The Europeanization of Policy Objectives in Finland and Sweden: The Case of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and Common Security and Defense Policy (CESDP)

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Thesis Abstract

The thesis compares the degree of Europeanization in the policy objectives of Finland and Sweden in the European Union (EU). Two policy areas are chosen, Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP). For the two countries, the policy areas represent the similarities and differences between Finland and Sweden in the EU. In the case of EMU, the two countries followed different policies, although their economic structures and interests are largely similar. In the case of CESDP, while the countries depart from differing geopolitical positions, they follow similar approaches to European security policy development. Neither has applied for membership in NATO and Finland has explicitly stated that the intention was to differentiate Finland’s security solutions from Central and Eastern European states applying for NATO membership. The thesis first explores the explanatory weight of more orthodox international relations and European integration theories, largely based on exogenously assigned economic and political interests. It further suggests is that Finland is utilizing instrumental identity politics, represented most concretely by the governments explicit policy aim of remaining in the ‘core’ of European integration, to 'Europeanize' (and by default, NATOize) its security environment. In Sweden, the use of European referents by the Conservative government (1991-1994) was followed by the fall of the government and subsequently, the policy of ‘wait and see’ in monetary integration. Sweden also exhibits no ambitions to develop a specifically European security solution on the Continent but continues its traditional internationalist emphasis.

On the one hand, the study attempts to understand the extent a European versus a national identity discourse has permeated the legitimation of two policy areas in the two countries. On the other hand, the study also explores how these meanings translate into policy action. Certain arguments resonate with the constituency others do not. The winning arguments are rewarded by inclusion in the government which then defines and executes the national interest through external (and internal) policies. If the dominant discourse includes Europe this will result in more support for EU policies. If the dominant discourse refers to Europe and the EU as the "Other", or only in instrumental terms, policies will Europeanise only to the extent of the stated interests.