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Constructing Security in the Shadow of Communities

A comparative study of Transatlantic and European influences on Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisations of security

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Abstract

The Nordic states' approaches to security have been painted out as differentiated because of their alliance affiliations. However, in the light of a changing security environment and increasing international collaboration on security issues, there is a need to re-evaluate the Nordic context and alliance-state relations in the construction of security. In this thesis, the influences of security communities on Nordic security policies are explored, and a constructivist framework for considering how they exert ideational power through securitisation is suggested. To test its explanatory power, I develop a methodological approach for examining how ideas about security are proposed at the community level, and adopted or declined at the state level. By analysing and comparing the contextualised security environments and the constructed strategies of NATO and the EU with Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisations between 1999 and 2020, several discoveries are made. While the states appear to be substantially influenced by the securitisations proposed, uniquely shared similarities between security communities and member states are seldom identified. Correspondingly, the states also construct distinct 'Nordic' ideas. The thesis thus illustrates the need to further review presumptions about Nordic security, and a relevance in approaching alliance-state relations from the lens of security community and securitisation theory.

Key words: *security, Nordic security, security community, securitisation, ideational power, constructivism*, *Transatlantic, European*

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1 Approaching security in the Nordic context

1.1 Nordic security in a globalised world

The Nordics consist of five states that are often grouped together because of their similarities in culture, social welfare, political systems, and economic matters. However, their closeness has not been matched by a common approach to security (Archer 2014). During the Cold War period, the Nordic states adopted divergent security policies, making different alliance choices that allowed for a 'Nordic balance' between two super powers.[1] The fall of the Soviet Union and developments towards a unipolar world order presented new options and opportunities for the Nordics to harmonise their strategies. However, it was not until two decades later that a surge in Nordic security and defence cooperation took place (Forsberg 2013). Their variation in security policy has thus been rooted in the question of turning to either the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and/or to the European Union (EU).

Concurrently, the international environment has gone through major changes and the Nordic region has faced a wide range of new security challenges that can be found both in traditional perspectives and within a widened conception of security (Hough 2018). The war in Georgia 2008 and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 have forced the Nordics to review their approaches to the eastern great power. Simultaneously, the Nordic states have had to adopt to threats from non-state actors, where the terror attacks in Oslo 2011 and Stockholm 2017 constitute two central events. New challenges also emerge from non-actors such as climate changes, economic crises, and pandemics. In a globalised world with amplified interdependencies, actors' understanding of security concerns is increasingly constructed beyond their immediate surroundings.

In the face of these new challenges, states and alliances of states are to a greater extent cooperating on matters of security and defence. The Nordics, placed within the European security context, have had to adjust to development of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), resulting from structural reforms within NATO to allow for greater European responsibility, as well as the development of

[1] In this thesis, the term 'alliance' is not excluded to military alliances, but also include non-military associations of states.

a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) within the EU in the early 1990s (Duke 2001). Since then, the EU has not only taken a substantially larger role on security and defence issues and gradually become more willing to forge its own path in this realm, but the two organisations have increasingly expanded their strategic partnership (Mouritzen & Wivel 2005). Today, cooperation between the EU and NATO can be seen as an established norm and daily practice. Correspondingly, although sharing a long history of collaborating in other policy areas, the past decade has born witness to a sudden surge in Nordic cooperation on security and defence issues (Brommesson 2018).

This brief background does not touch upon all security changes and challenges neither regionally nor globally. However, it identifies a relevance in examining factors that are crucial in the construction of the Nordic states security policies. Especially whether, how, and to what extent their ideas about and understandings of security are influenced by aspects originating beyond their immediate regional context. Consequently, there is a need to theoretically and empirically revisit the Nordics and problematize the role of their alliances in a globalised world that present new security concerns for the region and beyond. Simultaneously, the current international security environment in parallel with the integrational role of security communities call for new theoretical perspectives and methodological alternatives for researching the linkages between community and state levels in the construction of security.

1.2 Research ambitions

My ambitions in this thesis are threefold. First, I offer a contribution to the field by empirically challenging previously assumptions made about the Nordic context. This is primarily done by examining whether Transatlantic and European security communities, highlighted through NATO- and EU-empirics, generate the differences between Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisations of security suggested. Furthermore, the empirical contribution has the potential to open up for research to move beyond these cases in future enquires of the Nordic context. Second, I present a theoretical contribution by suggesting an alternative, constructivist approach to understanding Nordic security. Concurrently, offering a theoretical framework for analysing the securitising relation between community and state levels in the construction of security in general. Third, the thesis contains a methodological contribution, suggesting an alternative to the analysis and comparison of conceptualisation of security, in the Nordic context and beyond. Aware of the boundaries of this study, I also hope to provide valuable suggestions for future research based on my findings.

These ambitions can be summarised to the following research questions:

How are states' conceptualisations of security influenced by security communities?

How are the Nordic states' conceptualisations of security influenced by their security communities?

How and to what extent are Norway's and Sweden's conceptualisations of security influenced by the Transatlantic and European security communities?

The first two questions are approached with the support of a main theoretical hypothesis. It is then reformulated in connection to assumptions made in previous research of the Nordic context, and empirically challenged. Thus, laying the foundation to address the remaining research question.

Theoretical hypothesis:
Security communities exert ideational power through securitisation which influence states' conceptualisations of security.

Empirical hypothesis:
Transatlantic and European security communities exert ideational power through securitisation which influence Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisations of security respectively.

2 Understanding security in the Nordic context

Previous research committed to explaining Nordic security policies have allowed for a substantial contribution. Studies have primarily focused on understanding the variation in the Nordics' security strategies despite the states many similarities. During the Cold War period, they adopted varying policies, allowing a 'Nordic balance' between two super powers. However, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the "unipolar moment" of the United States (US), a window opened for the states to align strategies (Krauthammar 1990). Yet, this was not the case (Archer 2014). At the heart of differentiated security strategies thus lies the question of alliance affiliation, an issue that realists, institutionalists, and constructivists researchers have attempted to address.

Realists generally argue that the Nordic states' approaches to alliances can be seen as the act of smaller states seeking to maximize their security, explaining their affiliations as reactions to the inherently anarchic international system. Baldur Thorhallsson (2019) argue that smaller states seek shelter through institutions, where larger powers or international organisations can offer an escape from their relative smallness. Using the example of Iceland, he illustrates how the Nordic state has sought military, political, economic and societal shelter through bilateral support and multilateral cooperation platforms. Comparable arguments have been put forward by Anders Wivel (2014), who argue that The Nordics' divergent approaches to their respective organisations can be explained by unipolarity and a changing geopolitical landscape. Seeking protection from larger powers, and through integration with NATO and the EU, is seen as the rational response to their unique strategic environments. Håkan Edström and Jacob Westberg (2020) have illustrated how the Nordics' alignment strategies have changed due to external shocks in the international systems, demonstrating how their approaches also can be seen as reactions to alterations in their surrounding security environments. Their understanding of the strategies of states as affected by external stimuli follows the argument that different experiences cause divergent approaches for the Nordic states.[2]

In contrast, institutionalist explanations have been provided by Caroline Howard Grøn and colleagues (2015) regarding the Nordics' similarities and differences in approaches to the EU and European integration. The researchers argue that a combination of rational choice, historical, and sociological institutionalisms are

[2] See also Petersson & Saxi (2013) for external or 'systemic' level explanatory factors to Danish and Norwegian alliance strategies.

necessary in order to demonstrate the varieties of policies, actors, interests, norms, and traditions involved in positioning the Nordic states in relation to the union. Clive Archer (2015), in turn, argue that liberal-institutionalism has been the foundation from which the Nordics' formulate their approaches to security. He maintains that the Nordic states have generally adhered to a liberal-institutionalist logic in post-Cold War period. However, they have varied in their emphasis on either liberal *or* institutionalist ideas on security, thus explaining their divergences.

Constructivists have primarily turned to the role of culture, identity, and norms when aiming to understand Nordic security. Consequently, it has been the variations in the Nordics' strategic cultures or national identities that have provided enlightenments for what is expressed as diversified strategic behaviours. Jan Ångström and Jan Willem Honig (2012) illustrate how strategic culture can explain the variation in strategic behaviour of small states. Using the case of Afghanistan, they show how Norway and Sweden exemplified a sharp distinction in the priority of either national interests or humanitarianism. Similarly, Fredrik Doeser (2012), turning to the case of Finland, demonstrates how the interaction of national culture and domestic political calculation played a role in the government's policy on international military operations.[3] However, constructivists have been reluctant in directly addressing the issue of divergences regarding alliance affiliations.[4] Instead, researchers have focused on the strategies employed *within* the states' respective organisations. The Nordics' have often been described as norm entrepreneurs who, as smaller states, turn to normative power to exert influence in the international system. Christine Ingebritsen (2002) provides such an illustration when looking at how they deliberately exercise social power within conflict resolution and aid-policy with the purpose of offering alternative models of engagement on the global stage. Similar arguments have been put forward in the case of the Nordic EU-member states' influence on the union's development of its civilian security and defence policy (Jakobsen 2008).[5]

In addition, several recent studies have moved beyond comparing the states' individual strategies, and instead aimed at explaining the past decade's increase in Nordic cooperation on security and defence issues. However, the states' differentiated approaches to alliances have remained predominant in studies that regard them as incompatible. Researchers such as Rikard Bengtsson (2020), Douglas Brommesson (2018), and Toumas Forsberg (2013) have therefore sought to contribute to an understanding of how this surge in collaborations is taking place *despite* their varied affiliations. Observations have been conceptualised and explained as the outcome of 'differentiated integration' or illustrative of "a phenomenon [i.e. 'Nordicness' in foreign and security policy] of many variations"

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[3] See also Græger & Halvard (2005), Rasmussen (2005), and Axelsson et al (2017) for strategic cultures and single-case studies of Nordic states.

[4] The issue of differences regarding integration into the EU has been met by the notion of national identities presented by Hansen & Wæver (2002).

[5] See also Björkdahl (2007) for an example of Swedish norm entrepreneurship in the United Nations.

(Brommesson 2018:360). Evidently, Transatlantic and European developments have altered Nordic security strategies, but Nordic collaborations are still surging.

What I identify in previous research are two assumptions that have not been properly challenged neither theoretically nor empirically. First, researchers have made the assumption that, because of the differences between NATO and the EU, they propose incompatible security strategies. This assumption has been used to present the Nordic states' approaches as highly differentiated, but its implications have not been properly problematized. While operative differences are certain to create variations, the construction of security on the political level is arguably more dependent on ideational understandings. Therefore, if we consider NATO and the EU as parts of a larger 'Western' security community, the differences between the Nordic states' ideas about security due to affiliations are less self-explanatory. Second, I question the assumption that NATO and the EU necessarily have a primacy over Nordic cooperation strategies. Certainly, there will be areas where NATO and the EU influence the states' policies more than a Nordic approach, perhaps especially on the operational level. However, this is not necessarily the case when it comes to broader conceptualisations of security. Here, Nordic identity, as understood in a security community theorisation of the term, might prevail over identifications with Transatlantic, European or even 'Western' security communities, and, consequently, limit the gap between the Nordic states' understanding of security and thus also conditions for their cooperation.

In sum, previous research has focused on 1) why the Nordics have chosen their differentiated alliance strategies, 2) their approaches *within* their alliances, and 3) how Nordic cooperation relates to this dynamic. What has not been covered as extensively is the community-state relation in the Nordic context, and how the alliances in turn might influence the national security policies of the Nordic states. In addition, I identify a lack in constructivist attempts to address the issue of their divergent associations, and thus also a gap in donations of constructivist theoretical understandings. Therefore, I hope to contribute to the discussion by filling these gaps and offer a new theoretical framework aimed at understanding security communities' influence on the Nordic states' ideas about security. Moreover, previous research has made the assumptions that 1) NATO and EU memberships indicates significantly differentiated approaches to security, and 2) NATO and the EU always have a dominance over Nordic security cooperation. Consequently, I also hope to contribute to the discussion by challenging above assumptions and testing them against the empirical findings of this study.

3 In the Shadow of Communities

In order to address the identified gap in research and challenge the assumptions it has made, I turn to two theories within the constructivist paradigm. By combining them with an ideational notion of power, the theoretical framework has the potential to offer new insights into the enquiry of the Nordic states' security policies. This is done by considering how *security communities* exert *ideational power* through *securitisation*. Constructivism generally recognises that reality is a social construction driven by collective understandings that emerge from social interaction. Accordingly, security is in itself constructed, and states are embedded in a structure that is both material and ideational. This allows for the possibility that under some conditions actors can produce shared meanings and ideas. Rooting the theoretical framework in a constructivist understanding thus makes it suitable for analysing influences on conceptualisations of security, i.e. ideas about what constitute security threats and how to deal with them. In sum, the framework can be utilised to examine how these ideas are produced and reproduced through securitisation, and acknowledges how such processes are interwoven with ideational power dynamics.

3.1 Security community theory

When developing my theoretical framework, I first turn to the concept of *security communities* as coined by Karl W. Deutsch and colleagues (1957). They observed pluralistic security communities whenever states became integrated to the point where they formed a sense of community in which war became unthinkable. Accordingly, Deutsch and colleagues suggested that states can overcome the security dilemma through mechanisms found in the development of social networks and the acceleration of transnational forces. At the core of their approach was the assumption that communication is the cement of social groups and political communities in particular. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998) developed the idea and contended that, besides a sense of community and a common view that social problems should be solved peacefully, security communities are also characterised by means of direct interaction, long-term interests, and, most importantly, shared identities, norms, and meanings. Adler & Barnett argue that the difference between community and alliance can be found in "the degree of diffuse reciprocity, where [alliances] are distinguished by immediate reciprocity and communities have diffuse reciprocity; and the extent to which the actor's interests are interchangeable with those of the group" (1998:42).

The core of what differentiates a security community from an alliance is thus found in their shared meaning-making.

Similarly, it is the sense of community that separates security communities from the concept of regional security complexes (Buzan & Wæver 2003). Regional security complexes are defined by stable patterns of interaction between (state) actors. The theory suggests that security concerns are primarily regional in character, creating a higher degree of security interdependence between regional security actors. Consequently, security complexes emerge where states' security concerns become so interlinked that their national security problems cannot be analysed apart from each other. However, this theory appears to start from an 'objective' geopolitical environment, while in paradox arguing that security is never given by geopolitical realities (Guzzini 2011). Security community theory, on the other hand, focuses, not on how regional aspects forces mutual security understandings, but rather on the degree of socialisation and integration, i.e. the success of inducting actors into the identities, norms, and ideas of the community via a logic of appropriateness (Gheciu 2005; Hellman *et al* 2017). Consequently, I argue that viewing affiliation strategies between the Nordics through the lens of alliances misses out on the need to see their memberships in NATO and/or the EU, not as being parts of separate organisations with different structures and purposes, but as members of communities that still work through similar processes of meaning-making.

Nevertheless, discussing security communities raises the question of how they may be conceptualised, categorised, or differentiated. For example, Gunther Hellman and colleagues questioned the notion of the 'West' as a given, presupposed community,[6] and rather argued that "political orders are integrated via the construction and reproduction of a sense of community in complex and non-linear dynamic processes" (2017:308). Similarly, Deutsch and colleagues (1957) problematized seeing security communities through a definite threshold between integration or non-integration. Nonetheless, following research has aimed at defining conditions for their existence. Difficulties in determining security communities can be found in the discussion on whether the Transatlantic link constitute an appropriate example. Michal Cox (2005) problematizes the split between some European states and the US which casts doubts on assumptions about their shared identities, norms, and meanings. However, Vincent Pouliot (2006) highlights that, although being defined by peaceful resolution, security communities are not absent of internal conflicts nor power struggles because the social fact of peace exists through a power politics based on symbolic struggles to impose intersubjective meanings. In other words, while actors may struggle to impose their meanings on other actors in the community, the degree to which they are accepted and shared may determine the degree of community.

In order to respond to these issues, I argue that aiming to categorise and determining conditions for and between security communities is not the

[6] Understood as liberal and capitalist democracies in Europe and North America, including Australia, New Zealand, and Japan as outliers.

appropriate nor most fruitful approach. By focusing on the processes through which security communities exist, primarily how social interaction produces intersubjective conceptualisations about security and to what degree they are integrated within the community, research can analyse whether states are more or less cohesive in their understanding of security with presumable security communities (i.e. neither the objective existence nor the overlapping of different communities should be the focal point). To address these integrational processes of security communities, my theoretical framework incorporates the notion of ideational power and securitisation theory.

3.2 Ideational power and securitisation theory

The theoretical framework starts from the assumption that states construction of security policies is influenced by the dynamics of security communities. To account for *how* security communities exert influence the framework combines the concept of ideational power with securitisation theory. The explicit focus on ideational power indicates the interactive process through which ideas are conveyed. The approach is, therefore, characterised by a conception of power which is exerted through the constitution of intersubjective meaning structures that agents battle over to affect what ideas are deemed viable (Schmidt 2008). Ideational power can be differentiated between three modes of how ideas feed into power processes (Schmidt & Christensen 2016). First, power *through* ideas is defined as the capacity of actors to persuade other actors to adopt their views of what to think and do using ideational elements. Second, power *over* ideas is related to agents' imposition of ideas and the power of actors to resist the inclusion of alternative ideas. Third, power *in* ideas takes place when hegemony has been established over the production of subject positions by constraints on what ideas agents may take into consideration. In sum, ideational power can be defined as the capacity of actors (individual or collective) to influence other actors' ideational beliefs. However, the first mode, power through ideas, is best understood in relation to securitisation and therefore constitute the focus mode of this study. Securitisation theory can thus be integrated to address how ideational power is expressed by security communities and explicitly related to states' conceptions of security.

Securitisation theory was originally proposed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde (1998) who saw it as the process where state actors transform referent objects into matters of security through a speech act. Securitisation theory therefore proceeds from the assumption that security is neither given nor natural, but politically and socially constituted, and should thus "be viewed as the by-product of the intersubjective constructions of actors" (Sjöstedt 2020:29). Subsequently, 'security' is the outcome of a meaning-making process, and highly related to actors' capacity to persuade other actors to adopt their views on it. In other words, securitisation is practice through which "an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an

existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat" (Buzan & Wæver 2003:491). However, differences can be found between researchers who primarily focus on the speech act (Wæver 1995; Buzan *et al* 1998; Vuori 2010) and critics who have pointed out the risk of missing out on the multidimensionality of the securitisation process (Huysman 2006; Stritzel 2014).

A speech-act theoretical model of securitisation refers to the so-called 'grammar of security' that declares a problem as exceptional or existential (i.e. a threat that requires action). In contrast, researchers like Holger Stritzel (2014) understand securitisation as a discursive formation, and thus acknowledge the securitisation move as embedded in broader discursive and socio-political contexts. Additionally, the former model merges the issues of *authorisation* and *effectiveness,* because the speech-act itself indicates the presence of a legitimate actor who when performing the act create sufficient conditions to regard the referent object as securitised. The latter argue that authorisation and effectiveness is conceptually independent because the success of the securitising move is reliant on the broader context, and especially the audience's power to accept or challenge it (Balzacq 2005; Stritzel 2007). In this study, texts are regarded as examples of securitisation moves made by collective actors (i.e. security communities). Therefore, the aim is to uncover the 'grammar of security' on community level rather than discursive formations. However, the study recognises the audiences' (i.e. states') power to accept or decline the securitisation moves, thus allowing a comparison between the degree of effective/successful securitisation between community and state level.

However, securitisation theory generally operates between the middle(state)-level and the individual level, and does not account for how securitisation might take place on larger scales. In a speech-act theoretical model, state actors are seen as the primary agents engaging in securitisation moves. However, Buzan and Wæver (2009) have attempted to address this limitation by introducing the concept of 'macrosecuritisation'. They describe this concept as the overarching securitisation that relates and organises several middle-level securitisations, thus packing together securitisations into a higher order. Nevertheless, macrosecuritisation is more about larger patterns in the overall structures of securitisation than it is about examining how ideas about security can travel between levels through the use of securitisation moves. A more fruitful approach to understanding what happens when collective actors such as security communities engage in securitisation can therefore be explained in comparison to Stritzel's (2014) notion of 'securitisation as translation'. This concept accounts for what happens when threat images encounter a new discourse locale and are translated through transformations of meaning. However, this approach is mainly relevant from the scenario of transnationally travelling threat images. Securitisation theory must therefore be combined with security community theory and an ideational notion of power to properly address the travelling of ideas about security from community to state level.

3.3 The theoretical framework in this study

The theoretical framework presents a suggestion for both the practices and the underlying power mechanisms through which security communities have an influence on states' conceptualisations of security. At the core of my theoretical framework lies the production of intersubjective meanings about security and to what degree they are integrated within the community. Here the framework serves as a strategy to analyse whether states are more or less cohesive in their understanding of security with presumable security communities. Consequently, my methodological approach will not operationalise indicators for security communities nor analyse the process through which issues become securitised. Instead, I develop a method through which the extent ideas about security travel and are integrated between community and state level can be analysed. In addition, by incorporating levels of overlapping communities, as well as studying their relevance over time, the theoretical framework and the methodological approach of this study can be used to consider both spatial and temporal aspects of security communities' influence on states' conceptualisations.

When it comes to the practices and underlying power mechanisms through which security communities have an influence, the framework incorporates securitisation theory with the notion of ideational power. Consequently, I do not focus on identities, norms, nor interests (even though they are also important components of security communities), but on the production and reproduction of meaning-making processes in terms of security. Since the study recognises the states' power to accept or decline the securitisation, it also opens up for the comparison between the degree of effective/successful securitisation between community and state level. The theoretical framework is therefore primarily suitable for analysing influences of security communities on conceptualisations of security. I understand conceptualisations of security as ideas about and the contextualisation of actors' security environments and the threats they regard within it, as well as what actors construct as appropriate approaches to deal with them. The framework can thus be summarised to a theoretical hypothesis:

Security communities exert ideational power through securitisation which influence states' conceptualisations of security.

I will explicitly analyse how and to what extent Transatlantic and European security communities influence Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisations of security. The Norwegian and Swedish cases are chosen because they exemplify two Nordic states choosing divergent alliances that in turn manifest the two security communities. The main argument is that by adopting a security community theoretical approach rather than focusing on alliance affiliations, the framework can provide new understandings about the construction of security in the Nordic context. Primarily, it can be used to shed light on whether Transatlantic and European security communities do in fact pose as differentiated strategies as previously assumed. Perhaps it is more accurate to talk about a

‘Western’ or a ‘Nordic’ security community blurring the lines between the respective alliance strategy in terms of broader understandings of security, creating conditions to question whether they create as significant differences between the Nordics as previously contented in research. In this case, a ‘Western’ or ‘Nordic’ security community might prevail and limit the differences of the alliance affiliations on state level. In sum, by combining security community theory and securitisation theory with an ideational notion of power, my theoretical framework presents the possibility to provide new and valuable insights into the enquiry of the Nordic states’ security policies, exemplified by Norway and Sweden specifically. The theoretical framework in connection to the empirical focus of this study can thus be summarised to an empirical hypothesis:

Transatlantic and European security communities exert ideational power through securitisation which influence Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisations of security respectively.

4 Research design

4.1 Point of departure

In this study, I depart from the ontological and epistemological position of 'thin' constructivism. However, I make claims leaning towards critical realist assumptions since the objective of my research is to test the relevance of my theoretical framework by challenging whether it hold explanatory value. However, and herein lies the centre of a constructivist purpose of research, I reject possibilities to fully explain social phenomena, making attempts at a generalizable framework an impossible task. Nevertheless, I value the critical realist belief that it can be tested against an empirical outcome, and thus be strengthened or weakened in the context it is applied to (Marsh *et al* 2018). Because of this comprehension, I adopt a reasoning based on hypotheses, arguing that the appropriate approach is to test its relevance by empirically evaluating whether it may offer increased understandings.

Furthermore, my research questions imply making causal enquires by studying influences between social phenomena. While constructivists emphasise the role of texts in the construction of the social world, they generally distrust the validity of causal mechanisms. Nevertheless, I make assumptions that open up for the "possibility of establishing 'causally efficacious' relations among social facts" (Carta 2019:90). However, I do not argue that texts automatically cause changes in actors' understandings, nor that there are regular cause-effect patterns associated with them. Neither do I claim to be able to measure ideational power as an underlying force of causal relations. Yet, studying whether texts accept or decline conceptualisations presented through securitisation is an appropriate method to evaluate to whether it has been successfully exerted. Stefano Guzzini (2011) similarly argue that mechanisms of securitisation must be understood from case to case, but when they travel between empirical cases, they become part of a larger understanding. Therefore, by rooting the analysis in a larger discussion, the claims can be strengthened or weakened through empirical considerations and in dialogue with previous and future research.

Consequently, to test the hypotheses and my theoretical framework, I aim to analyse the influence of securitisation taking place on community level, on conceptualisations of security found on the state level. This results in a comparative methodology focusing on how ideas about security are proposed, and then adopted or declined. Therefore, the first intention is to organise the communities and states conceptualisations respectively, using qualitative content

analysis to identify the ideas about security and what ideas are particularly emphasised. I therefore refer to 'conceptualisations of security' as the umbrella term for actors' contextualised security environment, and their following constructed strategies. The next step of the analysis identifies where the communities' securitisations can be found in national texts by comparing their similarities and differences. The purpose of the comparative analysis is to investigate whether and to what extent the community's ideas about security are shared by the respective state, and thus whether successful securitisation has taken place.

4.2 Comparing conceptualisations of security

To map out community and state conceptualisations of security, I first analyse how the actors contextualise their security environments. The terminology refers to their constructed security concerns based on two perspectives: sector level and geographical level. This endeavour also encompasses two approaches since I examine relative emphases (i.e. percentages of security concerns found in the texts) and the general ideas identified within each sector and geographical level. Thereafter, I analyse how the actors construct appropriate strategies in response to their contextualised security environments. I thus depart from the assumption that concerns, including strategies to deal with the concerns, are constructed as matters of security through a 'grammar of security,' rather than as a given response to 'natural' or 'real' threats.[7]

When operationalising the actors' **contextualised security environment**, I turn to Buzan (1991) who contributed to a 'broadened' understanding of security. First, he divided states' security concerns into different sectors beyond the traditional military focus by also considering economic, political, societal, and environmental security issues. Additionally, he separated between two perspectives in the development of national security policies: inward looking aspects, focusing on the *vulnerabilities* of the state, and outward looking aspects, focusing on *threats* against the state. Second, the widening of the security term can also be understood in relation to an increase in internationalisation. While states regard threats and vulnerabilities as originating from their immediate geopolitical surroundings, globalisation has resulted in a broadening of security from a geographical perspective (Buzan & Wæver 2003). Consequently, actors may regard their security environment, not solely from the perspective of their geographical proximity, but continentally or globally as well.

The actors' contextualisation of their security environment in turn influences their security strategy because it provides a direction for what concerns they need to address. Therefore, I build upon above reasoning and develop the securitisation

[7] Operationalised terminologies can be found under table 1, appendix 1.

theory's approach by also analysing ends, means, and ways in order to outline and compare ideas about what actor construct as **appropriate strategies**. Since neither ends, means, nor ways are understood as naturally given, but socially constructed and thus not necessarily mutually constitutive, it is necessary to separate the analysis of these three aspects in the creation of strategy (Edström & Gyllensporre 2013). Accordingly, *ends* include the creation of objectives and goals in response to the security concerns the actors construct in their contextualised security environments. *Means* are understood as the material or immaterial resources and capacities the actor believe are needed to achieve its objectives, and *ways* are the methods the actor seeks to employ and what it argues to be necessary actions to achieve them.

Finally, in order to conduct the analysis within the 'conceptualisation of security' framework and merge it with a theorisation of securitisation, a final component must be present within all categories to be measured and compared: a **grammar of security**. A grammar of security thus constitutes a necessary condition for all operationalised terminologies to be included in the empirical analysis. This includes describing the elements within the actor's contextualisation of its security environment as creating exceptional security concerns that must be addressed. Similarly, ends, means, and ways must be formulated as necessary to deal with an exceptional security concern, meaning that if these objectives, resources, or action are not achieved or deployed it will be realised.

Once the conceptualisations of security have been mapped out in the community and state texts, the next step evaluates whether and to what extent the communities can be understood as influencing the states' construction of security. The empirical analysis thus focuses on the similarities and differences in contextualised security environments and appropriate strategies. This is done by comparing the operationalised terminologies in the respective text using the analytical questions outlined in table 2, appendix 1. The comparisons and the following discussions about whether and to what extent ideas about security travel between the text are then carried out spatially and temporally.

First, spatial comparisons are done between Transatlantic and European (community) conceptualisations and Norwegian and Swedish (state) conceptualisations. I examine this particular spatial relation because it is within its space previous research has argued for differences on community level causing differences on state level. Consequently, if the empirical hypothesis as well as previous assumptions are to be confirmed, the states should have most in common in their conceptualisations of security with their respective security community due to the (successful) securitisation taking place on community level. However, if this appears to be false, the thesis may provide empirical conditions and the possibility for future research to test for additional spaces (e.g. 'Western' or 'Nordic' security communities) blurring the differences that previous research has argued for. However, only the hypothesis based on previous assumptions is empirically falsifiable in this thesis. Second, temporal comparisons take into consideration, not only the question of: once a security community has proposed the securitisation, to what extent does the state draw on it, but also if so, when and

for how long? This comparison thus evaluates the time it takes for community conceptualisations in text to travel to state conceptualisations in texts, as well as the time period state conceptualisations are influenced by the community's proposed securitisation. In this study, I divide the empirical comparisons into four overlapping phases.[8] Therefore, an analytical focal point takes place around shifts initiated by a new key text, creating a focus on whether a new phase of community documents generate changes in the state documents.

4.3 Case selection and empirics

In this thesis, I aim to analyse Transatlantic and European security communities. Therefore, I turn to NATO and the EU for case selection based on the assumption that the communities' conceptualisations are manifested in and through the alliances. For national cases, the study focuses on Norway and Sweden. The cases are chosen because they constitute two Nordic countries that have chosen divergent alliance strategies, while simultaneously sharing many internal similarities in comparison to the other Nordic states. Thus, limiting the risk of interfering dynamics and proposing appropriate conditions to discuss of a causal influence between the community and the state texts (Blatter & Haverland 2012:41-50). More importantly, the approach allows for in-depth analyses of communities and states that exemplify the core of why previous research has argued that the Nordics propose differentiated and incompatible security strategies. Consequently, if the empirical hypothesis is proven either true or false, the study provides a basis for whether previous assumptions stand strong in the light of a new theoretical approach or if these assumptions should be further questioned in the Nordic context.

Although securitisation theory originally understood a securitisation move as an individual speech-act, the theory has been developed to include other forms of communications. Therefore, I turn to policy documents for empirics based on the assumption that the material summarises and highlights the conceptualisations of security that have been accepted by the communities and states respectively.[9] For the communities, four key policies outlining the alliances' security and defence priorities and approaches are chosen. The EU-documents have been approved by the Council of the EU, and the NATO-documents have similarly been adopted by the member states' Head of State and Government. Although the second EU-text also incorporates foreign policy, this issue is approached by the study's operationalisation and the necessary condition that ideas analysed use a grammar of security. Regarding national empirics, I analyse the states' defence acts adopted

[8] Phases for analysis and corresponding empirics can be found under table 3, appendix 1.
[9] A summary of the empirical material can be found under table 3, appendix 1.

between 2000 and 2020.[10] These documents are voted through in the respective parliaments and presented as propositions by the defence departments, thus also outlining the states' security and defence policies for the upcoming years. However, the national documents are substantially longer than the alliance documents sine they include operative guidelines. This issue is also dealt with through the study's operationalisation, focusing the empirical analysis on broader conceptualisations rather than operative details.

4.4 Methodological discussion

The careful reader might rightfully point out methodological inconsistencies in the comparison of the cases and empirics, and I thus intend to address the study's main limitations here. First, the validity and reliability of the study can be questioned in relation to the comparability of the cases. NATO is primarily a military alliance and formulating common security approaches lies in the core of its purpose. The EU, on the other hand, is predominantly a political and economic alliance with supranational elements.[11] Consequently, the sector-based focuses of the Transatlantic community manifested in NATO and the European community highlighted by the EU will likely be determined by their organisational purposes (e.g. military, political, and/or economic). Similarly, it can be assumed that states make primarily regional assessment, while security communities contextualise their security environmental from a continental or global angle due to the (geographical) scope of their composition. Likewise, the actors have different strategic possibilities because of various predetermined material limitations. This thesis, nonetheless, argues that all areas of security policy are influenced by ideational power dynamics and are, ultimately, socially constructed. I am interested in whether the community perspective travel and integrate to the state perspective. Consequently, since I do not presume a given geopolitical reality, analysing sector-based and geographical components in conceptualisations of security refers to the social or intersubjective, rather than the natural or objective. Rooting the empirical comparison in the alliances' security policies is done to challenge assumptions previously made in research, and examining NATO and the EU. not as alliances but in the theoretical light of communities constitute the main contribution of this study.

Second, the study does not parallel with empirics from 'external' cases, raising additional questions around possibilities to isolate the specific community's influence on the specific state. Correspondingly, increases in cooperation between

[10] All community documents precede the national documents they are compared to. The Swedish defence act of 1999/2000 was released seven months after the strategic concept of 1999.

[11] The relevance of case-selection must also be seen in the light of the EU advancing its security and defence cooperation in the past decades, making available documents highlighting what could be distinct European conceptualisations of security.

NATO and Sweden, as well as the EU and Norway, suggest similar methodological issues. However, all state material is compared with empirics from both communities, and the analysis thus opens up for several empirical outcomes. Consequently, the methodology takes into consideration comparisons with the 'external', meaning the community/alliance that the state is not a *presumable* part of. Notably, not accounting for actors outside the Transatlantic and European spheres in order to support the study's claims implies assuming that Transatlantic and European communities constitute separated entities to begin with. This is precisely what previous research suggests and what I am problematizing: if it becomes difficult to separate between the communities and identify their differences in the states' texts, how can we argue that the Nordics' can be equated as having differentiated approaches? Similarly, despite increases in cooperation between the cases, the aim to test if the communities nonetheless generate the different ideas about security previously contented remain relevant.

Third, comparability issues related to the empirics must also be addressed. In the time period between 2010-2020 there is a difference in the number of adopted policies between Norway and Sweden, and during the final two phases state documents are fewer. Moreover, the community texts have been adopted at different points in time. In between, major security events, such as 9/11 in 2001 and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, have taken place. Consequently, differences might be generated in response to these external chocks rather than differences in conceptualisations. Ideal conditions would be to compare community texts produced during the same time period, with national documents adopted in parallel time frames. However, relevant documents to analyse are not available. In order to respond to these issues, the empirical analysis will be conducted in four phases based on the adaptation of the alliances' documents. The comparisons will thus only take place between community and state texts, not between community texts**.** This approach creates an analytical focal point around the shift in phases, contributing to a focus on whether a new phase on community level create changes in the state documents and if these are determined by alliance/community affiliation.

5 The Transatlantic security community

5.1 NATO 1999

5.1.1 Comparison with Norwegian conceptualisations

In the **contextualised security environments** in NATO's strategic concept of 1999 and the Norwegian defence acts between 2000 and 2008, military and political security concerns constituted a shared focus of the actors. There were also resemblances in their conceptualisations of such threats and vulnerabilities.[12] Thus, risks of direct aggressions were described by NATO and Norway alike, although NATO did not recognise such concerns short-term. Moreover, the actors understood risks associated with armed conflicts outside their territories as being of relevance to their own security (1999:6; 2000:22; 2004:21; 2008:35). Additional concerns emphasised, and often related to conflicts abroad, were threats of and vulnerabilities following international terrorism and organised crime (1999:7; 2000:13; 2004:22; 2008:24). Linked to such issues were, also, the dissolution of states (1999:6; 2004:21), as well as ethnic and religious rivalries, and the movements of large numbers of people (1999:6; 2000:19; 2004:21). The state and NATO also shared an emphasis on regional security, thus constructing security concerns close to their own territories. However, the latter defence acts illustrate how Norway's conceptualisations of security became increasingly global, but at the expense of a European rather than Nordic/Arctic focus.[13] Consequently, NATO and Norway shared many conceptualisations of security during this time period.

Nonetheless, some notable dissimilarities were observed. Norway's construction of threats towards global institutions and norms, as well as political challenges following great power rivalry constituted such a difference (2000:21; 2004:20;

[12] The construction of threats of weapons of mass destruction and the advancement of military technology were particularly highlighted (1999:6; 2000:18; 2004:2; 2008:25).
[13] In the NATO-document, European member states were particularly highlighted, and references were made to concerns stemming from the 'periphery' of its territory (1999:16).

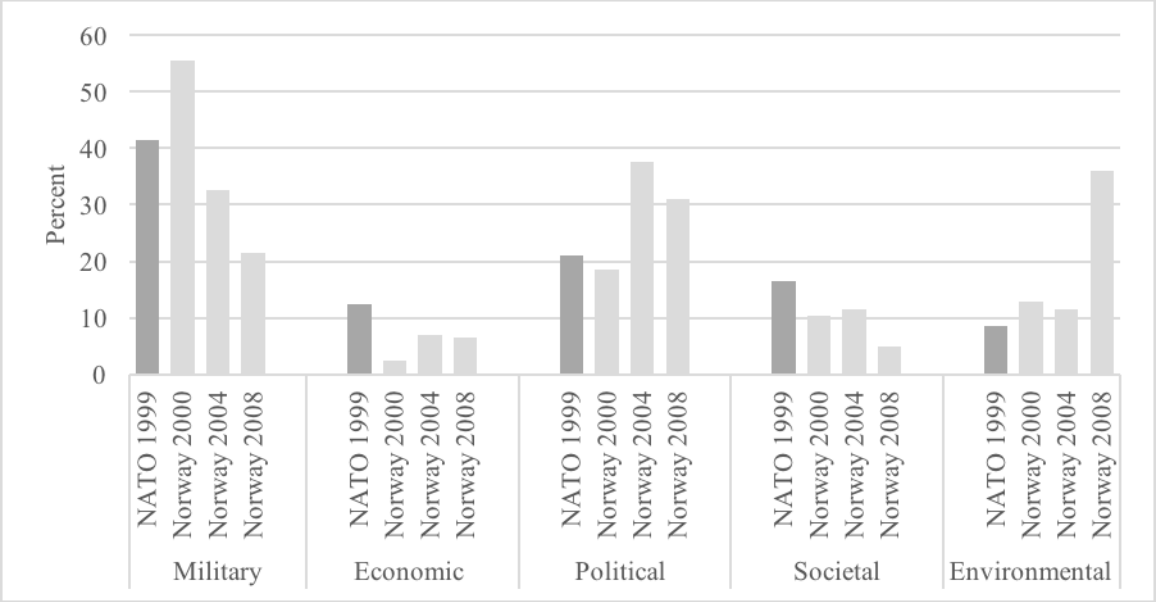
2008:40).[14] Another distinction was found in Norwegian conceptualisations constructing military and political threats as stemming from external actors' interests in the state's northern regions (2000:20; 2004:39; 2008:25). In the latter defence act, challenges were related to environmental security concerns, where increased dependencies on natural resources in parallel with climate change, were understood as amplifying these vulnerabilities (2008:28). While NATO mentioned risks following a disruption of the flow of resources, economic and environmental concerns were barely developed upon in the strategic concept (1999:7).

In the construction of **appropriate strategies**, several similarities were also observed. Both actors considered necessary objectives to be the protection of territorial and political integrity, and the general stability in the Euro-Atlantic area (1999:14; 2000:11; 2004:13; 2008:17). For NATO and Norway alike, the enhancement of collective defence was an indispensable aim (1999:11; 2004:35; 2008:9). Consequently, military power and defence resources were constructed as important ends and necessary means (1999:20; 2000:11; 2004:9; 2008:43). In turn, the advancement of military capacities was deemed a crucial action (1999:7-8). Norway particularly understood such activities as necessary to develop in relation to the alliance – either as a complement to ensure Norwegian defence or to participate in NATO-led mission abroad (2000:13; 2008:28). An additional similarity constituted increased cooperation with European states, the EU and other international organisations (2000:36; 2004:38; 2008:23). NATO also recognised increased dialogue with Russia as necessary (1999:9-11), and Norway, similarly, considered actions to increase dialogue with Russia in the earlier defence acts (2000:28).

While the documents primarily illustrated strong similarities between the two actors regarding appropriate strategies, NATO had a larger emphasis on the need to uphold its nuclear forces in Europe (1999:20). Perhaps contradictory, an important action for NATO not emphasised in Norwegian conceptualisations were an increase in arms control and non-proliferation (1999:11). On the other hand, Norway constructed upholding a multilateral, international order a crucial goal, specifically to safeguard small states' security interests against larger powers (2008:23). The state also recognised international law and global norms as valuable instruments to ensure its interests, while similar understandings were not found in the strategic concept (2004:21; 2008:27). Moreover, humanitarian, diplomatic, and judicial resources were regarded as important supplements to military and political means in the latter defence act (2008:13; 2008:32).

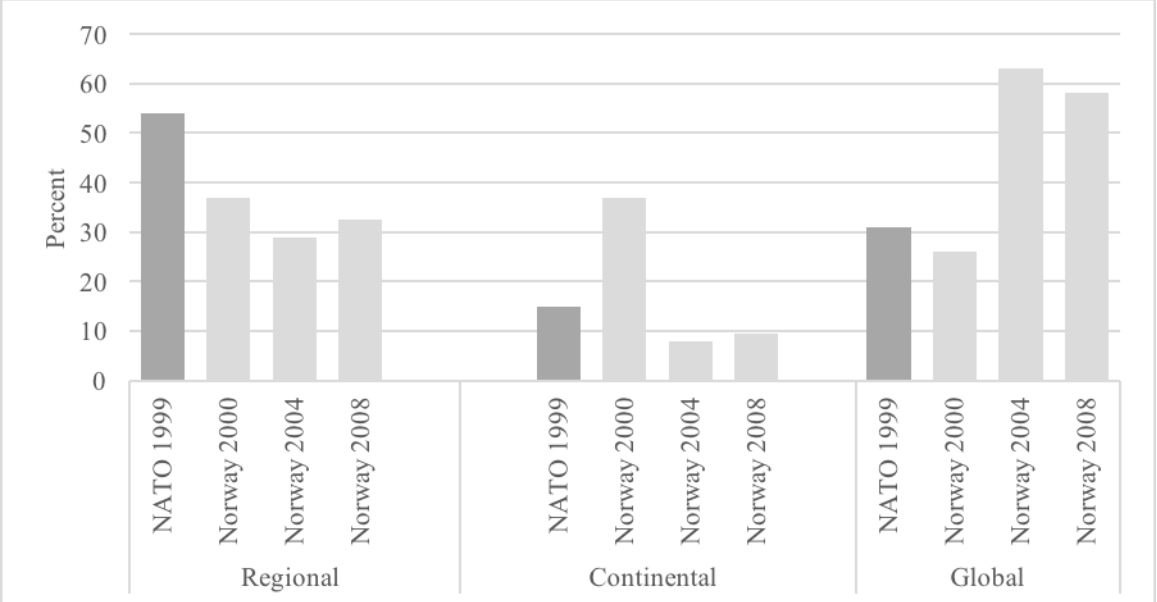
[14] The state especially regarded threats of societal tensions on a global scale, including internal fragmentation between the US and European allies (2000:22; 2004:29; 2008:32).

Graph 1. Sector-based security concerns of NATO and Norway during phase 1



Description: Percentage of the sector-based focus of security concerns in the Strategic Concept of 1999 and the Norwegian defence acts of 2000, 2004, and 2008.

Graph 2. Geographical security concerns of NATO and Norway during phase 1



Description: Percentage of the geographical focus of security concerns in the Strategic Concept of 1999 and the Norwegian defence acts of 2000, 2004, and 2008.

5.1.2 Comparison with Swedish conceptualisations

In the **contextualised security environments** in NATO's strategic concept of 1999 and the Swedish defence acts between 2000 and 2009, the actors also had a similar focus on military and political security concerns. Especially, similarities were found in a shared attention to weapons of mass destruction (1999:6;

2000:17; 2004:17; 2009:28), and an understanding of armed conflicts in other parts of the world as potential risks (1999:6; 2000:11; 2004:13; 2009:28).[15] However, neither actor recognised risks of direct aggressions short-term. Additional resemblances were found in their comprehension of risks associated with the collapse of states (1999:6; 2000:30; 2004:14; 2009:17), including the construction of associated risks such as terrorism and organised crime (1999:7; 2000; 2004:14; 2009:28).[16] Moreover, NATO diffusely stated the presence of economic risks in its strategic concept, and economic concerns were not addressed in Swedish conceptualisation until 2009 where mentions were made to global economic crises – thus illustrating a similarity found in a lack of attention (2009:28).

However, the actors' understandings of their security concerns generally illustrated varying degrees of emphases during the time-period. In the earlier defence acts, primarily dissimilarities in geographical focus were observed. However, a shift took place in 2009 when Sweden increasingly contextualised its security environment from a regional perspective. Conversely, Sweden, similarly to NATO, barely addressed environmental concerns in their earlier defence acts. However, in 2009, the state provided substantial attention to climate change, challenges related to natural resources, and fears of environmental damage in the Baltic Sea (2009:27-28). Finally, some distinct differences included exclusive Swedish ideas about security challenges associated with threats to the international system, and references made to antagonistic relations following Russian and Chinese progressions (2000:29; 2004:21; 2004:29; 2009:28).

In the construction of **appropriate strategies**, only a few similarities were observed. Resemblances in formulated ends encompassed the protection of territorial integrity, including being able to defend against aggressions (1999:14; 2000:13; 2004:23; 2009:35) Furthermore, necessary actions expressed by both actors were enlargement and increased international cooperation.[17] Another similarity was found in the constructed need to increase dialogue with Russia. For Sweden, this was understood as crucial in regard to the Baltic Sea region (1999:9-11; 2000:29; 2004:19; 2009:32). A final action for NATO also expressed in Swedish conceptualisations were strategies against weapons of mass destruction, although NATO put more emphasis on arms control and non-proliferation (1999:11; 2004:17).

However, differences between what the actors regarded as necessary strategies were predominant during this phase. While a main objective for NATO was stability in the Euro-Atlantic area, Sweden constructed global peace as a priority in the early defence acts (2000; 13; 2004:12). Correspondingly, whereas the strategic concept was related both to NATO's own defence and conflict

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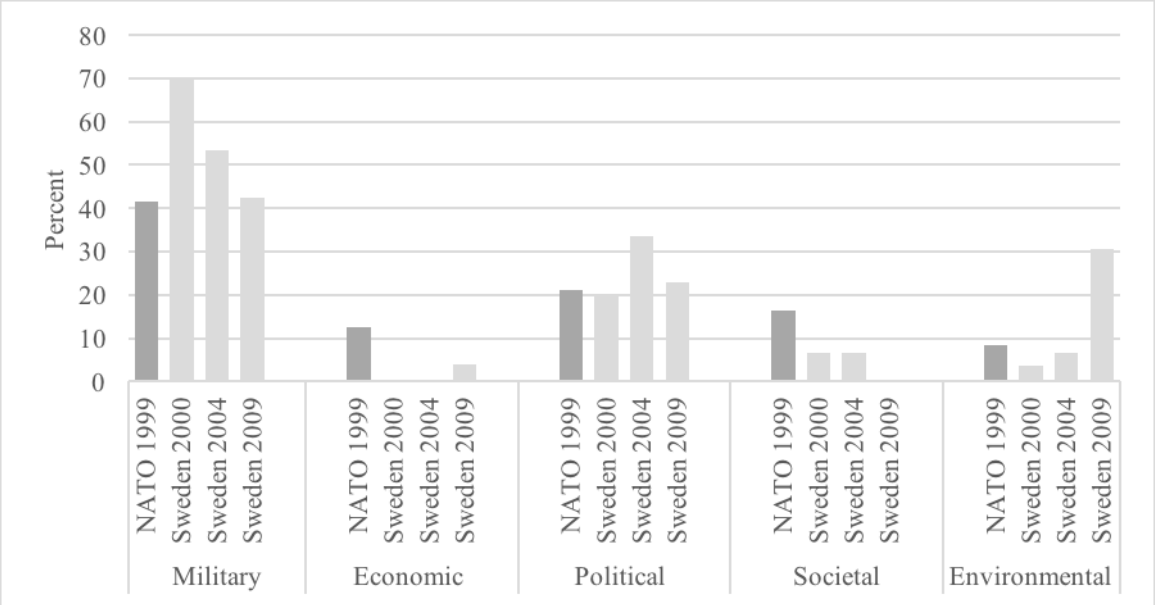
[15] However, Sweden also gave attentions to the threat of information warfare (2000:18; 2009:29).

[16] For Sweden, terrorism was not given attention in the former defence act, while transnational crime was more developed upon (e.g. human trafficking and illegal migration).

[17] Strengthening the transatlantic link, promoting European collaboration, and increasing Nordic and Baltic cooperation were particularly highlighted in the Swedish defence acts (2000:27; 2004:30; 2009:31).

prevention abroad, Sweden put a clear emphasis on the latter action (1999:7-8; 2000:13; 2004:12). Another difference between them can be found in NATO's creation of collective defence as an important aim, while Sweden constructed the need to remain military non-aligned (1999:1; 2004:23). Highlighted resources for NATO were military capacities, (1999:8; 1999:20), whereas Sweden, in contrast, sought to decrease national capabilities in 2000 and 2004.[18] Sweden rather stressed civil and humanitarian resources and instruments (2004:12; 2009:31). Notably, however, Sweden's geographical focus and understandings of security concerns closer to home became considerably more aligned with NATO's conceptualisations in the 2009 defence act.

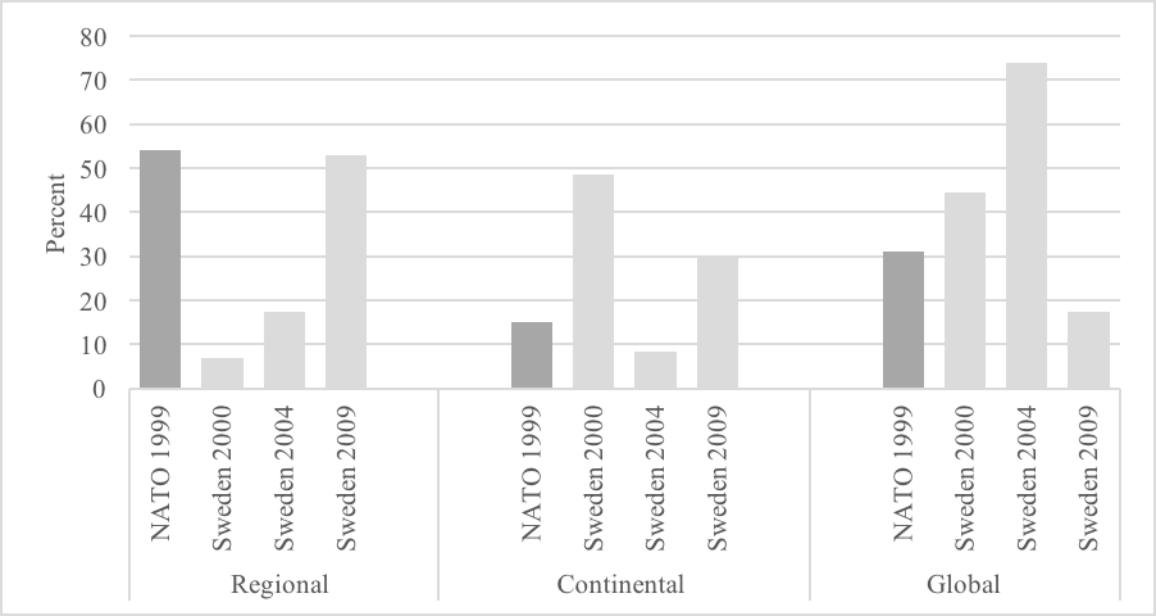
Graph 3. Sector-based security concerns of NATO and Sweden during phase 1



Description: Percentage of the sector-based focus of security concerns in the Strategic Concept of 1999 and the Swedish defence acts of 2000, 2004, and 2009.

[18] Instead the state sought to redirect resources towards international missions and increase means for crisis management in peace time (2000:32; 2004:23).

Graph 4. Geographical security concerns of NATO and Sweden during phase 1



Description: Percentage of the geographical focus of security concerns in the Strategic Concept of 1999 and the Swedish defence acts of 2000, 2004, and 2009.

5.2 NATO 2010

5.2.1 Comparison with Norwegian conceptualisations

In the **contextualised security environments** in NATO's strategic concept of 2010 and the Norwegian defence acts between 2012 and 2020, some resemblances in their military and political focuses, and produced conceptualisations were observed. Both actors recognised the threat of nuclear weapons (2010:10; 2012:23; 2016:34; 2020:37), risks of cyber warfare, and space technologies (2010:11-12; 2012:24; 2016:34; 2020:37).[19] Concurrently, they constructed concerns of military aggressions towards their own territories. Additional similarities included the construction of threats of terrorism and transnational crime (2010:11; 2012:13; 2016:34; 2020:36). They often associated the emergence of such threats to fragile states and conflicts abroad.[20] Regarding geographical emphases, the defence act of 2012 illustrated similarities with the strategic concept, where the actors predominantly constructed security concerns of

[19] Notably Norwegian conceptualisations gave further attentions to information-warfare and the spread of disinformation, and thus not exclusively digital threats to infrastructure or government administrations (2010:11; 2012:24; 2010:10; 2020:19).
[20] In Norwegian conceptualisations 2016, migration and violent extremism were also implied as being linked to terrorism and organised crime (2016:34).

a global character. While such conceptualisations persisted, Norway increasingly adopted a continental perspective.

The comparison between the actors' conceptualisations also encompassed several differences. Although they constructed armed conflicts beyond their borders as prevailing risks, such understandings were rarely expressed by Norway (2010:11; 2012:22). Instead, the state highlighted the threat of great power rivalry following military advancements of Russia and China, including pressures towards the liberal world order (2012:22; 2016:28; 2020:18). Further differences included the state's concerns regarding internal tensions in the Euro-Atlantic area following an increase in populist and nationalist scepticism to multilateralism (2012:22; 2020:18). Moreover, the construction of a migration crisis was seen as generating additional polarisation and radicalisation within Western societies (2016:28). Inconsistencies were also illustrated in the 2012 defence act, where Norwegian conceptualisations constructed more economic vulnerabilities following increased centralisation, specialisation, and technological dependencies (2012:13).[21] Although briefly expressing concerns related to international trade, NATO rather related international economic decline as generating additional risks of NATO-members decreasing defence spending (2012:12-13). Finally, differences were also found in the construction of environmental security concerns. NATO primarily considered risks following the threat of energy disruption, and threats from climate change (2010:13). In Norwegian conceptualisations, environmental concerns were often related to risks of military or political conflicts over resources, and focused on consequences to the Arctic region (2020:39).[22]

In the construction of **appropriate strategies**, more similarities between the alliance and its member state were found. Objectives such as defending the allies against direct attacks, contributing to international peace and stability, and enhancing collective defence were highlighted (2010:15-18; 2012:12; 2016:21; 2020:21).[23] Consequently, the defence capacities of NATO and the national military capabilities of Norway, including multilateral military support, were constructed as necessary resources (2010:26; 2012:31; 2016:17; 2020:10).[24] Norway regarded strengthening operational capacities – in close cooperation with NATO – crucial. (2012:12; 2016:22; 2020:22). Furthermore, both actors would seek to participate in multilateral crisis management and peace operations, and sought to develop such actions by incorporating more political and civilian approaches (2010:19; 2012:54; 2016:19; 2020:28).

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[21] The integration between the state's and the global economy was especially highlighted (2012:14; 2016:28; 2020:40).

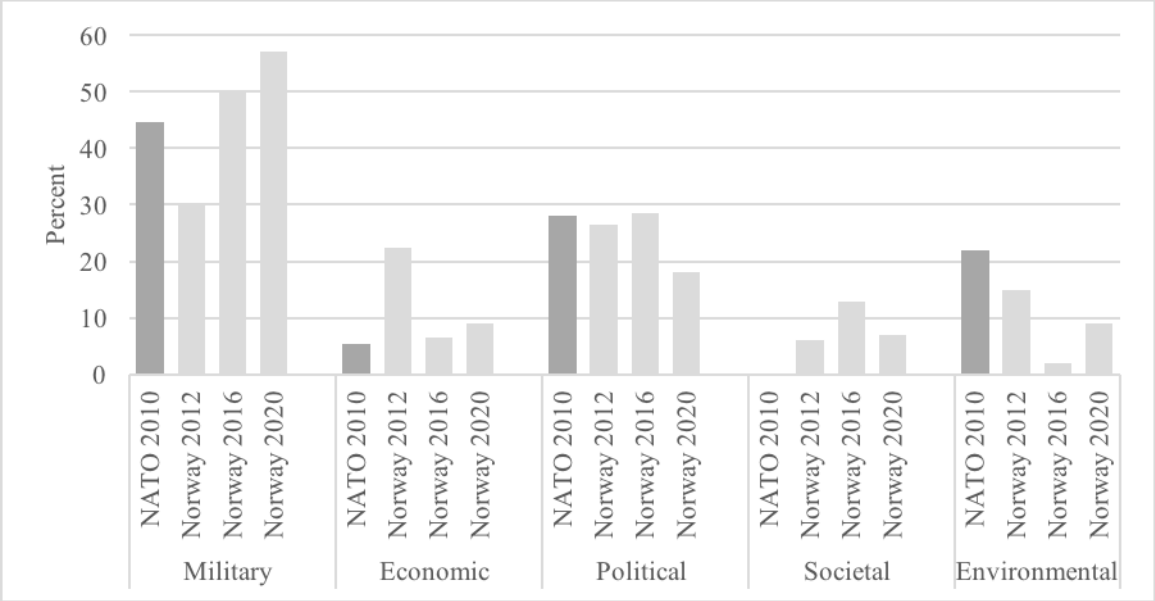
[22] Norway also constructed security challenges related to environmental degradation, and particularly threats its marine ecosystems (2012:30).

[23] This included development of abilities to defend against weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and cyber-attacks (2010:15–18).

[24] NATO's nuclear capabilities were mentioned as important deterring means in the strategic concept and the defence acts alike (2010:14; 2016:31).

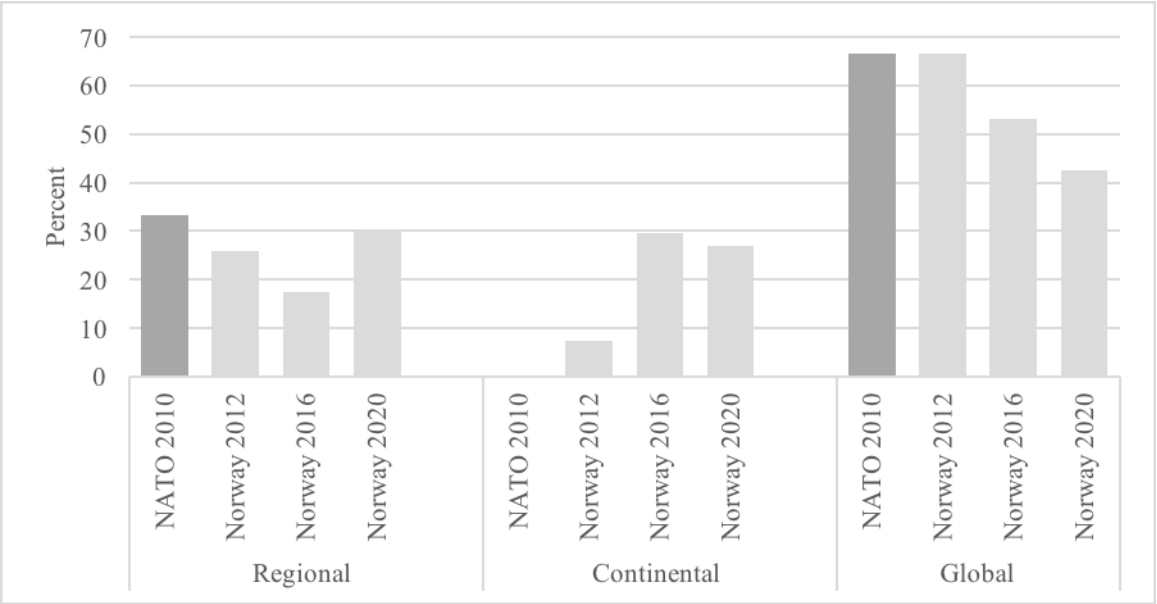
Nonetheless, while NATO sought increased engagement with international actors, particularly by strengthening partnership with the EU, Norwegian conceptualisations recognised the need for cooperation mainly within the UN (2010:28-29; 2012:21; 2020:13). Promoting increases in European, Nordic, and Baltic collaborations were considered, including an amplified dialogue between the Arctic states (2012:21; 2016:19; 2020:82). Moreover, NATO primarily sought its own enlargement whereas Norway highlighted possibilities to promote its values and interests through such platforms. Consequently, although international collaboration was similarly highlighted, where and how they would seek such cooperation differed. Thus, additional Norwegian aims can be found in upholding the liberal world order (2012:12; 2020:7). Norway also regarded diplomatic, informational, economic, and judicial means as necessary instruments to a larger extent (2012:24; 2020:65).

Graph 5. Sector-based security concerns of NATO and Norway during phase 3



Description: Percentage of the sector-based focus of security concerns in the Strategic Concept of 2010 and the Norwegian defence acts of 2012, 2016, and 2020.

Graph 6. Geographical security concerns of NATO and Norway during phase 3



Description: Percentage of the geographical focus of security concerns in the Strategic Concept of 2010 and the Norwegian defence acts of 2012, 2016, and 2020.

5.2.2 Comparison with Swedish conceptualisations

In the **contextualised security environments** in NATO's strategic concept of 2010 and the Swedish defence acts between 2015 and 2020, similarities in conceptualisations of military security concerns were found in the shared construction of the threat of aggression towards the actors' territories. They also recognised digital vulnerabilities and cyber threats (2010:11-12),[25] and highlighted a growing threat of weapons of mass destruction (2010:10; 2015:41; 2020:64). Additionally, both actors considered armed conflicts abroad as relevant for their own security (2010:11; 2015:32), which were further linked to threats of terrorist attacks and organised crime (2010:11: 2015:32-33; 2020:49). Finally, both actors constructed threats and vulnerabilities following climate change, resource scarcity, and health risks (2010:13).[26] However, Swedish concerns were often related to increases in competition for national resources and seen as generating additional security concerns of military or societal character (2020:67).

Thus, despite military, political, and some environmental security concerns constituting a shared focus, conceptualisations illustrated several differences between their ideas. Sweden had an emphasis on threats towards the liberal world order, and the European security order specifically. The state thus regarded

[25] For Sweden, such ideas included threats of hybrid warfare – particularly in relation to Russian aggressions (2015:40–42; 2020:61–63).

[26] NATO constructed vulnerabilities in connection to dependencies on foreign energy suppliers and the threat of energy disruption (2010:12), as well as concerns related to climate change, water scarcity, and health risks (2010:13).

international institutions, laws, and norms as increasingly threatened, which was constructed as posing a unique threat to smaller states (2015:21; 2020:33; 2020:69).[27] Furthermore, while NATO did not construct any societal concerns, Sweden recognised risks following a rise in right-wing and Islamist groupings (2020:66). Additional tensions following migration flows were constructed (2020:67). Furthermore, although neither actor had a focus on economic security concerns, NATO mentioned vulnerabilities to international trade whereas Sweden rather constructed economic challenges following geopolitical tensions and increased competition (2010:12; 2015:22; 2020:53). Finally, Sweden had a larger regional focus than NATO during this time period, thus constructing threats and vulnerabilities within or close to its own territory. In contrast, a global perspective appeared dominant in the strategic concept.

In the construction of **appropriate strategies**, similar objectives included safeguarding territorial and political integrity, and both actors constructed the need to strengthen its military capabilities (2010:14; 2015:10).[28] Additionally, the state, similarly to NATO, regarded cooperation platforms, including the transatlantic link, as necessary resources (2015:35; 2020:27). They thus considered deepening security and defence cooperation. While the state especially sought to do so through Nordic and European collaborations (2015:1; 2020:70), it also regarded increased participation in NATO-led exercises important (2015:38; 2020:77). Furthermore, NATO would actively engage in conflict management and peace operation missions (2010:19). Similarly, Sweden sought to increasingly participate in UN-led operations, and contribute in strengthening the EU's capacity to lead civilian and military crisis management (2015:35). However, in the latter defence act more focus was put on prevention and management closer to home.

While NATO and Sweden shared many ideas about appropriate strategies to counteract their contextualised security environments, some differences were apparent. While they similarly considered international peace a crucial purpose, the state primarily sought to do so by contributing to upholding the global world order and protecting its values, particularly by strengthening the UN and the EU (2015:20; 2020:31). Sweden also regarded international institutions, laws, and norms necessary means for its own security (2020:65). Moreover political, diplomatic, and economic means were highlighted by the state, but not declared in the strategic concept (2015:20; 2020:59). In contrast, crucial actions formulated by NATO were the development of abilities to defend against international terrorism and cyber-attacks (2010:15-18). Sweden would actively seek to strengthen its military capabilities as well, but it did not construct a comparable focus on ways to counter terrorism.[29]

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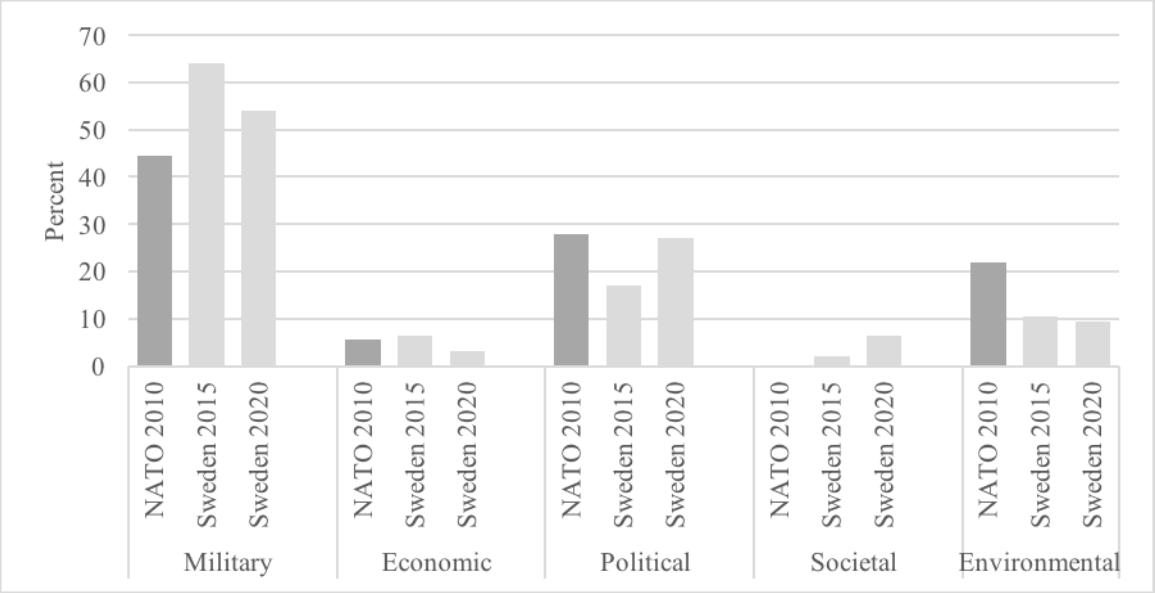
[27] In particular, such units were constructed as affected by China's increase in influence, and by direct Russian aggressions or attempts to counteract Transatlantic and European integration.

[28] For Sweden, this included increasing military presence in its strategic regions and developing capacities to give and receive military support (2015:8; 2020:68).

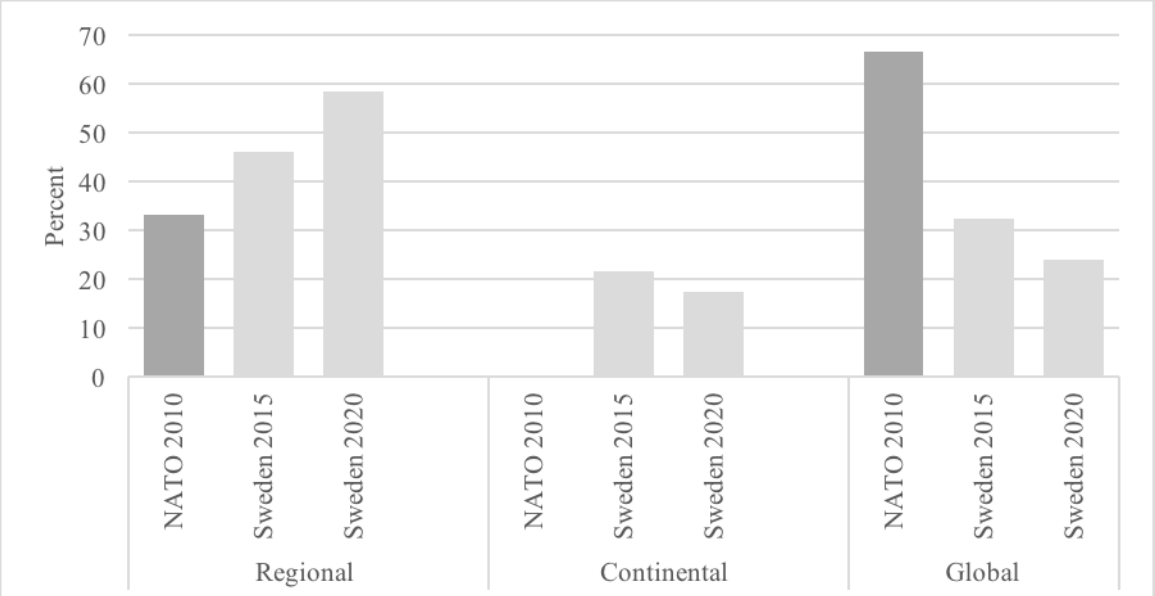
[29] However, it mentioned needs to strengthen societal preparedness and being able to identify hybrid threats (2020:29; 2020:62).

Graph 7. Sector-based security concerns of NATO and Sweden during phase 3



Description: Percentage of the sector-based focus of security concerns in the Strategic Concept of 2010 and the Swedish defence acts of 2015 and 2020.

Graph 8. Geographical security concerns of NATO and Sweden during phase 3



Description: Percentage of the geographical focus of security concerns in the Strategic Concept of 2010 and the Swedish defence acts of 2015 and 2020.

6 The European security community

6.1 The EU 2003

6.1.1 Comparison with Norwegian conceptualisations

In the **contextualised security environments** constructed in the European security strategy of 2003 and the Norwegian defence acts between 2004 and 2016, the actors shared a similar sector-based focus, although Norway increasingly emphasised environmental and economic security concerns in 2008 and 2012 respectively. The documents illustrated several similarities in conceptualisations as well. Both actors described challenges following conflicts abroad (2003:3; 2004:21; 2008:26; 2012:25; 2016:30). Moreover, terrorism and organised crime were particularly stressed (2003:5; 2004:22; 2008:32; 2012:23; 2016:34). They also shared the construction of vulnerabilities related to economic dependencies (2003:4; 2004:21; 2008:45; 2012:14; 2016:28),[30] and additional similarities were identified in their understandings of environmental concerns (2003:4-5; 2004:30; 2008:28; 2012:22).[31] However, for Norway, such threats were primarily related towards its northern territory. Nonetheless, a similarity was found in their emphasis of global concerns, although Norway also focused on regionally constructed threats and vulnerabilities.

The EU also conceptualised societal risks in relation to terrorism, describing it as undermining the openness of European societies (2003:05). Norway generally understood societal rivalries as external concerns (2004:21; 2016:28). However, the construction of a migration crisis in 2016 was seen as generating radicalisation and polarisation closer to home (2016:28). The state also recognised concerns following fragmentation between the US and European allies (2004:29; 2008:32; 2012:22). Their conceptualisations also included risks following the weakening of the state system and fragile institutions. However, for the EU, these issues were

[30] However, Norwegian conceptualisation increasingly contextualised these risks in relation to economic power shifts, risks of trade conflicts, and global debts in the defence act of 2012.

[31] For example, threats and vulnerabilities following an increased dependency on energy suppliers, the competition for natural resources as aggravated by global warming, and the spread of new diseases

described as a cause behind terrorism, while Norway associated such concerns with great power rivalry and its effect on the liberal world order (2003:6; 2004:20; 2008:32; 2012:22). Moreover, although they recognised the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the EU emphasised the risk of terrorist groups acquiring them, whereas Norway saw threats from state actors as well (2003:6; 2004:2; 2008:25; 2012:23; 2016:34). The major difference was thus found in Norwegian understandings of direct attacks as relevant (2004:34; 2008:16).[32]

When formulating **appropriate strategies**, similarities were found in the objective of upholding the liberal world order (2003:11; 2008:23; 2012:12).[33] Furthermore, humanitarian, diplomatic, economic, and judicial resources were regarded as important means. They also recognised the need to advance military capacities (2003:13; 2008:13; 2008:32; 2012:24), and similarities were found in the need to increase international crisis management (2003:14; 2008:28; 2012:54; 2016:19).[34] In addition, both actors highlighted the need to expand international cooperation and strengthen international institutions (2003:15-16; 2012:21; 2016:19).[35] The collective defence capabilities of NATO and the EU-NATO permanent arrangements were seen, by the actors as important resources (2003:14; 2008:28; 2012:31; 2016:17; 2016:31). Notably, Norway also considered ensuring harmony between NATO and the EU, and tying its own security policy closer to the union, necessary (2004:20; 2008:35).

Nonetheless, differences were observed in the aims of territorial integrity and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area found in Norwegian conceptualisations (2004:13; 2008:17; 2012:12; 2016:21). Additionally, the advancement of national military capacities for deterrence and defence, and the development of abilities to defend against threats of conventional character were amplified in Norwegian conceptualisations (2012:12; 2016:22). In contrast, the EU-formulated necessity to actively contain proliferation globally were not equally emphasised in the defence acts (2003:9).

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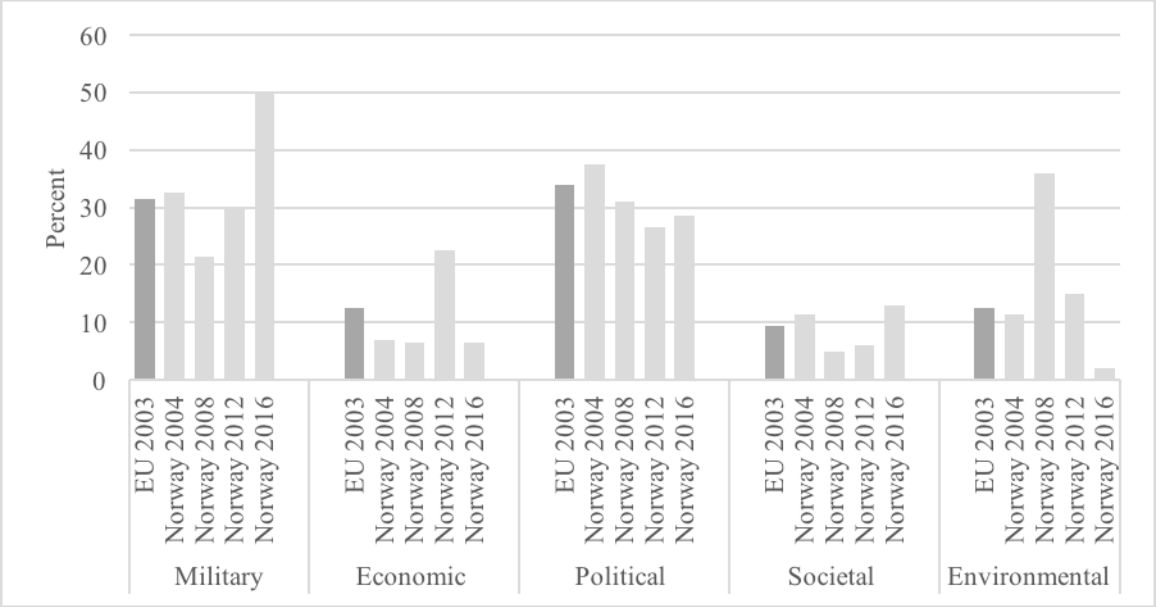
[32] In the 2016 defence act a continental, i.e. European, perspective increased in Norwegian conceptualisations.

[33] For Norway, this was often constructed as a necessary in order to safeguard small states' security interests against larger powers (2004:21; 2008:27).

[34] However, the EU's external activities would primarily seek social and political reform, whereas Norway sought to support military interventions. Still, the state constructed the need to incorporate more political approaches, and the EU would establish a defence agency to back military actions

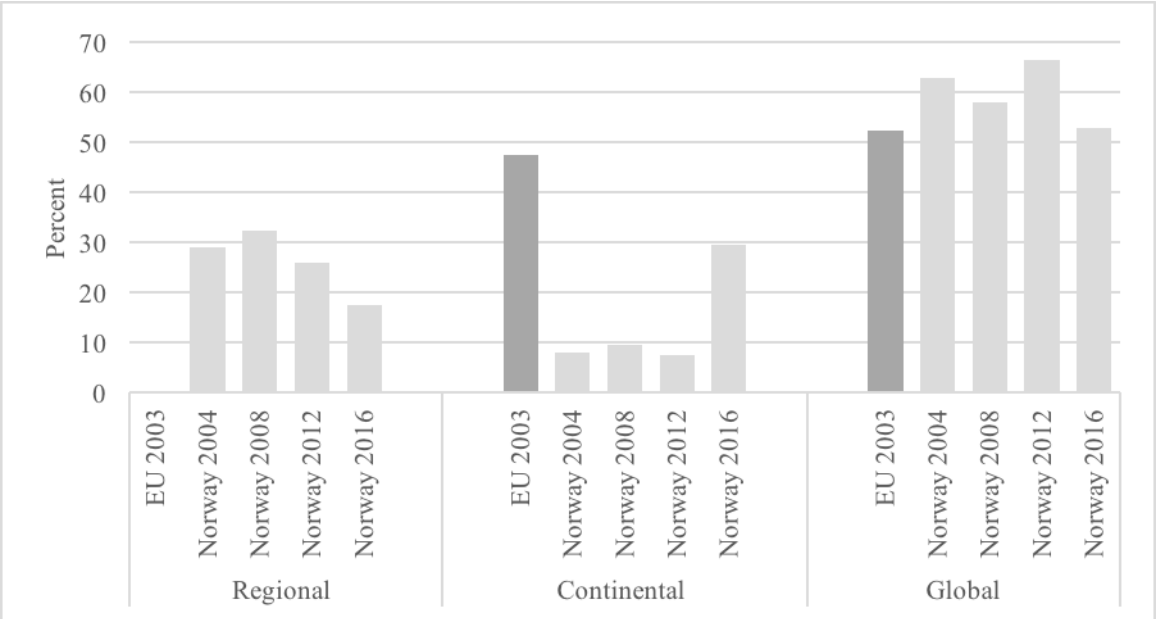
[35] Norwegian conceptualisations recognised the need for increased international cooperation, mainly within the UN, but also the development of European, Nordic, and Baltic collaboration.

Graph 9. Sector-based security concerns of the EU and Norway during phase 2



Description: Percentage of the sector-based focus of security concerns in the EU's Security Strategy of 2003 and the Norwegian defence acts of 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2020.

Graph 10. Geographical security concerns of the EU and Norway during phase 2



Description: Percentage of the geographical focus of security concerns in the EU's Security Strategy of 2003 and the Norwegian defence acts of 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2020.

6.1.2 Comparison with Swedish conceptualisations

Despite notable differences in sector-based focuses, the **contextualised security environments** constructed in the European security strategy of 2003 and the defence acts between 2004 and 2015 illustrate several similarities. The actors shared attentions to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (2003:6;

2004:17; 2009:28; 2015:41), and they considered armed conflicts in other regions relevant for their own security (2003:3; 2004:13; 2009:28; 2015:32). Similarities encompassed concerns of terrorism and organised crime, which were often linked to state failure or conflicts abroad (2003:6; 2004:14; 2009:28; 2015:32-33). An additional likeness was found between the EU-document and the defence act of 2009 regarding environmental security concerns. While Sweden had not emphasised such threats and vulnerabilities earlier, its 2009 policy lined up with the EU's construction of concerns regarding climate change and challenges related to natural resources (2003:4-5). For Sweden, certain risks were related to the Baltic Sea specifically (2009:27-28; 2015:31).

The case of a similarity between the EU-document and one of the defence act was not unique during this phase. For example, neither actor considered direct attacks to their territories. However, in 2015, Sweden constructed immediate threats of conventional character, as well as cyber-attacks and information campaigns (2015:40-42). Consequently, the state's regional focus increased substantially in 2009 and 2015. Similarly, the EU constructed certain vulnerabilities due to economic dependencies (2003:4). For Sweden, however, economic concerns were not addressed until 2009 where mentions were made to global economic crises, but in 2015 the state also recognised challenges rising from interdependencies (2009:28; 2015:21).

A consistently identified difference was, however, found in the EU's conceptualisation of threats towards its 'open and tolerant' societies (2003:05). In Swedish conceptualisations, societal concerns were rather constructed as rising from ethnic and religious rivalries abroad and not directly affecting its immediate surroundings (2004:20; 2015:32). In contrast, Sweden constructed global societal concerns associated with threats to the international system, and risks following authoritarian developments in larger powers (2004:29; 2009:28; 2015:21). In the latter defence act, the state conceived military and political threats from Chinese and Russian advancements specifically (2015:43).

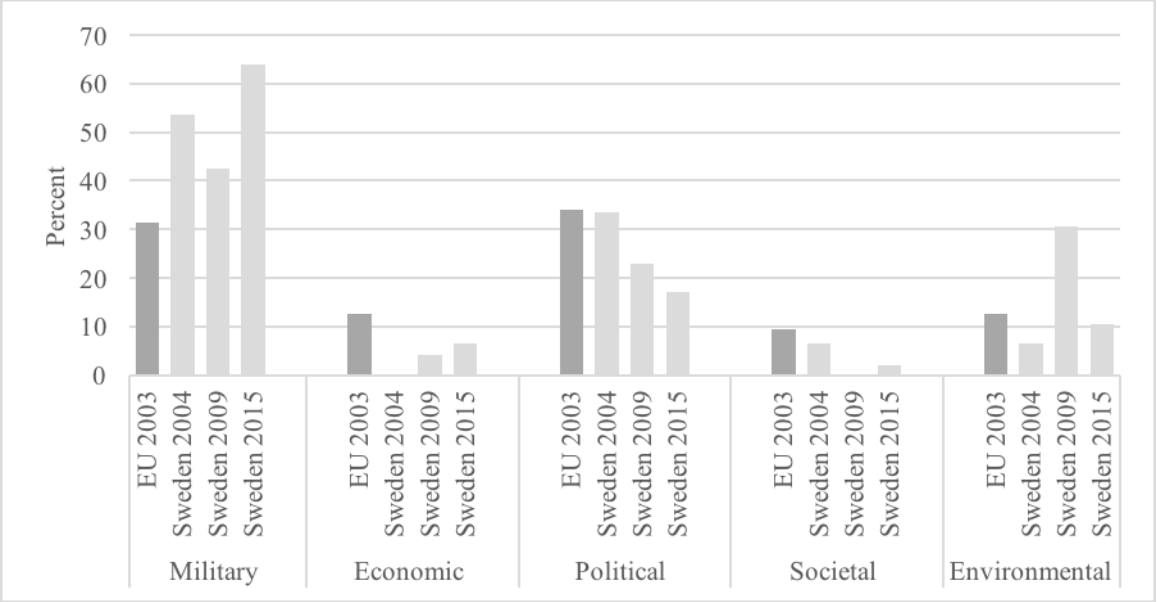
When formulating **appropriate strategies**, similarities were found in the actors' construction of ensuring international peace, developing a stronger international society, and upholding the liberal world order as crucial purposes (2003:11; 2004:12; 2009:35; 2015:20). Resources expressed as necessary were, in turn, political, economic judicial, diplomatic, civilian, and humanitarian instruments (2003:13; 2004:12; 2009:31; 2015:20). Additional enhanced resources were the EU membership and cooperation platforms with NATO, and the EU-NATO permanent arrangements respectively (2003:14; 2004:15-17; 2015:35). Furthermore, the EU stated the need to support social and political reform in regions plagued by armed conflicts and weak state institutions,[36] and Sweden, similarly, had an emphasis on the need to participate in humanitarian intervention

[36] The EU would thus establish a defence agency, and transform its military forces to support such actions (2003:14).

(2004:12).[37] Additionally, increased multilateral and bilateral cooperation, and the development of international institutions, was regarded important ways to achieve the actors' objectives (2003:15-16; 2004:30; 2009:31; 2015:1).[38]

Nevertheless, differences were observed in a Swedish objective being the protection of territorial and political integrity, including being able to defend against aggressions (2004:23; 2009:35; 2015:20) Notably, this aim was formulated in 2004 despite the absence of the construction of threats of immediate attacks. Likewise, the EU expressed the need to develop military capabilities (2003:14), while Sweden initially sought to decrease military capabilities and rather redirect resources towards international humanitarian missions (2004:23). Noteworthy, however, is that the EU formulated strategies to improve its military capacities primarily with the purpose of increasing international crisis management. Moreover, in the latter defence act, the state constructed the need to strengthen its national military capabilities again (2015:10).[39] Finally, the necessity to actively work to contain proliferation was mentioned in the EU-document (2003:9). However, although similar actions were formulated in Swedish conceptualisations, they were not particularly emphasised (2004:17).

Graph 11. Sector-based security concerns of the EU and Sweden during phase 2



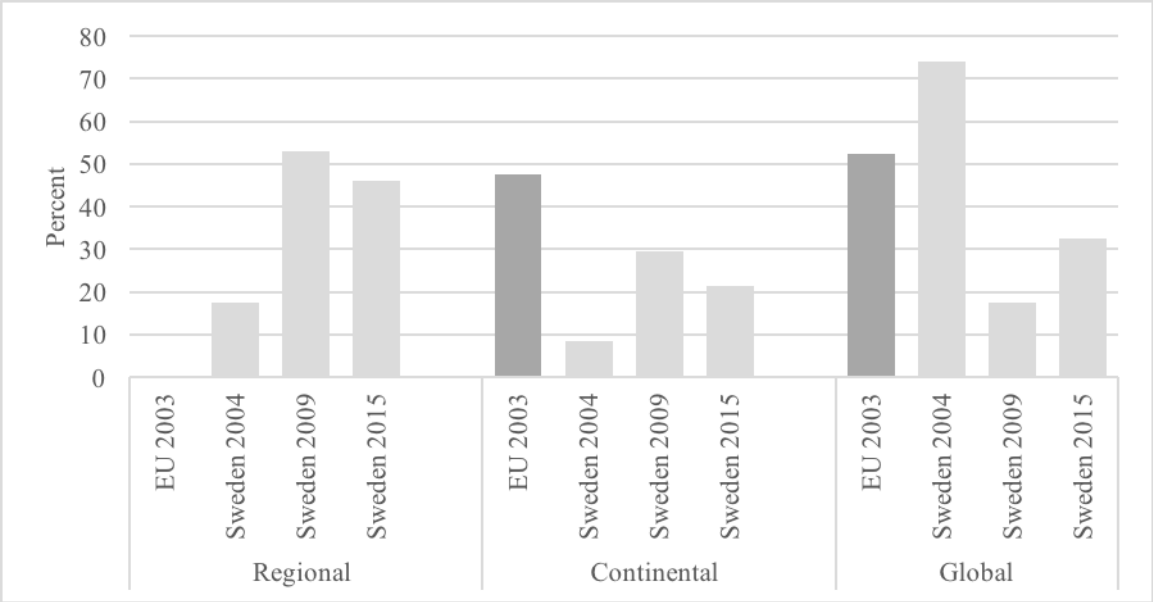
Description: Percentage of the sector-based focus of security concerns in the EU's Security Strategy of 2003 and the Swedish defence acts of 2004, 2009, and 2015.

[37] Consequently, the state would increasingly participate in UN-led peace-operations, and contribute in strengthening the EU's capacity to lead civilian and military crisis management (2015:35).

[38] Strengthening the transatlantic link, promoting European collaboration (including working actively to tie new member states to the union), and increasing Nordic and Baltic cooperation was highlighted in the Swedish defence acts (2004:30; 2009:31; 2015:1).

[39] For example, by increasing military presence in its strategic regions and develop capacities to give and receive military support (2015:8).

Graph 12. Geographical security concerns of the EU and Sweden during phase 2



Description: Percentage of the geographical focus of security concerns in the EU's Security Strategy of 2003 and the Swedish defence acts of 2004, 2009, and 2015.

6.2 The EU 2016

6.2.1 Comparison with Norwegian conceptualisations

In the **contextualised security environment** of the EU's strategy for its foreign and security policy (2016) and the Norwegian defence act of 2020, similarities were found in specific references to threats of Russian aggressions, risks associated with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as cyber-threats (2016:7; 2016:41; 2020:17; 2020:19; 2020:37). Furthermore, they described concerns with upholding international law, and incorporated references to threats towards international and state institutions, including the global order and its norms (2016:33; 2016:39; 2020:8). Correspondingly, the EU formulated challenges to the unity of the union, and threats towards European values and way of life (2016:19).[40] For Norway, societal concerns were particularly associated with tensions within the Euro-Atlantic areas following an increase in populist scepticism to multilateral cooperation (2020:18). Moreover, the EU and Norway constructed threats of transnational crime and terrorism (2016:9). However, in the defence act, such concerns were not emphasised and rather related to the

[40] To some extent, migration was addressed as generating parallel challenges (2016:34).

constructed challenge of migration (2020:36). Finally, there was a shared geographical focus throughout the phase.

While sharing several conceptualisations about their security concerns, Norway had a substantial sector-based focus on military threats and vulnerabilities while the EU emphasised political challenges. The actors also had some divergent conceptualisations. Although economic security concerns were barely mentioned by either, for Norway vulnerabilities were related to the integration of the national economy to the world economy. Thus, occurrences such as trade wars were seen as generating risks (2020:40).[41] Moreover, although both actors made references to environmental security concerns, Norwegian conceptualisations often related them to risks of armed or political conflicts over resources, focusing particularly on consequences to the Arctic region (2020:39).[42]

When formulating **appropriate strategies**, the actors illustrated a shared construction of objectives such as contributing to international peace and stability, safeguarding the liberal world order, and upholding international law (2016:8; 2016:33; 2020:7). Moreover, both actors regarded the need for military capabilities, as well as diplomatic, informational, economic, and judicial means as necessary instruments (2016:21; 2016:48; 2020:65). In addition, the EU and Norway alike would seek to participate in multilateral crisis management and conflict-prevention (2016:21; 2020:28), and both actors recognised the need for increased international security cooperation in general (2016:20; 2016:37; 2020:82).[43]

Nonetheless, differences included the constructed Norwegian aim of defending against direct attacks (2020:21). However, somewhat comparable, the unions objectives also incorporated the "territorial integrity of states" (2016:33). For the EU, the economic weight of the union and global norms were seen as valuable tools to exert influence (2016:32; 2016:39). Economic and normative resources were not equally recognised by the state. Norway rather regarded the collective defence capabilities of NATO as important deterring means (2020:10). Similarly, although they shared the need to advance military capabilities, Norway specifically regarded doing so in close cooperation with NATO necessary (2020:22). Finally, the EU to a larger extent included additional actions to enhance energy and environmental resilience (2016:22; 2016:27). [44]

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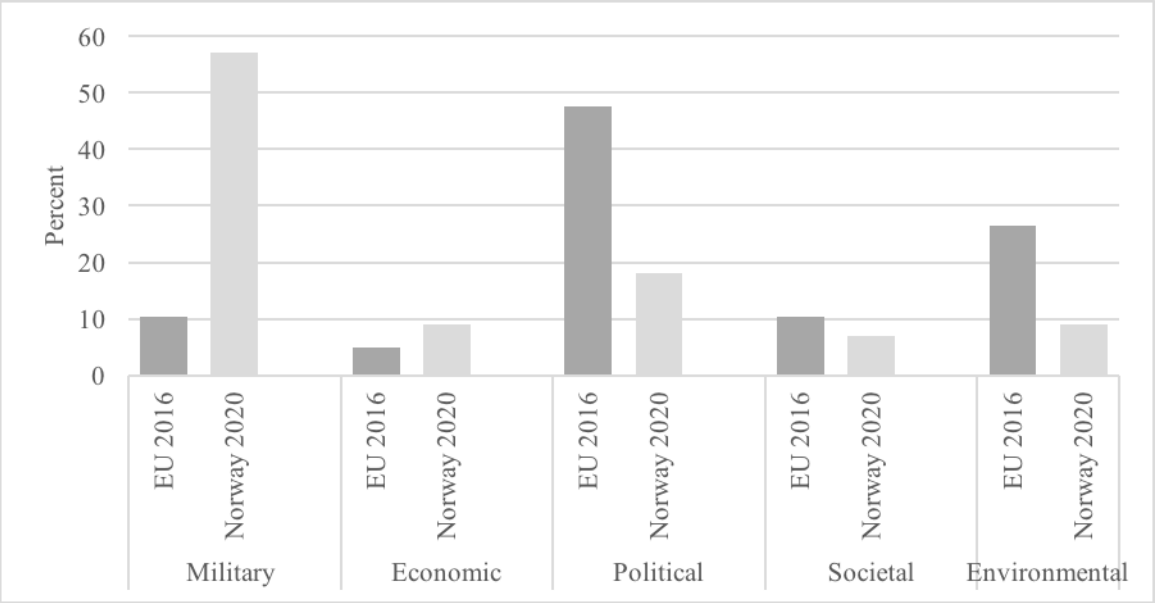
[41] In the EU-document, economic factors were primarily constructed as political goals and means, rather than security concerns.

[42] The EU constructed concerns regarding climate change, resource scarcity, energy security, and environmental degradation (2016:27).

[43] The EU wanted to increase defence cooperation between member states, EU-institutions, and with NATO. Intensifying the union's cooperation globally was described as foundational (2016:32-33). Norway did so mainly within the UN and NATO, however, also promoting an increase in European, Nordic and Baltic collaboration, including an amplified dialogue between the Arctic states (2020:13; 2020:82).

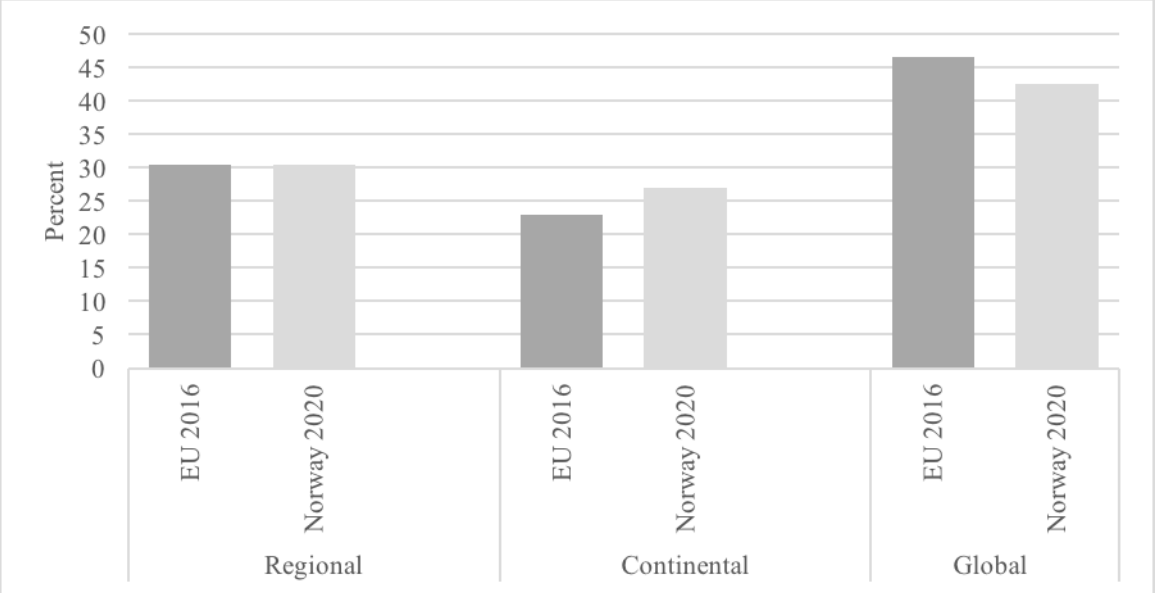
[44] This included diversifying the EU's energy sources, routes and suppliers, for example through energy diplomacy (2016:22).

Graph 13. Sector-based security concerns of the EU and Norway during phase 4



Description: Percentage of the sector-based focus of security concerns in the EU's Strategy for its Foreign and Security Policy of 2016 and the Norwegian defence act of 2020.

Graph 14. Geographical security concerns of the EU and Norway during phase 4



Description: Percentage of the geographical focus of security concerns in the EU's Strategy for its Foreign and Security Policy of 2016 and the Norwegian defence act of 2020.

6.2.2 Comparison with Swedish conceptualisations

In the **contextualised security environment** of the EU's strategy for its foreign and security policy (2016) and the Swedish defence act of 2020, several similarities were observed. Threats of Russian aggressions, risks associated with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and cyber-threats were

constructed (2016:7; 2016:22; 2016:41; 2020:61-64).[45] Additionally, their conceptualisation incorporated threats of terrorist attacks and organised crime, which were often linked to fragile states far from home (2016:9; 2016:25; 2020:49). The EU and Sweden also shared an understanding of threats towards the European order specifically, although international institutions, laws, and norms were also generally described as increasingly threatened (2016:39; 2020:69).[46] Societal concerns illustrated some additional shared constructions. The EU recognised threats towards the unity of the EU, including European values and way of life. To some extent, migration was considered as generating parallel challenges (2016:19; 2016:34). Sweden also recognised internal pressures due to a rise in right-wing and Islamist ideologies, and similarly, risks of tensions following flows of migration were constructed in the defence act (2020:67).

Even though the actors shared many conceptualisations, Sweden had a substantially larger focus on military security concerns, and a majority of its threats and vulnerabilities were seen from a regional perspective. Moreover, the actors also illustrated some dissimilarities in conceptualisations. Sweden emphasised the risk of being drawn into conflicts close to its own territory (2020:58). It also conceived threats from Chinese and Russian military advancements (2020:51). Similar conceptions were not found in the EU-document. Moreover, while the EU only included references to risks of economic volatility in the EU-document, economic challenges in Swedish conceptualisations were seen as following geopolitical tensions, as well as generating increased competition (2016:9; 2020:53).[47] Finally, the EU-document highlighted climate change, resource scarcity, energy security, and environmental degradation (2016:27). Swedish conceptualisations also included similar concerns, however, they were often related to increases in rivalry over national resources and seen as generating other types of security concerns (2020:67).[48]

When formulating **appropriate strategies**, similarities were found in the constructions of international peace and security and the protection of the liberal world order as necessary objectives (2016:7; 2020:31).[49] Furthermore, they formulated the need to strengthen military resources and capabilities. Political, diplomatic, and economic means were also highlighted (2016:31; 2020:59). Moreover, the EU and Sweden regarded international institutions, law, and norms indispensable means for their security interests (2016:39; 2020:65). They also considered deepening bi- and multilateral security and defence cooperation. For the EU, particularly by increasing cooperation within the union and with NATO,

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[45] Although Sweden more frequently constructed threats of antagonistic cyber-attacks, information campaigns, and so-called hybrid warfare.

[46] For Sweden, international political units were constructed as affected by China's increase in influence, and by Russian aggressions and attempts to counter Transatlantic and European integration (2020:33).

[47] In the EU-document, economic factors were primarily constructed as political goals and means, rather than security concerns.

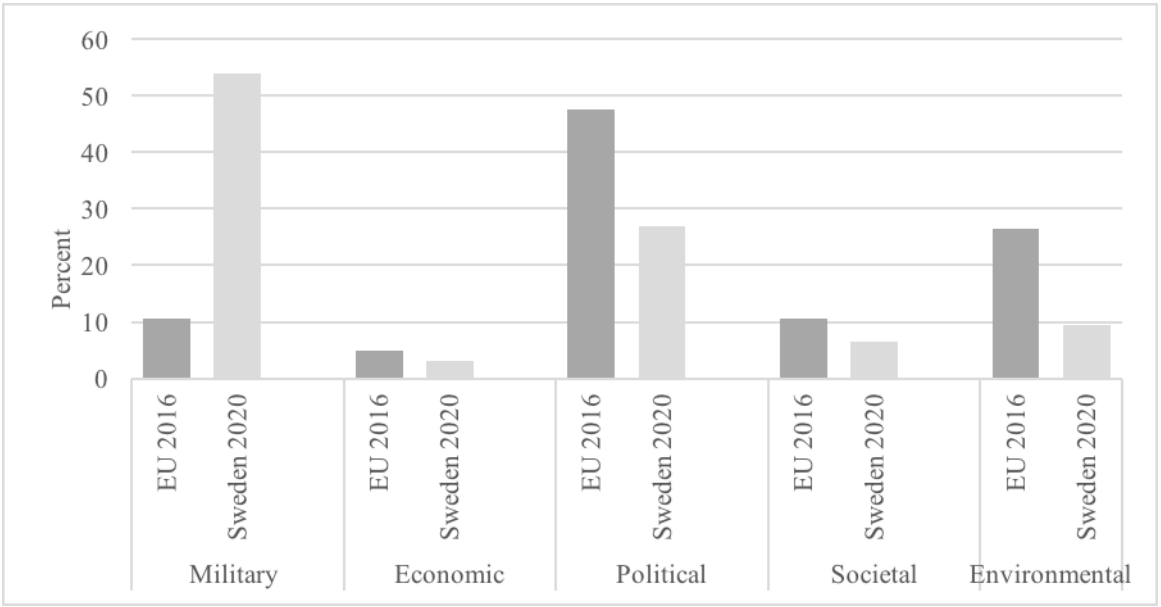
[48] Sweden had an emphasis on the consequences of climate change in the Arctic (2020:38).

[49] For Sweden, this was primarily formulated as an aim to strengthen the UN and the EU specifically (2020:31).

and, for Sweden, through Nordic and European collaborations, as well as with NATO (2016:20; 2016:37; 2020:70; 2020:77).

Despite constructing several similar objectives, resources, and actions as necessary, the actors also had some dissimilarities. The union had a broader interest in preventing conflict and promoting human security in the global 'south' (2016:34), while Swedish conceptualised objectives rather included safeguarding territorial and political integrity in Sweden, the Nordics, and Europe. The EU sought to increase its efforts on conflict-prevention and counter-radicalisation, and would work through various activities to address displacement and migration (2016:21; 2016:27).[50] A similar conception was not matched in the Swedish defence act. Instead, the state would strengthen its military capabilities, increase military presence in its strategic regions, and develop capacities to give and receive military support (2020:68). Finally, Sweden also mentioned needs to strengthen societal preparedness and being able to identify hybrid threats (2020:29; 2020:62), while the EU sought to diversify the union's energy sources and enhancing its energy and environmental resilience (2016:22). However, these divergent conceptualisations were not stressed in neither actor's conceptualisations.

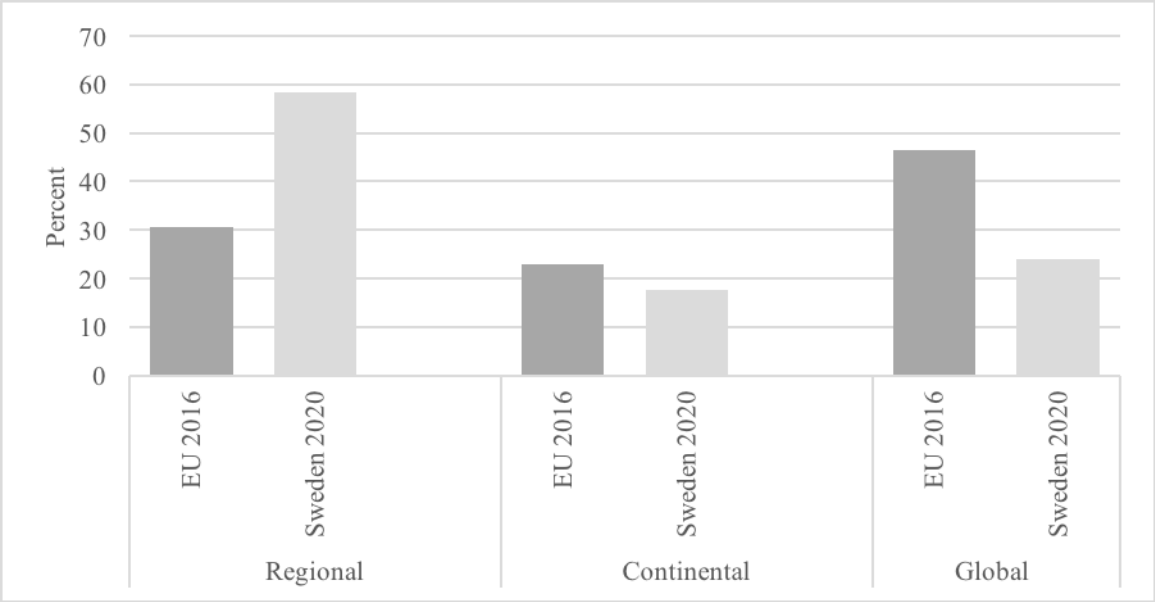
Graph 15. Sector-based security concerns of the EU and Sweden during phase 4



Description: Percentage of the sector-based focus of security concerns in the EU's Strategy for its Foreign and Security Policy of 2016 and the Swedish defence act of 2020.

[50] E.g. development policies, trust funds, preventive diplomacy, and mediation.

Graph 16. Geographical security concerns of the EU and Sweden during phase 4



Description: Percentage of the geographical focus of security concerns in the EU's Strategy for its Foreign and Security Policy of 2016 and the Swedish defence act of 2020.

7 Similarities and differences in conceptualisations of security

By considering the spatial and temporal relations in the analysis presented above, I intend to reach conclusions regarding the thirds research question and the aligned empirical hypothesis. First, spatial comparisons will be carried out between Transatlantic/European (community) conceptualisations and Norwegian/Swedish (state) conceptualisations. Within this space, previous research has argued that differences on community level cause corresponding differences on state level. Consequently, if the empirical hypothesis and previous assumptions are to be confirmed, the states should have most in common in their conceptualisations of security with their respective security community due to the (successful) securitisation taking place on community level. Second, temporal comparisons take into consideration two additional enquiries. If the states' conceptualisations of security are draw from the proposed securitisations of the security communities, when and for how long can these similarities be observed? Moreover, the empirical comparisons are divided into four overlapping phases, and an analytical focal point thus takes place around shifts initiated by a new key text. Thus, posing the question: does a new phase of community documents generate corresponding similarities in the state documents? Finally, since texts representing the security communities were not written at the same point in time, comparisons are likely shaped by external events which must also be addressed.

7.1 Spatial considerations

When analysing the **Transatlantic security community**, the contextualised security environments of NATO and Norway illustrated a shared focus on and similar conceptualisations of military and political security concerns.[51] However, comparable focuses and conceptions were also constructed within Swedish conceptualisations. In fact, NATO and Sweden understood direct attacks as less probable short-term during the first phase, whereas Norwegian conceptualisations regarded aggressions as a more immediate. However, the states also constructed additional concerns within these sectors that were not found in the community's

[51] For example, threats of or following weapons of mass-destruction, military aggressions, conflicts abroad, terrorism, organised crime, and fragile states.

conceptualisations.[52] Although neither economic nor societal concerns were particularly emphasised by NATO or the two states, NATO did not emphasise environmental security concerns in its strategic concept in 1999 whereas both states amplified such conceptualisations in the defence acts of 2008 and 2009 respectively. In 2010, environmental threats and vulnerabilities received more attention in the strategic concept. However, the states understood such threats as generating additional political and military concerns regionally, while a similar contextualisation was not evident in either of the strategic concepts. Furthermore, while NATO in its strategic concept of 1999 largely constructed security concerns at a regional level, Norway and Sweden, initially, understood the majority of their threats and vulnerabilities as being of a global character. During the third phase, the geographical focuses of NATO and Norway aligned, while Swedish conceptualisations did not.

Similarly, when considering what the actors constructed as appropriate strategies to deal with their contextualised security environments, more similarities between NATO and Norway were found, particularly during the first phase.[53] Notably, however, similarities were also identified between all three actors, especially after the strategic concept of 2010 and Sweden's increased focus on national defence in the year before. Nonetheless, the two states, similarly to their contextualisation of security environment, also constructed strategies that were not matched in transatlantic conceptualisations.[54] Remarkably, Norway and Sweden alike described some strategies as being uniquely necessary for smaller states to pursue in order to protect their specific security interests.

When analysing the **European security community**, the contextualised security environments of the EU and Sweden also illustrated a shared focus on and construction of military and political security.[55] However, several threats and vulnerabilities were similarly emphasised and constructed in Norwegian *and* Transatlantic conceptualisations. Yet, in 2016, the EU created security concerns regarding international norms and the global order. Such threats and vulnerabilities were correspondingly found in Swedish and Norwegian conceptualisations, and thus not generating differences between the states, but rather illustrating shared conceptualisations between the EU and Norway that were not found in the strategic concepts. However, consistent with the Transatlantic comparisons, the states also constructed shared security concerns

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[52] For example, digital and informational risks, political threats to the global order, concerns about great power rivalry, as well as threats and vulnerabilities following the rise of extremist ideologies and migration flows.

[53] For example, both actors prioritised the objectives of territorial integrity and collective defence, as well as constructing the need to increasing defence capacities. Sweden, on the other hand, saw the need to decrease national defence capabilities, redirect them to international missions, as well as uphold its military non-alignment.

[54] For example, the objective to safeguard the global order, to protect and make usage of its norms, as well as increasingly operate with or through diplomatic and political resources and actions in parallel with military activities.

[55] For example, weapons of mass destruction, cyber-threats, armed conflicts abroad, Russian aggressions, terrorism, organised crime, and state failure.

that were not found in the European community conceptualisations either.[56] While economic and societal security concerns were not particularly emphasised by the EU, the two states, (nor NATO), some resemblances in conceptualisations were identified.[57] Notably, however, the former concern was more emphasised by the EU and Norway. Furthermore, while the EU also did not prioritise environmental security concerns in its 2003 policy, such conceptualisations increased with its succeeding document. However, as mentioned, both states had already amplified such constructions. Looking at the geographical emphases, the EU initially had a larger focus on continental threats and vulnerabilities than both Norway and Sweden. However, after the 2016 document, Norwegian conceptualisations aligned more with the EU's emphases than Swedish conceptualisations did.

Finally, when considering what the EU and the two states constructed as appropriate strategies, the union's and the Swedish conceptualisations were in general not uniquely separated from the Norwegian. However, a similarity that appeared especially evident for the EU and its Nordic member state was a tendency to emphasis political and social means and actions, because although such resources and activities were mentioned in Norwegian conceptualisations they were provided with somewhat less attentions. Also noteworthy was that certain conceptions separated all three actors from NATO.[58] Subsequently, Norway shared some of its strategies with the EU, although they were not expressed by its own alliance. Conversely, however, Sweden and Norway also constructed additional objectives, which were not emphasised in the EU-documents but reflected in the strategic concepts.[59] A final remarkable finding was that the analysis uncovered ideas present in EU- and Norwegian conceptualisation that initially were not matched by the Swedish member state.[60] Eventually, however, Sweden aligned these ideas with its alliance and neighbouring state.

7.2 Temporal considerations

In the beginning of the **first phase**, the states, similarly to NATO, primarily constructed military security concerns.[61] But 2004 and onwards, they increasingly

[56] For example, concerns in relation to great power rivalry, global tensions, and populist movements.
[57] For example, construction of concerns regarding economic interdependencies and migration.
[58] For example, objectives such as upholding the global order, promoting international norms and values, and ensuring international peace, or regarding cooperative platforms and global norms as necessary resources.
[59] For example, ensuring territorial and political integrity.
[60] For example, the EU encouraged the advancement of military capabilities for its member states, including increased military cooperation between them, in both documents. In contrast, Sweden in the beginning sought to decrease such priorities.
[61] However, NATO did not regard direct attacks to its territories an immediate threat. Neither did Sweden until 2009, whereas Norway considered such a reality during the entire phase.

highlighted political challenges, while their relative creation of threats and vulnerabilities of military character declined (although military security concerns remained prioritised in Swedish conceptualisations). Notably, political security concerns encompass threats of terrorist attacks, and the construction of ideas about security after 2001 are likely to have been influenced by 9/11. Furthermore, neither actor gave much attention to economic, societal, nor environmental security concerns. However, this changed in 2008 and 2009, thus breaking with the states' tendencies to have similar emphases as NATO.[62] Moreover, the states initially focused more on continental security concerns in comparison to NATO. For Norway, this was replaced by a global attention in 2004 and 2008. Sweden shared the tendency of its neighbouring state in 2005, but ten years after the strategic concept, a drastic shift to regional security concerns took place. However, this alignment with NATO's geographical understandings of security took place following Russian advancements in Georgia 2008. Finally, regarding constructions of appropriate strategies, the similarities and differences outlined above generally persisted throughout this phase. However, a major change occurred in Norwegian conceptualisations 2008 following the construction of some necessary resources that had not been highlighted in NATO document nor in former Norwegian defence acts.[63] Another major change included Sweden breaking from its previous strategy to decrease national defence capabilities in 2009, and thus aligning more with the other actors. However, this must also be understood in relation to the Russo-Georgian War the year before.

The **second phase** was then initiated by a new EU-document. While it prioritised political security concerns, followed by the construction of several military threats and vulnerabilities, it was Norwegian emphases in 2004 that aligned the EU. Although Sweden had increased its political security concerns compared to the previous defence act, the state did not entirely adjust to the new policy document of its own security community despite the recent external event (9/11) arguably amplifying the relevance of political security concerns. Moreover, the EU did not, just as NATO, prioritise the construction of threats and vulnerabilities of neither economic, societal, nor environmental character. Consequently, the cited increase in environmental security concerns in the states' conceptualisations 2008 and 2009 cannot be understood as an influence following proposed securitisations by the EU either. Moreover, in 2012, economic security concerns were highlighted constructions in Norwegian conceptualisations. Despite sharing some ideas about such threats and vulnerabilities, the emphasis was not matched in the EU-document. Likewise, it was not until the 2009 defence act that Sweden aligned such economic conceptions with the two actors. Notably, the document followed a global economic crisis. Nonetheless, the states shared the EU-documents main construction of security concerns of global character in the

[62] For example, the states increasingly constructed threats and vulnerabilities such as climate change and resource scarcity.

[63] For example, an increased emphasis on political, diplomatic, humanitarian, and judicial means took place. Sweden included more civilian and humanitarian resources in all texts during this phase.

defence acts of 2004. While Norway kept its global focus throughout this phase, Swedish conceptualisation in the latter defence acts constructed more concerns at the regional level, moving away from its alliance's geographical focus. Moreover, neither state matched the EU's strong emphasis for continental threats and vulnerabilities with the exception of the Norwegian defence act of 2016. Finally, regarding the construction of appropriate strategies during this phase, the major change over time was Sweden's redirection towards national defence in 2009, aligning not only with NATO's strategic concept from 1999 but also with the EU-document emerging closer in time. Moreover, the major change regarding Norwegian conceptualisations of necessary resources in 2008 somewhat aligned its conceptualisations of appropriate strategies with emphasises found in the EU's policy. However, the defence act of 2004, directly following the EU-document, did not include similar resources and were thus more aligned with the strategic concept of 1999.

The release of a new strategic concept in 2010 initiated the **third phase**, and NATO consistently prioritised the construction of military security concerns. While this focus was not matched in Norwegian conceptualisations in the defence act of 2012, the following documents aligned with the state's alliance. Similarly, Sweden kept its emphasis on military threats and vulnerabilities during this period. However, the Swedish documents and the two latter Norwegian defence acts followed the military aggressions in Ukraine 2014. Thus, Norwegian conceptualisations prioritised political concerns in 2012 despite the strategic concept's military focus constructed two years earlier, and only shifted its attentions after a major event of military character occurred on the European continent. Still, Norway also constructed ideas about political security concerns to a relatively large extent, similarly to the strategic concept – except from the defence act of 2020. Conversely, Sweden did not match this focus in 2015, but did so in its defence act of 2020. Furthermore, while the NATO-document did not prioritise economic security concerns, Norwegian conceptualisations in 2012 did. However, they were constructed in the aftermath of a global economic crisis. Likewise, while societal security concerns were not the focus of either actor, what separated the states from NATO was the construction of threats and vulnerabilities related to migration. However, 2015 witnessed an increase in migration to Europe, which was constructed by Norway and Sweden alike as generating security concerns of either political or societal character. Another aspect of NATO's strategic concept was its comparably larger construction of environmental concerns, which was only somewhat match by Norwegian conceptualisations in the subsequent defence act of 2012. Nevertheless, Norway generally shared the emphasis on global security concern in the strategic concept, followed by many constructions of threats and vulnerabilities at the regional level for both actors. Still, NATO did not construct any concerns at the continental level, while Norway did so in 2016 and 2020. Contrary, Swedish conceptualisations had few and decreasing constructions of global security concerns. Finally, when analysing appropriate strategies, similarities and differences generally persisted throughout the period. However, Sweden increasingly sought more active and direct cooperation with NATO in the latter

defence act, while the previous importance of non-alignment was not as persistent. Furthermore, the third phase witnessed an increase in specified and emphasised cooperation with other Nordic and Baltic states in Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisation. Previously, Norway and Sweden had rather prioritised increased cooperation with international cooperation platforms. Yet, strategies appeared to become gradually more regionally located for both states, even though such ideas were not proposed by neither NATO nor the EU.

The **fourth phase** was initiated by a new EU-document. Since only the defence acts of 2020 have been included in the comparisons, tendencies over time cannot be observed. Nevertheless, during this period, the EU did not have the same emphasis on the construction of military security as in the previous text. However, the document encompassed both foreign and security policy which might have influenced the empirical outcome despite the operationalisation concentrating on a grammar of security. Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisation thus had a substantially larger focus on military security concerns in comparison. As mentioned, the defence acts after 2014 were likely affected by the Russian annexation of Crimea, but so was the EU-document. Thus, while a majority of its constructed threats and vulnerabilities were of political character, these concerns were often conceptualised as following military aggressions on the European continent. Consequently, while the states did not share a similar focus in terms of type of security concerns, they communicated similar conceptions regarding threats to the European security order and international law. Similar to earlier phases, societal security concerns were not prioritised in any of the documents analysed. However, the large movement of people to Europe were constructed as a migration crisis by the EU, Norway, and Sweden alike, but this external event was, nonetheless, not prioritised in comparison to other types of constructed security concerns. A final remark can be made to geographical focuses where the EU and the Norwegian defence act illustrated an almost identical construction of geographical security concerns during this phase. Sweden, in contrast, prioritised security concerns of regional character rather than global. When it comes to the construction of appropriate strategies, the similarities and differences outlined in the above section stands.

7.3 Empirical conclusions

Analysing similarities and differences in conceptualisation of security and considering the spatial and temporal relations between community and state level has served as a method to address the third research question and the empirical hypothesis of this thesis. First, returning to the empirically bounded research questions of this study:

How and to what extent are Norway's and Sweden's conceptualisations of security influenced by the Transatlantic and European security communities?

The empirical analysis illustrates that the security communities and the states shared many of their constructed security concerns, including which type of concerns were given most emphases in the documents. Consequently, the states appear to be substantially influenced by the conceptualisations of security proposed by the Transatlantic and the European security communities. However, it was difficult to find similarities that were unique for one of the security communities and its member state, as well as clear differences between the security communities and the non-member states – particularly during the latter phases. Related to this question are the enquiries regarding for how long conceptualisations are drawn upon by the states, and if a new phase of community documents generates changes in the state documents. To some extent, similarities following a new community document were identified in the state documents closest in time. However, this cannot be understood as a general tendency. It also appears relevant to take into consideration that the actors' conceptualisations may have been altered due to external stimuli, and not solely following newly proposed securitisations at the community level. Moreover, since Norway and Sweden appeared to share many conceptualisations with NATO as well as the EU, a new phase sometimes generated new ideas in both the states' documents.

Second, returning to the empirical hypothesis of this study:

Transatlantic and European security communities exert ideational power through securitisation which influence Norwegian and Swedish conceptualisations of security respectively.

Since it was difficult to establish tendencies for conceptualisations of security that were unique for a security community and its respective member state, the empirical hypothesis of this study appears to be false. Although some distinctiveness could be observed in the former phases. This also implies that assumptions made in previous research, i.e. that the respective alignments of Norway and Sweden generates incompatible differences in security policy, is questionable. Consequently, although the states appear to be substantially influenced by the conceptualisations of security presented by the Transatlantic and the European security communities, this study illustrates that such ideas are not vastly different nor generating vastly different understandings between Norway and Sweden. Additionally, the states constructed several shared conceptualisations of security, which were not highlighted in the security community texts. On occasions, these ideas were even described as being exceptional for smaller or 'Nordic' states. Consequently, they increasingly constructed what they articulated as distinctive 'Nordic' ideas about security. Correspondingly, however, they also appeared to increasingly parallel their conceptualisations with NATO *as well as* with the EU. The theoretical implications for our comprehension of the construction of security in the Nordic context following these empirical conclusions will be further addressed below.

8 Revisiting security in the Nordic context

Discussing how the empirical findings above can be related to gaps identified and assumptions made in previous research, and connecting the results to my theoretical proposal, serves as a way to address the second research question. In particular, I questioned two key presumptions: that NATO and EU memberships indicate differentiated approaches to security, and that the two alliances always have a dominance over a shared Nordic approach to security. Furthermore, I identified a lack of understandings of the community-state relation in the Nordic context, and especially few constructivist theoretical contributions when contemplating the Nordic states' alliances. Finally, addressing methodological limitations in regard to evaluating the Nordic context specifically, and provide suggestions for future enquires of the Nordic case based on conclusions made, is needed.

8.1 A constructivist understanding of Nordic security

In this thesis, Norway and Sweden were selected as cases representing the Nordic context. Specifically, they were chosen because they constitute two Nordic states that have chosen divergent alliance strategies, while simultaneously sharing many internal similarities in comparison to the other Nordic states. Consequently, the empirical findings above provide a basis for addressing the Nordic context beyond these cases. My second research question was formulated as follows:

How are the Nordic states' conceptualisations of security influenced by their security communities?

With the purpose of responding to the identified limitations in previous research of the Nordic context, I have proposed a theoretical and methodological framework for analysing the production of ideas about security and to what degree they are integrated within the security communities of the Nordic states. In the analysis, the Norwegian and Swedish states appeared to be influenced by the conceptualisations presented by the Transatlantic and the European security communities. Although it was difficult to establish conceptualisations, as well as tendencies over time, that were unique for a security community and its member state, both Nordic states appeared to increasingly parallel their conceptualisations with both security communities. Consequently, it appears that Transatlantic and

European security communities exert ideational power through securitisation which influence Nordic states' conceptualisations of security. However, Norway and Sweden sharing ideas about security with the EU and NATO does not conclude that the other Nordic states are destined to do the same.

Finland and Iceland are two Nordic states who have also chosen divergent alignment strategies. However, Norway and Sweden were chosen due to their many internal similarities relatively to these cases. Consequently, the states analysed in this study could also display more similarities in their acceptance of the security communities' proposed securitisations relatively to their Nordic neighbours. In addition, Denmark provides a unique Nordic example being both a NATO- and EU-member. Notably, Norway and Sweden appeared to increasingly align their conceptualisations with the EU *and* NATO which must be seen in the light of the alliances' increased cooperation with non-member Nordic states as well as the intensified strategic partnership between them. Consequently, if the theoretical approach of this study holds explanatory value, these similarities should be even more evident in Danish security policies. However, Denmark could also prioritise NATO when drawing upon their conceptualisations of security since the state does not cooperate with the EU on security and defence issues. In sum, making empirical conclusions about the other Nordic states cannot be done in this thesis. Consequently, addressing the research question posed must be done in a dialogue between the empirical findings and previous research of the Nordic context.

Regarding the first assumption made in previous research – that NATO and EU memberships necessarily indicates differentiated approaches to security for the Nordic states – the above analysis, contrary, indicated difficulties to determine conceptualisations and tendencies over time that were unique for the security communities and their respective member state. Notably, during the initial phases, the states appeared to align somewhat more with their own alliance, particularly regarding appropriate strategies. However, this was not the case concerning the contextualisation of their security environments. Moreover, although shared constructions of appropriate strategies were expected, this tendency did not appear to remain during the final phases of analysis. Concurrently, although some differences between the two alliances were noteworthy, their conceptualisation were, in general, remarkably similar despite being written at different points in time. This indicates that the assumption is questionable.

Regarding the second assumption – that the two alliances necessarily always have a dominance over a shared Nordic approach to security – the analysis also illustrated that Norway and Sweden constructed several conceptualisations of security that were not highlighted in neither security community's texts. On occasions, these ideas were described as being exceptional for smaller or Nordic states particularly. Notably, these expressions increased for both states in the latter phases, implying that shared 'Nordic' conceptualisations should be seen as increasingly relevant in parallel with expanded Nordic cooperation on security and defence issues. It is thus fair to assume that if distinctively Nordic or regionally formulated conceptualisation became more evident in Norwegian and Swedish documents as Nordic collaborations surged, they should do so in the

other Nordic states' security policies as well. However, it is noteworthy that, while Sweden increased its construction of regional security concerns, Norway primarily contextualised its security environment from an increasingly continental and global perspective despite constructing more 'Nordic' conceptualisation.

So, what can a constructivist theoretical approach contribute to the understanding of the Nordic states alliances? In this thesis, I have proposed a framework for analysing the production of ideas about security and to what degree they are integrated within the community, focusing on a comparison between community and state level. The main argument has been that, by adopting a security community theoretical approach rather than focusing on alliance affiliations, the framework can provide new understandings about the construction of security in the Nordic context. As illustrated, it proved difficult to establish conceptualisations, both spatially and temporally, that were exclusive for a security community and its member state. The approach suggested thus challenge previous presumptions about the Nordic context. Although the empirical hypothesis, rooted in these assumptions, was negated, the framework and the theoretical hypothesis, nonetheless, provides new understandings of *why* the empirical findings contradicted previous research (theoretical implications will be further discussed in the following section).

The outcome of this study generated empirical conditions to consider how levels of security communities might influence state level conceptualisations of security. Security communities' proposed securitisations appeared to travel to state policies, and the Nordic states explored seemed to increasingly align their conceptualisations with them. Consequently, it might be more relevant to consider a potential shared 'Western' understanding between the Nordic states and their security communities. All four actors constructed several similar sector-based security concerns, geographical security concerns, as well as strategic focuses. Their ideas about security were unexpectedly similar, even though some differences could be observed in certain conceptualisations and emphasises in the various texts. Nonetheless, due to the difficulties with establishing patterns of unique understandings of the communities and their respective states, such differences did not appear to generate substantially divergent approaches to security between them.

Correspondingly, the analysis also illustrated that the two Nordic states constructed several conceptualisations of security that were not highlighted in neither security community's texts, while sometimes describing these ideas as being exceptional for smaller or Nordic states. Therefore, the empirical findings of this study also illustrate the need to revisit and discuss the significance of a 'Nordic' security community blurring the lines supposedly generated by the states' alliances. Although the Nordic states had a lot in common with both security communities, this thesis exemplifies the need and the importance of adopting a security community theoretical approach when aiming to understand how they construct their ideas about security in relation to proposed securitisations at the Transatlantic, European, and Nordic level. Most importantly, it provides alternative answers to why the surge in Nordic cooperation was possible despite the presupposed divergent approaches of the Nordic states.

However, although this study has provided valuable insights and its empirical findings have clearly illustrated the relevance of expanding our understanding of how different security communities influence the construction of the Nordics' security policies, I must also admit to this study's limitations to comprehensively respond to the Nordic context. Ideal conditions to analyse the cases and empirics selected to exemplify the Nordic context would have been to compare community texts produced during the same time period, with national documents adopted in parallel time frames. I have attempted to respond to these issues by conducting the analysis in four phases based on the adaptation of the alliances' documents. Using the temporal considerations as a strategy to recognise and respond to, not only possible alterations in state documents following new phases, but external security events likely to affect empirical outcomes.

Furthermore, since the study did not parallel the empirical outcome with material from external cases, it was impossible to isolate the specific community's influence on the specific state. However, not taking into consideration actors outside the Transatlantic and European spheres was based on the assumption that Transatlantic and European communities constituted separated entities. Although this was what previous research suggested, it indeed became difficult to distinguish between conceptualisations and, subsequently, identify differences in the respective member state's texts. Correspondingly, since the study did not compare empirics from any external or internal security community with the Nordic state level, only empirical conditions pointing to the relevance to further examine these spaces can be stated. Nonetheless, the main purpose of this thesis was to challenge certain presumptions and to offer an alternative approach to understanding the Nordic context. Consequently, the main conclusion regarding the Nordic context is that there is an urgent need to further revisit our comprehensions of the Nordic states' construction of security.

8.2 A call to further revisit Nordic security

As illustrated by the discussion above, reconsidering conclusions made in previous research is necessary. Accordingly, the findings as well as the limitations of this thesis propose several suggestions that I would strongly urge other researchers to consider. First, my study exemplifies a need to expand case selection and empirics. Comparing Denmark, Finland, and/or Iceland, or simply incorporating all Nordic states, in future research using the framework of this thesis would undoubtedly shed further light on, not only the second research question, but Norway and Sweden in comparison to the larger Nordic context. Correspondingly, adding additional empirical material, for example by examining securitisation beyond policy documents, has the potential to further support or contradict this thesis's theory on what influences the Nordic states' construction of security. Second, the empirical findings illustrate a need to investigate the role of 'Western' or 'Nordic' security communities in parallel with 'Transatlantic' and 'European' influences. I have focused on the space generated by the latter security

communities in order to respond to previous research assumptions. However, the empirical outcome of this study not only challenged the presumptions within it, but also indicated empirical conditions to examine the relevance of additional spaces generated by other potential security communities. Consequently, it is necessary to reconsider the influence of various security communities in the construction of Nordic security. Finally, I call for future research to continuously consider constructivist theoretical proposals when aiming to understand the construction of security in the Nordic context. Evidently, constructivist research can provide necessary insights, challenge assumptions made in previous research, and provide answers to questions raised. The relevance of this thesis's particular constructivist framework, beyond the Nordic case, will be further discussed in the following section.

9 Security communities' ideational power through securitisation

In this thesis, I have utilised two theories within the constructivist paradigm, and combined them with an ideational notion of power. The aim in doing so was to offer a theoretical framework that could increase understandings about how security communities influence states' conceptualisations of security. Correspondingly, a methodological approach suitable to analyse how ideas about security are produced through the securitisation of security communities, and accepted or decline by states, was suggested. Therefore, I intend to address the first research question and the theoretical hypothesis. The appropriateness of the theoretical framework as well as my methodological approach will thus be evaluated and discussed, and placed within a larger constructivist debate. Lastly, I will offer my suggestions for future research of the relation between community and state levels in the construction of security based on the findings of this study.

9.1 Evaluating the constructivist theoretical approach

When first identifying a lack of constructivist attempts to understand community and state relations in the context I sought to analyse, a corresponding need to develop suggestions for how security communities could influence states' ideas about security specifically was recognised. Consequently, an initial and theoretically bounded research question was formulated:

How are states' conceptualisations of security influenced by security communities?

In order to address the research question, I combined security community theory and securitisation theory with an ideational notion of power. The theoretical framework thus served as a way to consider how states are more or less cohesive in their understanding of security with presumable security communities. To evaluate its the relevance, a theoretical hypothesis that could be used against my own, as well as additional empirical contexts addressed in future research, was formulated:

Security communities exert ideational power through securitisation which influence states' conceptualisations of security.

One of the ambitions of my research has thus been to test the relevance of my theoretical framework by challenging whether it holds explanatory value. Departing from the ontological and epistemological position of 'thin' constructivism, this implied an empirical evaluation of whether it had the potential to offer increased understandings in the context it was applied to.

The analysis illustrated that the states appeared to be substantially influenced by the conceptualisations of security proposed by the security communities. Many of the ideas expressed in the community documents seemed to travel to the state documents, both regarding their contextualised security environments and what was constructed as appropriate strategies. Consequently, although the empirical hypothesis was disregarded because of difficulties to determine ideas that were unique for a security community and its member state, the empirical outcome does not exclude the relevance of the theoretical framework nor its main hypothesis. Placing the outcome and the theoretical suggestion in the Nordic context rather pointed to the importance of considering alliance-state relations through the constructivist lens of security communities at different levels. The states also constructed ideas that had not been presented in neither security community's texts, sometimes describing these as being unique for their own region. Consequently, while substantially drawing upon the proposed securitisation of the larger security communities, the states simultaneously constructed and shared their own conceptualisations. When discussion the results within the Nordic context, this created empirical conditions to consider a 'Nordic' security community proposing its own securitisations. On the one hand, the theoretical framework and hypothesis thus appear relevant to incorporate at the Nordic level, on the other hand, it also becomes relevant to reconsider the theoretical importance of geographical proximities.

When introducing the theoretical framework, I distinguished security community theory from the theoretical concept of regional security complexes. The latter theory suggests that security concerns are primarily regional in character, creating a higher degree of security interdependence between regional security actors. Such complexes thus emerge where states' security concerns become so interlinked that their threats and vulnerabilities cannot be analysed separately. Although the states' conceptualisations of security pointed to shared regional security concerns, particularly by connecting several sector-based threats and vulnerabilities to the Arctic or Baltic Sea region, it is also worth pointing out that they in parallel emphasised continentally and globally constructed security concerns. At times to a larger extent than they contextualised their security environments from a regional perspective. Security community theory, on the contrary, focuses, not on how regional aspects forces mutual security understandings, but on the degree of socialisation and integration of imagined communities. Consequently, since we cannot assume security environments and strategies as necessarily regionally bound, we should rather attempt to understand the success of inducting actors into ideas of communities regardless of their geographical scope. In this sense, although some conclusions point to the relevance of regional security complexes, the overall findings indicate that states' constructions of security are extensively socially produced.

Despite the apparent relevance of security communities, I have argued that aiming to categorise and determine conditions for and between them is not a fruitful approach. Instead, research should focus on the processes through which security communities exist, primarily how social interaction produces shared ideas about security and to what degree they are integrated within the community. I have suggested the analysis of (community) actors' power to persuade other actors (states) to adopt their views of what to think (security concerns) and to do (strategies), while acknowledging the latter actors' power to accept or decline the proposed securitisations. As mentioned, the findings illustrated that the states appeared to be substantially influenced by the securitisations suggested by the security communities. However, some ideas presented by the communities did not travel to the state texts, and the states also constructed ideas that had not been presented in community texts. Consequently, although many conceptualisations about security were successfully securitised, rejections as well as alterations to these ideas were apparent in the analysis. These findings bring back the notion of 'securitisation as translation', a concept accounting for what happens when threat images encounter a new discourse locale and are translated through transformations of meaning. However, the aim of this study has been a modest one: to empirically test the relevance of the framework. Nevertheless, its findings point the relevance to further investigate how the process of integration between community and state levels takes place – how do the wheels behind the hypothesis turn?

Consequently, approaching the issue of alliance-state relations from the theoretical lens of security communities, and understanding the influence that relation has on security policy by combining securitisation theory with an ideational notion of power, proves itself a valuable suggestion. Nonetheless, my point of departure calls for a final rejection of possibilities to fully explain social phenomena. Therefore, this theoretical framework cannot be understood as generalizable or comprehensive enough to account for all factors that play into the construction of states' security policies. The temporal assessment I presented following the empirical results pointed to the relevance of taking into consideration external stimuli as influencing actors' conceptualisations. On several instances, changes in their ideas appeared to follow larger security events. Since the theoretical aim of this study was not to analyse external explanatory factors, it is also fair to assume that additional external events affected its outcome. Similarly, internal fluctuations might have disturbed the results. Shamelessly referring to my own previous enquiries, I have in earlier work illustrated the presence of ideology and strategic culture in the construction of security in the Nordics.[64] Consequently, it is also fair to assume that changes internally, for example in governments or public opinion, have altered the analysed states' conceptualisations.

[64] See Edström (2020).

9.2 Evaluating the constructivist methodological approach

The methodological approach of this thesis thus sought to analyse the relation between securitisation taking place on community level, on conceptualisations of security found on the state level. Specifically, the hypotheses implied analysing whether ideational power through securitisation influenced states' ideas about security. Consequently, making causal enquires by studying influences between social phenomena was suggested. However, assessing ideational power as an underlying force of any causal relation is a difficult task. Therefore, my approach suggested that studying whether texts accept or decline conceptualisations presented through securitisation is an appropriate method to evaluate whether it might be successfully exerted. The intentions of the research design were thus twofold: to organise the communities and states conceptualisations respectively, and to organise where the communities' securitisations could be found in national texts by comparing their similarities and differences.

To conduct the initial task, I referred to 'conceptualisations of security' as the umbrella term for actors' contextualised security environment, and their following constructed strategies. Although this was primarily done to systematically compare similarities and differences in the comparative stage, it proved valuable for additional reasons throughout the analysis. For example, while it was fair to assume that the sector-based focuses of NATO and the EU would be determined by their organisational purposes, the analysis, nonetheless, illustrated strong emphases on political security concerns for former as well as a large focus on military security concerns and relatively few attentions to economic ones for the latter. Similarly, while the states could be expected to construct primarily regional security concerns, this was not the case for Sweden in the former phases nor Norway in the latter phases, illustrating that geographical security concerns had been more or less internationalised. Moreover, although it could be argued that the actors' objectives, resources, and actions would be affected by material possibilities and limitations, this approach rather suggested that all areas are influenced by ideational power dynamics and are, ultimately, socially constructed. For example, while actions are often seen as the natural outcome of the objectives and available resources of an actor, constructivist research can show that ideational elements create boundaries or open possibilities for what actor regard as appropriate or even possible. Consequently, while it is tempting to assume that security concerns and strategies are formulated in sync, the analysis illustrated that, since neither is naturally given, and thus not necessarily mutually constitutive, it is not only helpful but necessary to separate the analysis of all these aspects.

The next step of my methodological approach proposed an analysis of similarities and differences between texts, taking into consideration their spatial and temporal relations. This endeavour naturally called for a degree of contextualisation. While my operationalisations have been used to increase

transparency and to guide a systematic comparison, the need for the researcher to interpret and contextualise ideas presented is unavoidable. For example, sometimes similar ideas were expressed although they were measured within different sector-based security concerns. The states constructed several military threats and vulnerabilities following the Russian annexation of Crimea. The EU, on the other hand, constructed threats and vulnerabilities of political character, such as risks to the European order and international law, but nonetheless discretely referring these concerns to the same event. Consequently, this, and similar examples, implied differences between the community and state actors, but not as divergent as they initially appeared. Therefore, using temporal considerations, not only to address comparisons over time, but to place ideas about security in their contemporary setting was necessary to properly contemplate the empirical results. The researcher's ability to interpret securitisation through different theoretical departures should thus not be disregarded, nor reversed from external occurrences. Rather, it contributes to widening the epistemological and ontological understanding of securitisation, illuminating the tensions between structural, physical, and ideational dimensions. Thus, I also acknowledge the difficulties and limitations my methodological approach implied, illustrating a need to further develop means by which temporal comparisons may be appropriately conducted.

Lastly, the methodological approach of this thesis has proved helpful in its purpose to analyse whether the construction of systems of meanings about security on community level are reproduced in national texts. However, I have not successfully analysed the internal processes through which conceptualisations of security become securitised by security community actors nor the process through which the proposed securitisation becomes accepted or declined by state actors. As addressed in the theoretical discussion above, the empirical findings point out the relevance to further investigate how the process of integration between community and state levels take place. Consequently, while my aim has been to use the research design of this thesis to illustrate a theoretical relevance and an empirical demand, the thesis clearly demonstrates the necessity of considering constructivist methodological approaches when seeking new understandings about community-state relations, in the Nordics and beyond.

9.3 A call to further consider community-state relations

Constructivist theoretical and methodological approaches have something to offer in our understandings of community-state relations in construction of security. First, the theoretical framework and the empirical findings illustrate that future research aimed at testing its proposed hypothesis, or simply using a similar theoretical staring-point, should broaden the perspectives of current research and assess community-states relations at different levels – within in and beyond those

included in this thesis.[65] Second, since the focus of this study has been to account for the theoretical relevance of the framework by testing its hypothesis empirically, I have not analysed the processes through which security concerns become securitised nor the processes through which they become accepted or declined. Consequently, a comprehensive examination of *how* this happens is strongly encouraged. This could be done by looking at other types of empirical materials, or by performing a discourse analysis in order to dig deep into the discursive elements that produces and reproduces ideas about security in these texts. Third, although the methodological approach proved itself helpful in response to the aim of this thesis, some difficulties were recognised regarding, primarily, the temporal aspects, including the temporal comparability of empirics and the limitations of means to isolate comparisons from external stimuli. Therefore, future research is encouraged to develop and improve the research design proposed.[66] Finally, although I remain a strong advocate for the approaches suggested, I recognise that several factors interplay with the meaning-making of security, and that a weakness of this study has been the lack of assessing its relevance in comparison to additional stimuluses. Therefore, I strongly urge future research to analyse, on community and state level, the interplay between external and internal as well ideational and material explanatory factors behind the construction of security.

[65] A suggestion for the Nordic context has been presented in the above section based on the empirical findings of this study.
[66] Suggestions for the Nordic case in regard to case-selection and empirics have been presented in the above section.

10 Conclusions

While the Nordics are often grouped together because of their many similarities, their closeness has not been matched by a common approach to alliances. Therefore, previous research committed to explaining and understanding Nordic security policies have attempted to address the question of alliance affiliation and the differentiated security strategies of the Nordic states. However, I recognised a gap in research addressing the community-state relation in the Nordic context from a constructivist perspective. Furthermore, I identified assumptions that had not been properly challenged in the light of recent progressions. Consequently, a theoretical framework, compromising two hypotheses, were developed with the ambition to provide increased understandings of security in the Nordics and of the influence of security community on states' ideas about security in general.

Several conclusions can be made in response to the initially posed research questions. A first conclusion is that states appear to be substantially influenced by the conceptualisations of security proposed by security communities. The analysis illustrated that the security communities and the states shared many of their constructed security concerns and strategies, including what was given most emphasis in the documents. To some extent, similarities seemed to be stronger closer in time, however, such tendencies were not conclusive. Furthermore, a second conclusion recognises that states also construct their own conceptualisations of security that are not, necessarily, proposed by security communities. They sometimes described these ideas as being exceptional for smaller states or unique for their own region. Thus, it is possible that these conceptualisations have been generated by a security community at a different (regional) level. Correspondingly, a third conclusion can be made about the Nordic context, and Norway and Sweden specifically. The Nordic states appear to be influenced by the securitisations of Transatlantic and the European security communities. However, rather than sharing distinct ideas with their alliances, they seemed to increasingly parallel their conceptualisations with both security communities while also formulation unique Nordic ideas about security.

Additional conclusions can be made in response to the theoretical hypothesis of this study, as well as the empirical hypothesis formulated based on the assumptions identified in previous research. A fourth conclusion is that the theoretical hypothesis appeared to hold some explanatory value. The analysis illustrated that the states seem to be influenced by the securitisation proposed by security communities, both regarding their contextualised security environments and what is constructed as appropriate strategies to face the security concerns created within them. However, a fifth conclusion is that the empirical hypothesis could be disregarded. The analysis illustrated difficulties to establish distinct conceptualisations between NATO/the EU and Norway/Sweden respectively. In

the light of these findings, a final, sixth conclusion can be made about the research assumptions identified in previous research: they both appear to be questionable. The presumption that NATO and EU memberships indicates differentiated approaches to security for the Nordic states was contradicted by difficulties to find unique conceptualisations between the alliances and their member state. Correspondingly, the assumption that the two alliances necessarily always have a dominance over a shared Nordic approach to security was contradicted by the finding that Norway and Sweden constructed several conceptualisations of security that were not highlighted in neither security community's texts, and described these as being exceptional for Nordic states.

In sum, my ambitions in this thesis have been threefold. I have offered an empirical contribution by filling a gap in research and problematizing assumptions previously made. This donation is summarised in the conclusions above. Furthermore, I also sought to present a theoretical contribution by suggesting a constructivist approach to understanding the influence security communities have on states' ideas about security – in the Nordic context and in general. Approaching the issue of alliance-state relations from the theoretical lens of security communities, and understanding the influence that relation has on security policy by combining securitisation theory with an ideational notion of power, has proven itself a valuable proposal. Concurrently, a methodological contribution has been made in the suggestion of how these ideational relations between security communities and states can be analysed. However, I have also pointed to the limitations of this study, and called for further assessments and developments – empirically, theoretically, and methodologically.

In an interconnected world, understandings of security also become interconnected. The Nordic states have, not only witnessed a range of new security challenges, but have also had to adapt to increasing collaborations between and within their alliances, and are, concurrently, expanding their own cooperation on security and defence issues. There is thus an urgent need to revisit the Nordic context, and a need to theoretically re-evaluate the influence between communities and states in the construction of security. I have presented a suggestion for how this can be understood and studied. However, if anything, the main ambition has been to inspire the reader to do the same. Security, and our comprehension of it, has implications beyond just being ideas. So, let us not take their word for it.

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Appendix 1

Table 1. Operationalisation of conceptualisations of security

Contextualised security environment and appropriate strategies		
Sector-based focus	Military	Internal or external threats or vulnerabilities involving the use of military force[67]
	Economic	Internal or external threats or vulnerabilities related to abilities to maintain economic capacity or caused by economic dependencies[68]
	Political	Internal or external non-military threats or vulnerabilities related to political units or the defence of system-level referents [69]
	Societal	Internal or external threats or vulnerabilities related to upholding social cohesion or caused by (collective) identity competition[70]
	Environmental	Internal or external threats or vulnerabilities related to environmental damage or caused by environmental degradation[71]
Geographical focus	Regional	The threat or vulnerability is identified as having a regional character and demanding a regional response*
	Continental	The threat or vulnerability is identified as having a continental character and

[67] In this study, military security concerns have included but not been limited to threats of conventional character, military technological advancements, informational or digital attacks, including in technological advancements in cyber-space or space, as well as risks of attacks towards infrastructure or networks.
[68] In this study, economic security concerns have included but not been limited to threats and vulnerabilities following economic interdependencies, risks to trade routes, as well as economic challenges following additional risks to resources.
[69] In this study, political security concerns have included but not been limited to threats of terrorism and organised crime, as well as vulnerabilities to political and state institutions (e.g. governments or norms).
[70] In this study, societal security concerns have included but not been limited to threats and vulnerabilities due to migration, rises in extreme ideologies, as well as understandings of increased tensions between different groups and within societies.
[71] In this study, environmental security concerns have included but not been limited to climate change, natural disasters, risks to natural resources, pandemics and health risks, as well as environmental damage and degradation.

		demanding a continental response**
	Global	The threat or vulnerability is identified as having a global character and demanding a global response
Strategic focus	Ends	The objectives formulated as necessary in response to the threats or vulnerabilities
	Means	The material and immaterial resources and capacities formulated as necessary to achieve the objectives
	Ways	The methods and actions formulated as necessary to achieve the objectives

Necessary condition: Above terminologies must be described as an exceptional security concern or as necessary in response to an exceptional security concern

*Regional concerns for Norway include the Nordic and Arctic region, and for Sweden the Nordic and Baltic Sea region. For the EU and NATO, regional concerns include threats and vulnerabilities as well as responses within one or several member states.

**Continental concerns for Norway, Sweden, and the EU include Europe. For NATO, continental concerns may include both the European and North American continents.[72]

Table 2. Analytical questions for comparing conceptualisations of security

	Analytical questions	
Security environment	What similarities in sector-based focuses are identified between the texts?	What differences in sector-based focuses are identified between the texts?
	What similarities in geographical focuses are identified between the texts?	What differences in geographical focuses are identified between the texts?
Strategy	What similarities in objectives are identified between the texts?	What differences in objectives are identified between the texts?
	What similarities in resources and capacities are identified between the texts?	What differences in resources and capacities are identified between the texts?
	What similarities in methods and actions are identified between the texts?	What differences in methods and actions are identified between the texts?

[72] Geographical security concerns are not operationalised similarly because they are related to the respective actors' geographical proximities.

Table 3. Phases for the empirical analysis

Phases	**Security community empirics**	**State empirics**
Phase 1 1999-2010	NATO-document initiating phase 1 ➢ The 1999 Strategic Concept	Norwegian documents ➢ The Long-term Plans for the Defence of 2000, 2004, and 2008 Swedish documents ➢ The Defence Acts of 1999, 2004, and 2009
Phase 2 2003-2016	EU-document initiating phase 2 ➢ European Security Strategy 2003	Norwegian documents ➢ The Long-term Plans for the Defence of 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 Swedish documents ➢ The Defence Acts of 2004, 2009, and 2015
Phase 3 2010-2020	NATO-document initiating phase 3 ➢ The 2010 Strategic Concept	Norwegian documents ➢ The Long-term Plans for the Defence of 2012, 2016, and 2020 Swedish documents ➢ The Defence Acts of 2015 and 2020
Phase 4 2016-2020	EU-document initiating phase 3 ➢ The Global Strategy for the Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union 2016	Norwegian documents ➢ The Long-term Plan for the Defence of 2020 Swedish documents ➢ The Defence Act of 2020