reevaluating Security

By identifying the need to "act in cooperation" with other states, Swedish foreign policy took a decisive step away from the concept of "non-participation in military alliances" stated in previous policy positions. In addition, Swedish policy

makers began to recognize that the newest transnational threats would not be concerned with whether a state is neutral. Sweden's security posture could be best achieved by enhancing security relationships with Europe. Ultimately the September 2001 attacks turned Sweden's security orientation more decisively towards Europe and strengthened its solidarity as an EU partner.

During the elections in September 2002, the Social Democrats retained the majority, keeping the same Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in place. In 2003, FM Lindh omitted the word "neutrality" for the first time in a Foreign Policy Statement, relying rather on the statement:

> "Sweden does not participate in military alliances. This is a policy that has served us well in different phases of history for almost two hundred years. It allows us freedom of action. It has broad popular support. The agreement the Government has reached with the Centre Party, the Christian Democrats and the Moderate Party means that it has broad political support" (p. 16).

It was interesting to note that in addition to specifically omitting the word neutrality, she also highlighted the broad public and political support. This emphasis both acknowledged the symbolic break from neutrality as a cornerstone to Swedish policy, but also underscored the justification for the shift.

The following year, FM Laila Freivalds elaborated on the 2003 statement. Here the Foreign Minister stated the desire to strengthen ties with the EU on security and defense policies. She also publically reflected on the Kosovo conflict, Sweden's inaction based on the premise of neutrality, and incorporated those lessons into the statement. The text specifically read:

> "Sweden does not participate in military alliances. This is a policy that has served – and still serves – us well. At the same time we

> want to be actively involved in strengthening European security and defence policy. There is no contradiction here.
>
> We know that many lives could have been saved in the Western Balkans if the EU had been better able to coordinate its foreign policy in the 1990s. We could have done more for the besieged city of Sarajevo, where snipers were killing innocent civilians every day. We could have done more in Srebrenica, in Rwanda and in Congo. This is a painful insight. But it is a necessary one if we are to prevent similar events in the future" (Freivalds, 2004, p. 11).

These changes indicated the beginning of the movement away from neutrality in Swedish foreign, security, and defense policies and signified a desire to be more involved in European security. FM Freivalds laid out the intent for Sweden to be actively engaged in preventing human rights transgressions both in the European theater, but also beyond.

The Common Security and Defense Policy and EU Battle Groups

During this time frame, discussions of the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and EU battle groups were emerging in Europe. The initial concept of the EU battle groups began in 1999 and was further outlined in February 2004. In 2004, the Swedish government bill 'Our Future Defence' (Prop. 2004/05: 5) proposed further reforms aimed at transforming its military forces from a 'defence force against invasion' to a 'mobile, flexible operational defence' and involving 'radical transformation both in terms of size and structure' (Möller & Bjereld, 2010). Thus, the Swedish military was organized for both national defense and international interoperability.

In December of 2004, another bill was presented by the Defense Minister, Leni Björklund, a Social Democrat, to the Swedish government in order to develop and activate an EU battle group to strengthen the EU's security posture.

This bill was soon passed in 2005. Sweden, along with Finland, Norway, Estonia and Ireland, formed the Nordic Battle Group. This military group was unique as it consists of two other neutral European countries (Finland and Ireland) and contained only "small" European states, as defined by Molis (2006). This interesting political initiative codified Sweden's focus away from traditional armed neutrality and territorial defense, and firmly entrenched its position on EU security. Though not called upon to date, the Nordic Battle Group established the potential for foreign military action, and expanded Sweden's international military influence and capacity.

A 2007 quote from Lt. Gen. Mats Nilsson, chief of staff of the Swedish armed forces and commander of the armed forces headquarters, provided insight into how and where the Swedish defense decision makers envisioned their military operating. "Sweden today is an active partner in international operations … conducting operations on three continents under U.N., NATO and EU commands. … We have a very clear designation from our political leaders to be a professional contributor, together with other countries, in fulfilling the missions we see together in the world" (Ackerman, 2007). The General was clear that the political elites desired Sweden's active involvement in a variety of military missions that both fit its abilities and foreign policy priorities.

A brief summary of the EU battle groups' origins and intended use is provided for better clarity of understanding. The initial concept of the EU battle groups can be traced back to the 1999 Council summit held in Helsinki. The ensuing "Headline Goal 2003" proposed a military force of up to 60,000

personnel with special attention given to a 'rapid reaction capability.' The Franco-British summit held in February 2004 further elaborated on the concept of a small-sized rapid response element, resulting in the battle group concept being included in the Headline Goal 2010. However *Operation Artemis,* executed later in June 2003, highlighted the viability and practicality of a smaller rapid reaction force. *Operation Artemis* provided EU policymakers with a real-life template for future rapid response deployments. The battle groups were in many ways modeled on UN force packages and intended to respond to a variety of situations around the globe from far away regions in Asia and Africa to closer locations in the Balkans (Lindström, 2007).

Swedish Defense Production and Armed Forces Structure

Even though Sweden was a neutral country, it maintained a substantial arms production industry. The industrial complex coupled with mandatory conscription up until 2010 meant that Sweden's active army may have been comparatively small, but they had the ability to amass a substantial army relatively quickly. "The long lasting era of peace began in 1814, but it remained a peace backed always by moderate defensive strength" (Scot, 1988).

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Sweden has optimized and streamlined its defense structure, placing emphasis on interoperability with UN, NATO, and EU partners over the conventional defense of its national territory. As such, it has moved away from the area command structure with defense assets, comprised of combat brigades, focused on different regions of the country. The defense forces are now streamlined into different regiments, which

provide more flexibility, greater mobility, and a more dynamic force which can operate autonomously or integrate with partner forces. This more modern structure maximized the efficiency of the armed forces, therefore reducing the number of troops, amount of equipment required to complete missions, and the funds required to sustain the military (Bailes, Herolf & Sundelius, 2006). According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditures Database, Sweden has reduced defense spending by half over the past 25 years as a percentage of gross domestic product, falling from 2.6% in 1988 to 1.3% in 2010 (SIPRI, 2010).

The reorganization of the defense structure was important to neutrality as it marked one more way that Sweden was actively moving away from the ideal of armed neutrality. By definition, armed neutrality provided a force for defensive protection in the case of attack. The previous area defense forces were well designed to perform that sort of mission. However the newer regimental forces were designed for mobility and interoperability, neither of which aligned well with the concept of armed neutrality. Additionally the reorganization of the military was a more definitive and enduring change backed by the funding for the reorganization. Rhetorical statements made by political elites and decision makers indicated ideas of neutrality were shifting conceptually. However, the actual planning, funding and execution of a military transformation showed in a more tangible way that Sweden no longer had the intent to remain an armed neutral country, but instead had the intent to cooperate more closely with other militaries.

In 2005 and 2006, FM Freivalds continued to assert the importance of security partnerships and retained the position that it is in Sweden's security interests to maintain affiliation with groups such as NATO, the UN and the EU. FM Freivalds focused on strengthening international cooperation and Sweden's role in peacekeeping operations, nation building, and safeguarding human rights.

D. 2004-Present: Current Swedish Foreign Policy

The Alliance and its Foreign Policy Agenda

As mentioned previously, The Alliance political bloc was created in 2004. As a result of the Alliance bloc, and the continued emphasis placed on globalization and integration of international markets, the Moderate Party returned to power during the 2006 election. This time Fredrik Reinfeldt led the government as Prime Minister while Carl Bildt (Prime Minister from 1991-1994) filled the role of Foreign Minister. This is a position where FM Bildt again had the ability to directly impact foreign and domestic policy. In his first Foreign Policy Statement in 2007, his identification of neutrality indicates a decisive break. Since 2003 the concept of neutrality was sidelined by the concept of international cooperation without explicitly stating that Sweden was no longer neutral. However, Carl Bildt made the bold statement that the policy of neutrality was tied to the past, suggesting that Sweden's future laid with EU integration and would no longer embrace neutrality as a central tenet of its foreign policy. In his opening statement in 2007, FM Bildt explicitly outlined the concept that neutrality was no longer the primary objective. His significant departure from neutrality justified the inclusion of the full section of text.

> "Through membership of the political alliance that the European Union constitutes, Sweden has broken away from a tradition dating back to 1812. For almost two centuries after that date, our policy was ultimately about trying to prevent our country from being drawn into the general European war that was always a looming threat. During the latter part of the last century, it was this endeavor that led to the policy often called a policy of neutrality.
>
> This was a policy that in all essentials served us well – a point we must not disregard when we now discuss more openly the manner in which it was conducted or presented.
>
> However, the fall of the Soviet dictatorship and its empire, combined with increasingly intense European integration, created a fundamentally new situation.
>
> It was natural for Sweden to join the European Union and, by participating in the Union's efforts to gradually strengthen cooperation and integration between the democracies of Europe, help build a new order of peace in our part of the world.
>
> A vital task for Sweden today is to contribute to even stronger European cooperation, making the Union the force in the service of peace, freedom and reconciliation that the world more and more obviously needs.
>
> We therefore want Sweden to be at the heart of European cooperation. This is why cooperation within the European Union has a special status in Swedish foreign and security policy.
>
> Sweden is currently taking part in peace-keeping missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan, and off the coast of Lebanon. Together with Norway we are preparing a mission in Darfur in Sudan. Preparations are continuing for the Nordic Battle Group that will be at the disposal of the European Union during the first half of 2008" (Bildt, 2007, p. 1).

In 2008 Sweden led the Nordic Battle Group during its first on-call rotation. Bildt highlighted the battle group while also suggesting a deeper cooperation with NATO and the aim to bring foreign policy, aid policy, and defense policy closer together. 2009 was dominated by Sweden's rotational EU presidency and Sweden's desire to place emphasis on the EU's growing global role. Sweden

leveraged its role as EU president to cement concepts of European cohesion. In February 2010, FM Bildt further suggested a more defined defense relationship and solidarity among the EU member countries as defined under the CDSP.

> "Membership of the European Union means that Sweden is part of a political alliance and takes its share of responsibility, in the spirit of solidarity, for Europe's security. Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is similarly affected" (p. 3).

After the 2010 elections, The Alliance continued to lead the government, and FM Bildt was able to continue the EU and global engagement agenda, further entrenching Sweden as a globally committed actor. His 2011 Foreign Policy Statement restated the same emphasis on Sweden's solidarity with the EU and its intent to act in the event of an attack or disaster. These ideas conceptually invoked NATO's Article 5.

The Divide Between the Political Elite and the General Population

It must be noted however that the political elite have been well aware of the population's attachment to their neutral identity and desire to remain militarily non-aligned. The Moderate Party political elite therefore have kept the discussion of neutrality within the population's comfort zone (Devine, 2011). Magnus Christiansson (2010) suggested that policy makers achieved this balance by "conceptually stretching" terms such as *solidarity* and *sovereignty*. He went on to suggest the Swedish government engaged in a *two-level game* as it tried to "protect its perceived interests 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" (p. 5). As early as 2004, the Swedish

government highlighted the concept of *solidarity* when referring to EU and UN support that could include military assistance in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack. To the international audience, Sweden was seemingly aligned with the EU on matters of security. However for the Swedish audience, the word *solidarity,* used in the context of crisis support, was an acceptable alternative to the concept of *military alignment*. Representing the EU as a "security cooperation platform" did not infringe on Sweden's foreign policy agenda. Though the Swedish population was willing to "stretch" their conceptualization of *solidarity* to include crisis support; they were still not ready for a full military alliance or membership in NATO.

According to Lödén (2012), a 2010 opinion poll indicated that 50% of the Swedish citizens polled disapproved of a Swedish NATO membership, while only 23% approved of NATO membership. Further, the Moderate Party led government stated clearly, "that NATO membership will not be considered as a viable option as long as the Social Democrats are against it" (Lödén, 2012, p. 277).

In 2010 SIPRI published its most recent edition of EU-27 Watch, an analysis of discourse on European policies. This analysis provided insight to the public discourse in regards to Swedish defense issues. The issues explored went beyond joining NATO and included the concept of *military non-alignment*, EU membership, and the affects of other EU policies and institutions. SIPRI reported that "Swedes do not generally see non-alignment as the decisive factor for security in Sweden". It detailed that 43% of Swedes view military non-

alignment as having a positive effect on Swedish security, but other factors were even more important. Fifty-two percent of Swedish poll responders saw Swedish membership in the EU as positive for Swedish security, 52% also viewed Swedish participation in the CFSP as a positive contributor to security, and 49% felt that European Security and Defense Policy missions were positive for Swedish security (SIPRI, 2010). Though the numbers were all relatively close, the analysis suggested that the Swedish population was also starting to conceptualize their security within the context of the EU.

Deploying Combat Aircraft to Libya

In March 2010, UN Security Council Resolution 1973 authorized NATO to enforce a No-Fly Zone in Libya to *protect* citizens. Subsequently, the United States invoked the '*responsibility to protect principle'* in its case for intervention in Libya, thus lending an international legitimacy to the '*responsibility to protect'* model in foreign policy. When NATO requested Swedish support with operations in Libya, the Swedish government almost unanimously supported a proposition to contribute eight fighter jets. However, in order to achieve political unity among the Moderate Party led government and the Social Democrat led opposition, the mission was restricted to upholding the no-fly zone, and specifically excluded attacks on ground forces (Lödén, 2012). In April 2011 Sweden deployed combat aircraft to Libya together with NATO under the PfP program. This was the first time Sweden deployed its military in a combat purpose alongside a military alliance.

The 2012 Foreign Policy Statement explicitly asserted that Swedish security is reliant on EU partnerships and that Sweden should expect both to provide and receive military support if the need arises. This statement provides irrefutable proof that Swedish political elites no longer embrace neutrality as a tenet of their foreign policy.

> "Sweden's security is built in solidarity with others. Threats to peace and security are deterred collectively and in cooperation with other countries and organisations.
>
> Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is similarly affected. We must be in a position to both give and receive support, civilian and military" (Bildt, 2012).

The evolution of the annual Foreign Policy Statements showed how Sweden's concepts of neutrality and foreign, security and defense policies have changed over the past 15 years. Joining the EU clearly made a significant impact. However, there are other factors that additionally impacted these changes. To say that joining the EU was the sole impetus to Sweden's change on neutrality would be simplistic. It was important to uncover and explore the other layers in order to understand the change. As new threats to security emerged, the traditional principle of "national security" focused on external borders evolved to encompass non-state actors. These new entities posed a threat more to a population's security than to a nation's borders and for that reason new counter mechanisms were required.

SECTION 7:

CONCLUSION

This thesis demonstrated that a variety of factors have contributed to Sweden's changing stance on neutrality. The electorate, though interested in Sweden's neutrality, and foreign and security policies, prioritized domestic issues when electing its national level leadership. The government leadership understood the population's wariness of formal security alliances, such as NATO. Due to this understanding, they ultimately used terminology to set Sweden's foreign policy agenda, which includes the concept of neutrality, within the scope of the population's comfort zone.

There have been several major events that set the stage for Sweden's shift away from neutrality. First, the collapse of the Swedish economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s required a change that created room for other ideas and parties to gain an increase in support. From the ascendancy of these generally more conservative parties came Sweden's development of a more globally competitive economic policy. Support for globalization extended beyond the economy to incorporate other policy areas as Sweden joined the EU.

The collapse of the Soviet Union reduced the military need for Sweden's neutrality. With a new multi-polar, global landscape, a strict interpretation of armed neutrality hindered Sweden's options to respond to international crises, such as the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo in 1999. After the events in Kosovo, both the public and policy makers were ready to accept a reorientation of their view on neutrality. The government has changed the Swedish policy on

neutrality in response to geopolitical events such as the end of the Cold War, membership in the European Union, and humanitarian crises in Kosovo and elsewhere.

During the course of Sweden's neutrality re-imagination, policy makers guided the discourse away from the traditional Swedish concept of armed neutrality towards a new model that leveraged Swedish neutrality and created an altruistic platform from which Sweden could act as humanitarian caretakers with a responsibility to protect vulnerable populations. This new identity meshed well with the Swedish welfare model and still remained consistent with the principles that underpinned the country's historic neutrality.

As Sweden re-imagined its international role, the events following September 11th unfolded and provided opportunities for the new form of non-military engagement to be applied and tested. The PfP allowed Sweden to partner with NATO without having to join, so Sweden was able to contribute to missions in Afghanistan and Libya within its own framework of humanitarian protection while still benefitting from the security and support structures in place for extended engagement and military backup if needed.

Sweden's current foreign policy and security position is based on solidarity with the EU. FM Bildt further specified that Sweden would not remain passive if another EU country were attacked, and that Sweden should be ready to provide military support if needed. This new security orientation is decidedly no longer neutral, but it also has not been tested.

The findings of this thesis in regards to the contributing factors to Sweden's changing stance on neutrality can be summed up as the following. Domestic factors determined which party or coalition controlled the government and with it the ability to set and change policy. External factors determined the global environment in which the government would have to interact, operate, and respond. It was the political policy makers that ultimately made the decisions that have changed Sweden's stance on neutrality. Though Sweden is not an antagonistic power, it has decisively departed from its historic neutral roots, and is poised for deepening military cooperation.

Table 1: *Important Election Issues*

How important were the following issues for your party choice in the parliamentary election?									
Issue	1988	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	Averages 1998-2010	
Employment	NR	97.19	53.66	**89.62**	89.25	**89.41**	**88.43**	**89.18**	**Employment**
Schools & Education	NR	NR	10.47	89.6	**91.94**	87.39	86.51	88.86	Schools & Education
Swedish Economy	NR	**98.07**	44.42	89.49	90.68	87.57	86.74	88.62	Swedish Economy
Health Care	NR	97.92	23.87	87.63	91.83	85.41	83.41	87.07	Health Care
Elderly Care	NR	NR	NR	76.85	82.74	77.3	73.02	77.48	Elderly Care
Private Economy	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	77.26	72.79	75.03	Private Economy
Taxes	NR	95.62	25.56	73.89	75.58	73.91	72.62	74.00	Taxes
Child Care	NR	90.16	13.26	72.01	81.09	71.91	68.79	73.45	Child Care
Environment	NR	95.78	**56.01**	67.36	76.88	72.03	75.15	72.86	Environment
Gender Equality	NR	NR	6.11	64.58	74.53	68.23	67.35	68.67	Gender Equality
Energy & nuclear power	NR	NR	NR	63.26	64.91	71.8	66.55	66.63	Energy & nuclear power
Conditions for Business	NR	NR	NR	65.02	67.92	69.38	62.75	66.27	Conditions for Business
Law & order	NR	93.44	7.73	71.31	80.86	75.39	67.55	66.05	Law & order
Foreign & Security Policy	NR	90.73	2.25	NR	68.44	60.69	53.74	60.96	Foreign & Security Policy
Pensions	NR	91.86	10.89	59.38	NR	NR	61.58	60.48	Pensions
Refugees/Immigration	NR	80.38	6.9	47.13	69.44	50.1	58.67	56.34	Refugees/Immigration
EC/EU/EMU	NR	86.75	12.3	57.62	62.64	51.41	40.06	52.93	EC/EU/EMU
Troops in Afghanistan	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	30.52	30.52	Troops in Afghanistan

Highlighting and shading: Numbers highlighted in red represent the three most important issues to voters each year. The number that is also bolded is the singular most important issue of the year. Under the averages column blue shaded boxes represent issues that averaged over 80% importance with voters. The green shaded boxes contain averages over 70%, while yellow boxes represent averages over 60%. The rows highlighted in gray are those issues pertaining to foreign, security and defense policy and external matters that may affect the concept of neutrality. NR stands for not recorded.

Chart 1: *Social Democrat Party Election Trend*

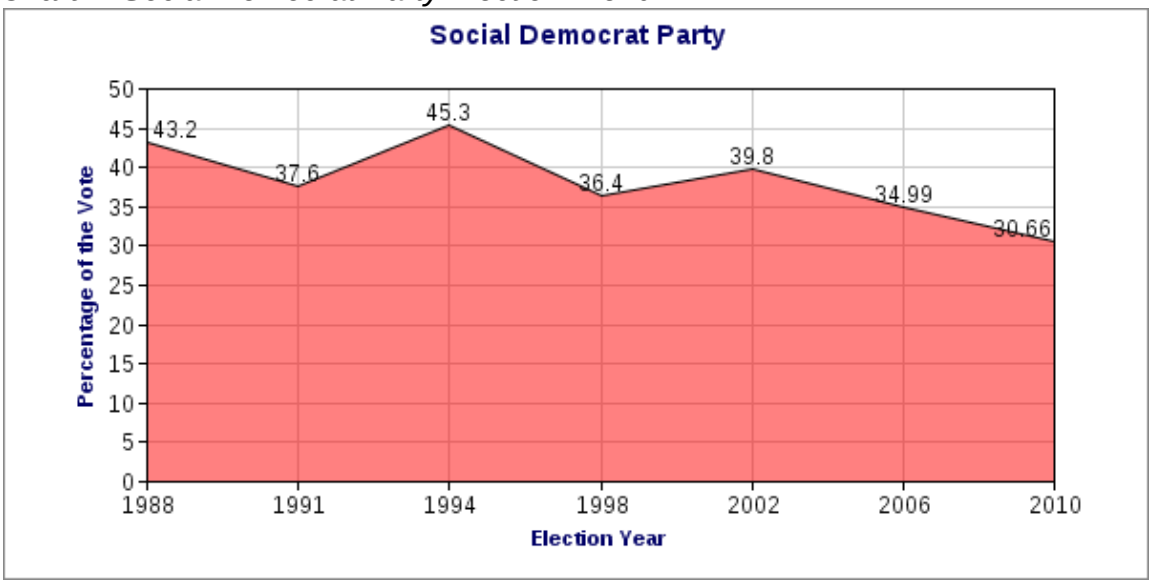


Chart 2: *The Moderate Party Election Trend*

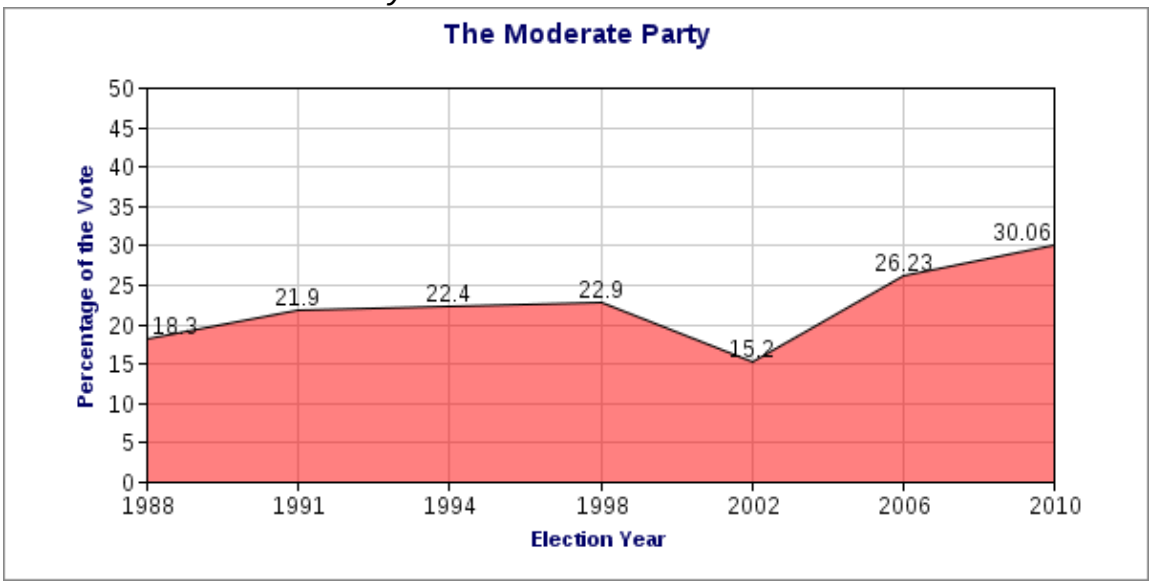


Chart 3: *Left and Right Group Election Results Comparison*

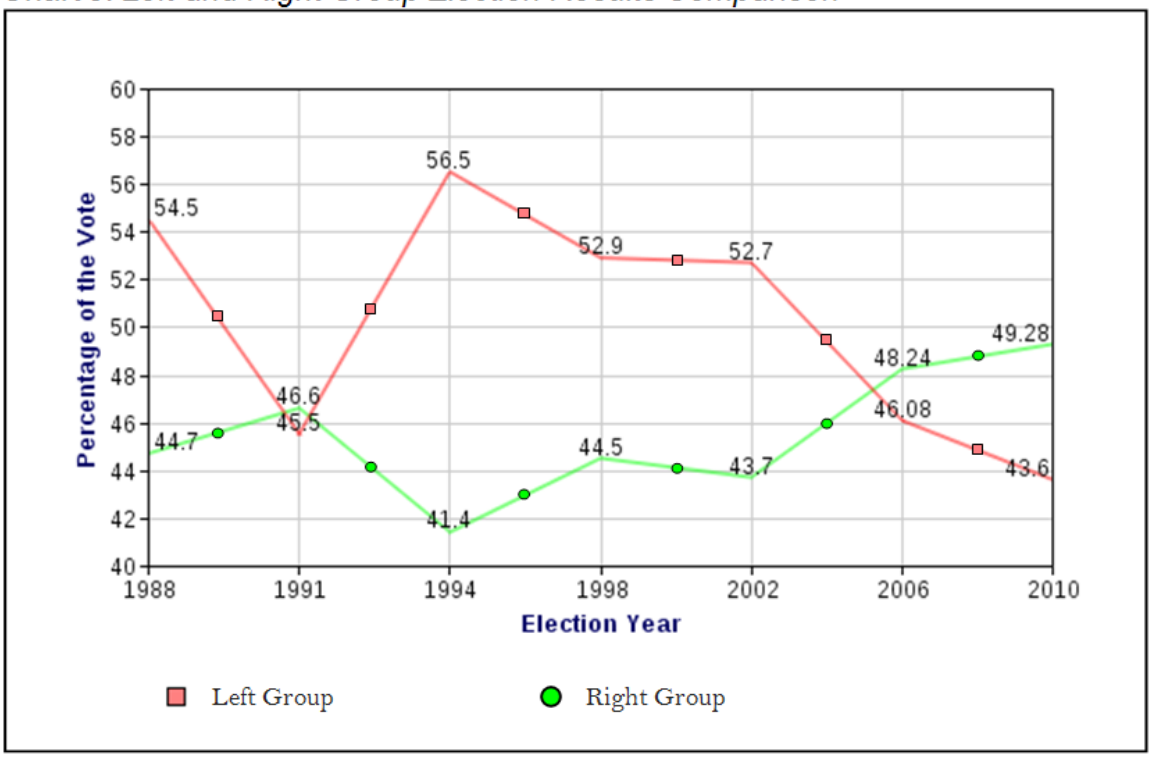
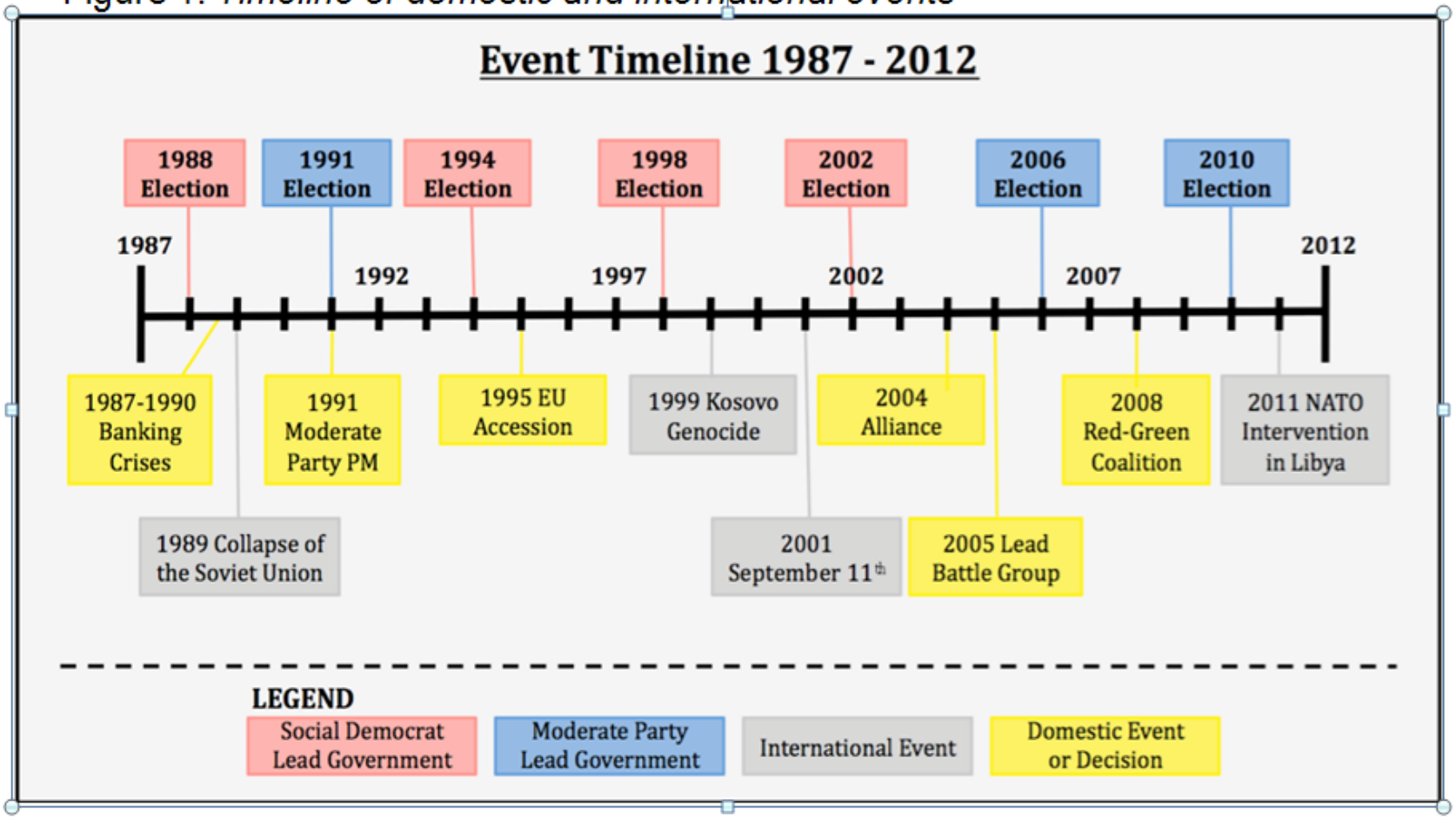


Figure 1: *Timeline of domestic and international events*



SECTION 9:

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