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Nordic States: Towards Unity or Diversity?

Abstract: The aim of the article is to examine whether Nordic area can be regarded as a homogenous and successfully cooperating region, which is providing one unified political front. Considering many similarities between Nordic states, as for example shared values (equality, women rights, common love of democracy, peace and welfare state), one could say that Nordic states constitute a single and unitary area. What is more, the linguistic, cultural and historical closeness of those states is a fact, but at the same time many differences can be pointed, especially considering their security and foreign policies. Those aspects seem to be the main obstacle in introducing full cooperation in the region. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that current international developments and appearance of new threats to security are influencing the Nordic states which, as a result, are changing their attitudes towards security policy. Those factors could lead to introducing new dimensions of their cooperation.

Keywords: *Nordic states, security, foreign policy, cooperation, neutrality*

Introduction

Nordic countries are often perceived as being similar owing to their shared history, culture and values (Lawler, 1997; Archer, 2007). Geographical vicinity and their peripheral location in Europe also influenced the establishment of special ties between them. In international relations the whole area is perceived as culturally and ideologically homogenous. Already in the times of World War I the region appeared to be seen as a political, economic and social unity rather than a group of separate states (Gebhart, 2013, p. 368).

The aim of this article is to examine, whether Nordic states can be actually regarded as a united region, composing its own specific common policy lines and cooperating

multidimensionally. It is undeniable that there are long traditions of cooperation within the Nordic area. Their legal systems and social policies are similar. Cooperation within peace promotion, development aid, culture and science are flourishing. But at the same time many contradictions can be listed, for instance within their defence and foreign policy, attitude towards European Union and European integration. The first hypothesis that will be tested in the article states that security and foreign policy were until now the main obstacle in achieving full Nordic cooperation, however not fully preventing the cooperative initiatives. The second hypothesis is that European integration processes automatically opened the region on security cooperation as well. The third hypothesis concerns the fact that current situation in Europe (the Ukrainian crisis and the refugee crisis) can boost revival of cooperation among Nordic states, especially in security areas.

The research conducted in the article is based on comparative approach. Policies of certain Nordic states have been compared, with special focus put on their security and foreign policies, since until now they seemed to be the main differentiating aspects limiting possibilities of full Nordic cooperation.

The Early Scandinavism

Creating a uniform region in Nordic area began with the attempts of uniting Scandinavian states. Scandinavism means a way of thinking about all three Scandinavian states¹ as a unity. First attempts to unite Scandinavia happened in Medieval Ages, however the idea flourished only between 1830s and 1860s. In Medieval Ages unification endeavours derived mostly from dynastic policy and feudal order. Scandinavia became united under one crown for the first time within a Kalmar Union introduced in 1397 (Grzela, 2014, p. 29). It survived until 1523, when Sweden chose a separate king Gustav I Vasa, however this fact has been accepted by Denmark in 1570. In spite of existing for more than 100 years, the weakness of Kalmar Union was evident from the beginning, mostly due to each state's different objectives in foreign policy and ambitions of widening own territories. After its dissolution, time of intensified struggle between Sweden and Denmark began. The idea of uniting Scandinavia under a single monarch did not die, however the strongest states (especially Denmark and Sweden) had their own visions of Scandinavia under their leadership, instead of all being equal. Latter attempts of creating personal unions were first uniting Denmark and Norway from 1537 until 1814 and later formulating a Swedish-Norwegian union

¹ Nordic area has a wider range and encompasses Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland and Sweden. Scandinavian states are only Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

(Cieślak, 1969). The creation of a legal form, which in fact guaranteed existence of two separate states with two separate state systems linked by a common ruler and foreign policy, allowed peaceful coexistence, at least in the first period. The United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway existed from 1814 until 1905 (Berg, 2014, p. 266). The tradition of most commonly personal unions between Nordic states gave a foundation for cohesion in this region, especially on legal grounds. Already in 1880s Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden started to harmonize their legislation. (Gebhart, 2013, p. 368).

Introducing similar legal solutions at least to some extent favoured future cooperation. What is more, being united under one monarch, sharing common history and mutual cultural development contributed to the contemporary cooperative initiatives. It can be said, that historical experience makes cooperation easy and natural in the region. However, all the attempts to create a united Scandinavian state did not succeed, mostly owing to the turbulent times and weakness of personal unions. The latter period was much more favourable for cooperative endeavours. Economic and cultural cooperation flourished already in the 19th Century. (Cieślak, 1978, p. 74–5). All this resulted in bringing Nordic states closer and influenced future shape of their cooperation.

In the 19th Century Sweden, Denmark and Norway created a monetary union – in 1874 Denmark and Sweden introduced common currency and Norway joined them one year later. The union meant, that gold and other coins could circulate freely between those states and from the 1901 banknotes as well (Henriksen & Kærgård, 1995, p. 91). It is worth noticing, that the union introduced common unit of currency and preserved for central banks of each state control over monetary policy (Bergman, 1999, p. 363). After the crisis within the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway, the monetary union has weakened significantly and the outburst of World War I was equal to its end. Almost simultaneously, in 1872 the first congress of lawyers has been organized and the elaboration on standardizing administration, civic, mercantile and trade law in Scandinavian states began. What is more, intergovernmental and parliamentary cooperation has been established already in the early 20th Century. The main area of cooperation focused on social policy aspects (Grzela, 2014, p. 31). From the beginning, it was obvious that the main field of collaboration would be rather soft aspects of state's policy such as health protection, cultural and linguistic cooperation, social insurances etc. Nevertheless, some convergent interests within security and foreign policies of Nordic states could be found as well.

Creating Nordic Economic, Cultural and Social Cooperation

From the end of World War I and interwar period, further steps approaching the construction of Nordic cooperation were undertaken. Regular meetings of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Ministers for Education, Ministers for Social Security, Ministers for Justice and Ministers for Trade were held and the pressure for closer cooperation between Nordic states was increasing. The aspect of Scandinavian cooperation has been somehow naturally extended to Nordic cooperation, encompassing Finland and Iceland as well. There were many non-governmental organizations with word 'Nordic' in their names, aimed at deepening Nordic bounds and the range of collaboration (Grzela, 2014, p. 32).

After the end of World War II, it was obvious that the Nordic area would face new challenges to their relations. First of all, Finland found itself in a hard position of being under Soviet influence to some extent. In 1948 Finland and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance, according to which Finland declared being aside of contradictory world powers (Allison, 1985, p. 19). It was a significant aspect inhibiting its freedom to cooperate with the rest of Nordic states. Neutrality of Sweden and Finland was also significant. It kept them out of the European Union until 1995 and still keeps out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and therefore distanced them from the rest of continental Europe. On the other hand, Norway, Denmark and Iceland decided on becoming members of the NATO. The natural division within Nordic states into Atlantic part (Iceland, Greenland, Norway, Faroe Island and according to some sources even Denmark) and Baltic part (Sweden, Finland, Danish islands and Karelia) (Piotrowski, 2006, p. 9) could be perceived as probably one of the biggest obstacles in elaborating successful and comprehensive cooperation within Nordic states. Despite these differences, Nordic states, being part of the NATO or not, shared a specific front within security policy, named "Nordic balance" (Lodgaard, 1992, p. 283). Although we can observe different paths chosen within foreign and security policy among the Nordic states, the willingness to cooperate did not weaken. Despite the fact of being the NATO or EU member or not, Nordic states seemed to create some kind of mosaic of strategic decisions aimed at common benefit, according to Dahl (1997, p. 175). It was evident for example in deterring from military engagement and military presence of nuclear weapons and US forces in Norway and on the other side, counteracting Soviet influence in Finland (Laurson & Olesen, 2000, p. 67).

In spite of many differentiating factors between Nordic states, the advantages of sustaining economic, cultural and social cooperation were noticed. The collaboration entered into a new stage and quality when the official structures for future coopera-

tion were introduced. In 1948 the governments of Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden created a Common Nordic Committee for Economic Cooperation, which contributed to the introduction of common market (Grzela, 2014, p. 33). In 1952 Nordic Council has been established (Nordic Council), which was meaningful in several ways. In spite of existing political tensions, Nordic states did not decide on creating joint security alliance and concentrated instead on cultural, social and economic cooperation. Nordic states assumed the possibility of Russian aggression in northern Scandinavia. Those fears became even more justified after the USSR conducted military manoeuvres in the Baltic Sea in 1950 (Piotrowski, 2006, s. 42). Taking into consideration the international instability, the need to create a forum for deepened cooperation among Nordic states was evident. Some efforts aimed at securing safety in the Nordic area have been made. In 1948 Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Osten Unden, proposed a creation of the Nordic Defence Union, but the project was not developed, mostly due to lack of mutual agreement between Sweden and Norway (Grzela, 2014, p. 33). It was the first attempt of introducing this kind of cooperation. The fiasco of the talks highlighted the dissonance between Nordic states and difficulties in cooperating on political ground. Lack of agreement in this field derived mostly from the Soviet pressure on Finland. Latter accession of Iceland and Denmark to the NATO additionally showed different priorities of their security and foreign policy.

The Nordic Council was established as a consultation body. Its decisions and recommendations were not legally binding for its members. However, it was perceived as an important tool of effective international cooperation (Piotrowski, 2006, p. 45). It is worth mentioning that it was established in the first stage of the Cold War, which was characterised by high uncertainty of international situation, which made it even more difficult to develop effective and complex structures of this organisation. Nevertheless, it was a kind of pioneer in the field of, for example, international economic cooperation, as Rome Treaty was introduced only in 1957. Next to the Nordic Council, another important institution of Nordic cooperation has been established in 1971 – the Nordic Council of Ministers.

As a political cooperation within common security system could not be achieved, at least not at the time, the main focus of Nordic activities concentrated on economic aspects. Efforts have been accompanied by European implementation of the European Economic Cooperation. During the Nordic Council's summits, economic integration has been discussed vividly. In 1957 in Helsinki, Sweden, Norway and Denmark voiced their interest concerning British proposal of creating common free trade area, which was perceived as a prelude to future Nordic customs union (Cooperation Report by the Nordic Economic Cooperation Committee, 1958). The way towards economic

cooperation was far from easy though. The creation of European Economic Cooperation however, seemed to be a solid motivation for Nordic countries, which were disturbed by potential economic consequences of their isolation. Introducing a common market or customs union among all Nordic countries was not possible, nevertheless after many efforts the European Free Trade Association has been established in 1959 (Phinnemore, 1996, pp. 32–47). The new association encompassed Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Switzerland, Austria, Portugal and Great Britain. After certain period of time, almost all its participants decided on integrating with European structures. Nevertheless, in the first stage, the EFTA allowed Nordic countries to safeguard their economic interests.

In the face of growing interest in the European Community among Nordic states, most of the economic aspects of cooperation were excluded from Nordic Council. In 1992 a decision was made to limit the areas of cooperation within the organisation. The selected priorities were culture, education, development, research, environment, equal rights and fishing as spheres mostly benefiting to the whole region. At the same time, a significant change has been introduced. Joint consultations in cases of common interests and aspects discussed on the European forum could be held from now on (The Helsinki Treaty of Cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, 1993). It was a sign of developing political cooperation in the sense of elaborating common position of all Nordic states. At the same time, the core idea of Nordic cooperation still focused on rather cultural than political aspects.

Main Areas of Nordic Contradictions

The main objectives of Nordic cooperation, in spite of many ambitious plans and expectations, concentrated on the aspects of culture, health, law etc. Political cooperation was limited as a result of internal differences among Nordic countries. As has been noted above, a significant factor differentiating Nordic countries was the fact that each of them differently perceived European integration process, the meaning of NATO as a safeguard of European safety and stabilization and last but not least, their neutral status in international relations.

Neutrality and NATO Participation

Finland was marginalized as a result of its relations with the USSR. What is more, together with certain political dependence, the case of neutrality as a tool of security policy must be mentioned. Soviet objective was to retain Finland away from any forms of international cooperation - economic, political and most significantly – military. It

was undeniably the factor impeding the possible cooperation within Nordic region, as most of the early initiatives did not succeed. The president Urho Kekkonen declared official neutrality as a continuum in Finnish policy, in accordance with the Soviet expectations (Dośpiał-Borysiak, 2007, p. 35). Such decision had strictly political significance, as it was one way of safeguarding at least some range of Finnish independence. Finland did not decide to join EFTA in 1960 and stayed outside the organisation until 1986, cooperating with its members only on the grounds of FINNEFTA agreement (Browning, 2008, p. 201–2). However, Finland decided on undertaking certain diversification of its external economic contacts in the 1970s, when in 1973 an agreement between Finland and EEC has been signed (Tiilikainen, 2001, p. 39). This could already have implied, that under favourable circumstances Finland would gravitate towards West rather than East. International situation in the 21st Century is already contributing to undergoing changes within security and foreign policy. In 2007 Finnish prime minister Matti Vanhanen announced the possibility of Finland joining NATO Responce Force. Additionally, the 2009 Finnish Security and Defence Policy assumed the possibility of full membership in NATO.

Sweden is another Nordic state officially following its policy of neutrality, however contrary to Finland, it was its internal and independent decision. Similar with Finland, this is one of the factors limiting possibilities of deeper cooperation within the region, however to a much lesser extent. Sweden is not a state perpetually neutral as it has no legal grounds of such status, therefore the aspect of neutrality could be changed easily. Its tradition derives from the Napoleonic Wars and lost war with Russia over Finland. The first official declaration of neutrality has been announced in 1834 by Charles XIV (Scott, 1977, p. 320). Like in case of Finland, policy of neutrality is in decline from the beginning of 1990s. Sweden's joining the European Union could be perceived as the end of political non-alignment. Nevertheless, it is still one of the core elements of Swedish national identity. Generally speaking, nowadays Swedish policy of neutrality can be perceived as based on the military nonalignment combined with active engagement towards promoting peace and political engagement. This is accomplished through Nordic cooperation, the EU, activity within the United Nations and, for more than two decades now, cooperating with the NATO to some extent.

Denmark is definitely a state with traditions visibly distant from the rest of Nordic countries. It has also experience of neutrality, however after World War II it has focused on its possible interests with continental Europe. During World War I Denmark declared neutrality together with Sweden and Norway in Malmö in 1914 (Karlsson, 2009, p. 61). After World War II Denmark decided to change its foreign and security policy, focusing rather on possible advantages of cooperating with continental Europe instead of isolation. Norway's experience with neutrality seems to be to some extent

similar to the Danish. Norway as well stayed remained neutral during World War I. The same effort has been made at the outburst of the World War II. However, Norway's neutrality has been violated after the Nazi's attack in 1940 (Killham, 1993, p. 82–83). After war, differences in the concept of further security policy between Sweden and Norway were most evident. While Sweden strived for neutral defence alliance of Nordic states, Norway preferred to protect its own security by providing external financial and military support (Lindgren, 1959, p. 264). The NATO from the beginning constituted an important element of Norwegian security policy, however at the same time Norway insisted on rather limited partnership by keeping its territories free of NATO's troops or nuclear weapons. The same thing concerned Denmark. Both those states strived for their security guaranteed by the NATO together with balancing potential risk of provoking the USSR (Bailes, 2012, p. 158). As a member, Norway had a substantial significance within the organization as being located in the so called northern flank. Nowadays, potential interest of Sweden and Finland in joining the NATO would have similar value, as the northern flank would then be fully closed.

Iceland is the smallest of Nordic states, which until the end of World War I was dependant, first from Norway and then from Denmark. It gained national independence in 1918. Owing to its geographical location, it stayed outside main trade and migration paths and therefore its economic and political significance was rather low. Being afraid of possible British influence, Iceland proclaimed neutrality in 1918. Before the World War II, Iceland sought for cooperation with Great Britain as a way of safeguarding own security (Whittaker & Thorsteinsson, 2015). Taking into consideration its geostrategic location, Iceland became a significant state for NATO. Therefore, after World War II, Iceland decided to shape its foreign and security policy in similar way to Norway, choosing the NATO as a guarantor of its safety. What is more, in 1951 Iceland signed an agreement with the United States, stating that they will take over the responsibility to defend Iceland (Kaplan, 2004, p. 26). Iceland is the only Nordic state so deeply dependant on the NATO structures and mechanisms as a mean of safeguarding its security.

The Cold War era showed some differences in the Nordic region, which previously was perceived as rather uniform, especially in the field of following neutrality in foreign policy. This aspect is deeply connected with the debate on joining the NATO and perceiving it as a guarantor of their security. In spite of visible division between Nordic states – Danes, Norwegians and Icelanders decided on joining the NATO, while Sweden and Finland remained neutral – decision makers insisted on the need of preserving Nordic solidarity. However, in practice, different visions of security policy among all the Nordic states resulted in taking decisions not necessarily with respect to this declared rule (Bailes, 2012, p. 159). A conclusion could be made,

that while Nordics notice their kinship and geopolitical incentives for cooperation, they are much better at uniting within social, cultural and judicial areas. However, at the same time, this feeling of kinship combined with changing international and geopolitical factors is pushing those states to develop and expand their cooperation in military field as well. An excellent example for this could be the creation of the NORDEFSCO. Another factor enhancing military cooperation in the region could be full Nordic participation in the NATO.

European Integration

Another area differentiating Nordic states is the European integration process. Again, the traditions of neutrality as well as strong national identities and attachment to independence resulted in hesitancy to joining European Union or if being EU member, participating in some of its dimensions of cooperation.

Sweden, contrary to Finland, much earlier sought possible forms of cooperation with continental Europe. Already in the 1970s Sweden started negotiations with the European Community concerning creating closer, deeper and more durable ties (Arter, 1993, p. 222). Economic aspects were particularly significant to growing Swedish openness. Swedish international trade with the EEC encompassed 50% of all revenues after Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined it (Dośpiał-Borysiak, 2007, p. 27). The economic turndown, which haunted Sweden at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s gave another reason for joining the EU, which happened in 1995, together with Finland and Austria. Finland, mostly owing to restrictions imposed by Moscow, did not decide on integrating with European structures earlier - only in 1986 it joined the EFTA. Sweden's interest in joining the EU together with *perestroika* in the Soviet Union worked as an incentive for Finland in redefining its foreign policy. Also the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States was perceived in Helsinki as a potential threat (Blank, 1996, p. 7). What is more, for Finland EU membership could be a kind of a comeback to Europe.

Sweden's and Finland's joint accession could be seen as an introduction of Nordic front in the EU in respect to their common interests (Dosenrode, 2004). On the other hand, Carmen Gebhart (2013, p. 366–367) argues, that taking into consideration visible competition in the field of the Northern Dimension introduced in the EU by Finland and the Baltic Sea Region initiative introduced by Sweden, such tandem could be challenged. Nevertheless, joining the EU and the aspect of ESDP made a significant change both in Swedish and Finnish security policy – instead of neutrality, military non-alignment has been introduced. It shows a slow shift in those countries' perception of security policy. While in the 1990s active participation

in peacekeeping and crisis management were fully acceptable, new security threats push those changes even further. Sweden and Finland are not any more absolutely excluding the possibility of joining the NATO in the future (Finnish Security and Defence Policy, 2009). During last 15 years the support for joining NATO in Finland has grown by 6% – from 21% in 2000 to 27% at the beginning of 2015 (Kuzmiak, 2013, p. 466; Henzel, 2015). Finland is already cooperating extensively with the NATO - in 1992 it became an observer in North Atlantic Cooperation Council (Jussila, Hentilä & Nevakivi, 2001, p. 386) and since 1994 a member of the Partnership for Peace. Finnish contribution to the NATO is mostly connected with joint exercises and training programmes – for example VIKING or US BALTOPS (Kuzmiak, 2013, p. 461). Similar thing happens in Sweden. The crisis in Ukraine, which began in 2013, and the incident with Russian submarine in the area of Stockholm in 2014 contributed to current instability of international situation. At the beginning of 2015, 33% of Swedes were positive towards joining the NATO (in 2012 it was only 17%) with 37% against (45% in 2013) (“Nearly one-third of Swedes want to join NATO”, 2015).

Denmark voiced its interest in the European Union much earlier than Sweden and Finland, which may be derived from the change in neutrality policy after World War II. The main trade partner for Denmark was Great Britain. Therefore, Denmark eagerly joined the EFTA in 1960 and one year later decided on applying to the EEC (Dośpiał-Borysiak, 2007, p. 12). The referendum was held in 1972 with the turnout of 90,1%. 63,3% voted for joining the EEC, which was a big surprise (Kelstrup, 2014, p. 15). Danish integration with continental Europe may have suggested that cooperation within the EEC and later the EU was more significant than the Nordic one. Economic interests seemed to dominate Danish policies and distanced Denmark from the rest of Nordic states. But at the same time, a reluctance, at least to some extent, towards deepening of European integration could be noticed. It concerned particularly the field of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, from which Denmark was excluded (Gourlay, Remacle, 1998, p. 62–63). For Denmark European integration was a way of protecting mostly its economic interests, combined with reluctance towards too broad political and security cooperation. Almost the same reasons brought Sweden and Finland to European Union, however in case of those two states, some geopolitical factors and the influence of policy of neutrality delayed their actual entering into European structures.

Norway decided to stay outside the European Union, in spite of undertaking some efforts aimed at integration. Generally, as the NATO secured military interests and economically the state was secured by oil reserves in the North Sea, Norway did not need to strive for the EU membership (Ingebritsen & Larsson, 1997, p. 212–213).

Two referenda in 1972 and 1994 ended with negative decision of Norwegian electorate. However, Norway stayed close to Europe, first as a member of the EEA, later by joining the Schengen Area and engaging into the Common Foreign and Security Policy (Archer, 2004, p. 1), which the rest of the Nordic states are trying to avoid. The attempt to prevent excessive formal and organisational engagement into the European Union could arise from long struggle for Norwegian independence, at first from Denmark and then Sweden. Their autonomy and independence then were endangered by the two world wars. While joining the NATO seemed to be the only reasonable way of securing Norwegian borders, European integration was perceived as a threat to their autonomy. Staying outside the EU without a harm to their economy, especially after accession of the United Kingdom and Denmark (two biggest trade partners for Norway) was possible mostly due to thriving energy sector - at the beginning of the 21st Century gas and oil made 46% of Norway's export. At the same time their domestic needs were mostly provided by hydroelectric plants. At the beginning of the 21st Century Norway was one of the wealthiest and best developed countries in Europe (Dośpiał-Borysiak, 2007, p. 95).

At the same time, most of the commercial exchange took place with the EU members, therefore full isolation from it was not possible. Over the years, the group of most important trade partners did not change dramatically – France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Denmark had the most expanded trade contacts with Norway (Statistics Norway, 2014). The solution to enable trade contacts with the European Community and then the European Union, was signing by the EFTA countries in 1977 an agreement concerning abolition of customs duties and latter creation of the EEA. The case of already mentioned Common Foreign and Security Policy seems to be an interesting aspect in the case of Norway's relations with the EU. On the one hand, Norway did not decide to integrate formally with the EU in fear of losing its political independence, but at the same time it has engaged in a cooperation within the common foreign policy. Supposedly, this was dictated by the desire to avoid excessive political isolation in Europe. Since the CFSP has been created in 1992, the international situation has changed, as a bipolar system has collapsed. Norway lost to some extent its importance to the NATO and it was evident that Norwegians should seek additional mechanisms of safeguarding their security (Hilde, 2014, p. 102).

Iceland seems to be the most unique case of all Nordic states in the case of European integration. It is mostly dependant on its fishing and industry connected with it, which became one of the main obstacles in engaging in European integration. Iceland also felt dubious about joining the EFTA. Only in 1970 it decided on joining this organisation. Also, most of the Nordic cooperative initiatives met with rather

cold reaction – until 1982 Iceland did not decide to join common Nordic market (Lundberg-Lithman, 1987, p. 7–8).

International Situation as a Driving Force for the Nordic Unity

The current international situation with new threats to states' security, such as the Ukrainian conflict or the refugee crisis, which has started in 2015 after an escalation of the Syrian conflict are influencing the Nordic area in a significant way. The Ukrainian crisis has projected a potential threat posed by Russia, which after the collapse of bipolar world has diminished, especially for Nordic states. The Swedish security service Säpo stated that Russia has intensified its espionage activity in Sweden and probably is including war preparations. More evidence of Russia's increased interest in Sweden has been conducted lately with simulated flight attacks on Swedish targets and attempts to recruit spies. This information was presented in the Säpo annual intelligence assessment (Säkerhetspolisens årsbok, 2014, p. 60–61). Although the plans of a Russian attack on Sweden seem to be unlikely, it is not absolutely out of question. Sweden already decided on spending 6 billion SEK in order to upgrade its navy fleet in 2015 ("Sweden's military to get six billion kronor boost", 2015). Finland and Sweden also at the beginning of 2015 signed a new defence cooperation agreement which assumed possible joint action in case of war ("Sweden and Finland in joint military war plan", 2015). Already in 2009 in a report prepared by Thorvald Stoltenberg concerning Nordic cooperation on foreign and security policy, deepened cooperation in the field of creating stabilisation task forces, cooperation between foreign services and air surveillance has been suggested (Stoltenberg, 2009). All this indicates that in recent years, Nordic countries, both belonging to the NATO or not, are becoming more active in the field of military and foreign policy cooperation. The NATO factor then becomes less important for the future of Nordic cooperation and unity, especially taking into consideration Swedish and Finnish growing interest in abandoning policy of neutrality. Also already mentioned the NORDEFECO is another prove for more active Nordic cooperation in the field of security, showing a growing motivation in the region of searching for new methods of safeguarding Nordic states.

Conclusions

The conducted analysis led to a validation of all three hypotheses. Different visions of security and foreign policy after World War II can be perceived until now as the main contradiction differentiating Nordic states. Two groups were formulated: one by Denmark, Iceland and Norway, which focused on Euro-Atlantic area and tools offered by the NATO. The second, by Finland and Sweden, was pursuing policy of neutrality, but at the same time since the end of the Cold War, cooperating with the

NATO to some extent. In the case of European integration, there are visible differences among Nordic states as well. Denmark was the first to decide on integrating with the European Community due to trade benefits. Finland, owing to its ties with the Soviet Union, could decide on accessing the EU only in the 1990s, together with Sweden, much more devoted to its neutrality. Norway, in spite of some efforts, never managed to elaborate social consensus and both referenda turned out with negative decision concerning accession, but at the same time decided on cooperating with the EC and later the EU on the basis of trade agreements and engaging into the CFSP as well, contrary to other Nordic countries. Iceland seems to be the most sceptic towards any kind of economic integration. Taking into consideration changing attitude of Nordic states towards the European integration, an ascertainment can be made, that the range of Nordic cooperation in recent years is changing slowly as well. Political integration paved a way for wider openness on other dimensions of cooperation. From the beginning of the 21st Century we can observe new forms of joint actions. Nordic states are putting some efforts aimed at deepening their cooperation and extending its range, e.g. through the NORDEFECO and through promoting the idea of Nordic Balance in the European Union.

The contemporary international instability and growing threats to security have the potential of eliminating one of the biggest obstacles in developing political aspects of Nordic cooperation, which are policy of neutrality and hesitation towards joining NATO. Joint military manoeuvres, military training under NATO, changes in Swedish and Finnish terminology used in security strategies (concerning using the term non-alignment instead of policy of neutrality) suggests that in the future accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO should not be excluded. This could be the last necessary step towards enhancing Nordic unity, political and military cooperation. Therefore, the hypothesis concerning the impact of current international situation on the shape and range of Nordic cooperation has been validated as well.

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