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Swiss Neutrality Examined: Model, Exception or Both?

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Introduction

This paper examines the experience of Switzerland within the greater discourse of neutrality in international relations. When many scholars or policy makers discuss neutrality, they often draw upon the experience of the Swiss. Switzerland has, since the early 19th century, constructed an identity as a neutral state. Unlike nearly every other neutral European in modern political history, Switzerland has been successful. In this paper we show the Swiss as an outlier in the dialogue on neutrality. Switzerland has been far more successful at neutrality than any other state for reasons of culture, history and international recognition. Neutrality as a policy has been largely a failure for most states. The Swiss, however, possess three major attributes that allow them to succeed and prosper in their role as neutral. First is the incorporation of an armed deterrent into the national culture. Second is the provision of neutrality as a collective good. Finally is the solidification of Swiss neutrality into international law, custom and convention over nearly 200 years.

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Much of the most recent literature on neutrality focuses on building a normative definition within the context of European security policy.[1] Also, some work exists on the idealistic functions of neutrality and its contribution to national identity.[2] While the internal use of neutrality and non-alignment are important this essay takes a different approach in that we position Switzerland as an outlier with regards to external benefits of neutrality. This essay is part of a larger investigation into the success or failure of neutrality on a global and historical scale. By beginning with Switzerland we hope to show just how much of an outlier Swiss neutrality, and its success at it, really are when framed in the proper context of external benefits and why that is.

Thus, this study differs from previous work in a number of important ways. First, by placing and comparing the Swiss experience with that of other neutrals, this article highlights the differences between Swiss success and the more typical failure of other neutralities. Comparative work on the success and/or sources of neutrality across countries is quite rare, so exploratory work in this direction is much needed.[3] Second, this article builds upon the wealth of material on Swiss neutrality (detailed below) to explore how the many explanations given in these works can be categorized into three factors. Last, by developing an explanatory framework for the success of Swiss neutrality, this article creates a testable set of factors that can be applied to understand/explain the success or failure of other neutral states. The authors consider all of these important contributions to the literature not only on Switzerland, but more generally to that of neutral states, and perhaps also discussions of small state behavior.

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[1] See for example, Jessica L.Beyer and Stephanie C. Hofmann, "Varieties of Neutrality: Norm Revision and Decline," *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, 3 (2011): pp. 285-311; Karen Devine, "Neutrality and the Development of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy: Compatible or Competing?" *Cooperation and Conflict* 46,3 (2011): pp. 3334-369; Christine Agius, "Transformed Beyond Recognition? The Politics of Post-Neutrality," *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, 3 (2011): pp. 370-395.

[2] See for example, Laurent Goetschel, "Neutrals as Brokers of Peacebuilding Ideas?" *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, 3(2011): pp. 312-333; Kate Morris and Timothy J. White, "Neutrality and the European Union: The Case of Switzerland," *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution* 3, 7 (2011): pp. 104-111; Daniele Ganser and Georg Kreis, "Swiss Neutrality: Incompatible with EU Membership?" in *Switzerland and the European Union*, ed. C. Church, (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 52-78.

[3] The study of comparative neutrality was reinvigorated by Neal G. Jesse,"Choosing to Go it Alone: Irish Neutrality in Theoretical and Comparative Perspective," *International Political Science Review* 27, 1 (2006): pp. 7-28; Neal G. Jesse,"Contemporary Irish Neutrality: Still a Singular Stance," *New Hibernia Review* 11, 1(2007): pp. 75-95.

The importance of the Swiss example to the study of neutrality is important. Many important works on the power of small states start from the assumption that Switzerland is a special case. One seminal work goes so far as to exclude Switzerland from any discussion of neutral states because, "Switzerland's neutrality goes so far back into history and has become so fixed a feature in the thinking of European diplomats that there was a psychological obstacle to invasion possessed by no other neutral."[4] In other words, the Swiss model of neutrality has been so successful that it is a paragon to which others cannot even be compared. Lesser known works also highlight how pervasive these opinions are, even if not always directly enunciated. As an example, one work proclaims, "No one would disagree with the statement that the history of Switzerland is, indeed, a history of success…[and] can be viewed as an historical contradiction in comparison to the rest of Europe."[5] The Swiss term for this, *sonderfall*, means outlier or exception and this word has defined Swiss interaction with Europe and the world since at least the 1500s. The political culture promotes isolation and exclusionism but not at the expense of cooperation and cosmopolitism.[6] Swiss neutrality is based on this point of view and both foreign and domestic policy promotes *sonderfall* as the traditional way. Therefore, the Swiss also seem to view their success as both model and exception.

In short, explaining and drawing conclusions from Swiss neutrality is important for four reasons (all of which are expanded upon below). First, Switzerland was the first state to have neutrality formally recognized in the Congress of Vienna in 1815. This makes it a model of neutrality because it was the first, but it also potentially sets the Swiss experience apart as an outlier. Second, it is the only state to have maintained continuous neutrality for over 100 years, and as such is a model of success. Third, it was one of only three neutral states in Europe not to have its sovereignty directly violated during the Second World War. Last, it is the only contemporary European neutral to maintain strict neutrality after the fall of European communism.

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[4] Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 5.

[5] Amy C. Di Stasio,"Reached Its Limits?" in *Perspectives on Business and Economics: Austria and Switzerland at the Crossroads,"* Vol 18, (Bethleham, Penn.: Lehigh University, 2000).

[6] Jürg Martin Gabriel, *Switzerland and the European Union* (ETH Zürich-Forschungsstelle für Internationale Beziehungen, 2000).

In order to paint our picture of Swiss neutrality we have divided our argument into three parts. First, we briefly outline the history of Swiss neutrality and how the changing international system has played a part in framing it. Second, we briefly compare the Swiss experience to that of other neutral states, highlighting the uniqueness of the Swiss example. Last, we develop a model of successful neutrality and seek to provide a theoretical basis for understanding the success of Swiss neutrality.

The history of Swiss neutrality and the changing international system

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 marks the moment that the Swiss received recognition of their neutrality by the international system. Switzerland had endured Napoleon's attentions during the early 19th century and was determined to declare and maintain its neutrality away from the Great Powers. The cantons of Switzerland agreed to unite under a revolving leadership and Swiss independence.[7]The exact wording of this reads "France will recognize and guarantee conjointly with the allied Powers and in like manner as they do the political organization which Switzerland will give itself under the auspices of the said Powers and on the bases agreed upon with them".[8] This declaration acknowledged that the Great Powers recognized the Swiss Confederation as a legitimate government.

More importantly, the Congress of Vienna produced a declaration that was ratified on March 20th, 1815 ensuring Swiss neutrality.[9] As Gordon Sherman notes, the Swiss were clothed in a distinctive international personality of permanent neutrality as guaranteed by the Great Powers. The perpetual neutrality of Switzerland was a first for Europe and enshrined the concept that the cantons had been trying to maintain since the 16th century. The outcome of the Vienna meetings represent the incorporation of Switzerland as a neutral state into the custom of European society and law, a fact that

[7] Harold Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna, a study in Allied unity: 1812-1822* (New York: Viking, 1969), p. 195.
[8] Gordon E. Sherman, "The Neutrality of Switzerland," *The American Journal of International Law* 12, 2 (1918):pp. 241-250, p. 246.
[9] Ibid., p. 248.

plays an important role in how Switzerland interacts with the rest of the continent for the next two centuries.

Switzerland's small size and notion of armed neutrality kept all but the most vocal nationalists away after German unification in 1871.[10] The shared heritage between the two states had some extreme German nationalists calling for the forced inclusion of Switzerland into the new state. The outbreak of the First and Second World Wars would, however, be the first real tests of Swiss neutrality. The First World War saw the Swiss mobilize their nearly half-million strong army on all borders.[11] This was a continuation of the armed neutrality that was designed to keep the prying eyes of the Great Powers aware that the Swiss were still neutral and that there were willing to enforce that neutrality through violence, if necessary. The end of the war brought a renewal of recognition Swiss neutrality by the Great Powers as contained in Article 435 of the Treaty of Versailles.[12] Further, the First World War saw Switzerland evolve into a place for the belligerent states to continue diplomatic relations, a base for humanitarian operations, and as a conduit for the continuation in trade of certain essential materials.[13]

As the Second World War approached the Swiss informed the belligerents that they intended to maintain their neutrality and their status as a ""state that mitigates humans suffering in times of war.""[14] The mobilization of the Army and the occupation of the borders further made clear that Switzerland was ready and willing to back-up its status as an armed neutral. German desires and plans towards Switzerland throughout the war were mixed. A full scale invasion was planned after the fall of France, in the summer of 1940.[15] In support of this, Germany began to impose economic sanctions on the Swiss, resulting in shortages of various essentials; this was eased somewhat by the Swiss Government laying large stockpiles in the late 1930s.[16] Joseph Goebbels made statements that he believed Switzerland would convert to a form of National Socialism

[10] Norman Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy 1814-1914* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1992), p. 219.
[11]Ian F.W. Beckett, *The Great War 1914-1918* (New York: Pearson Education, 2001); Stephen Halbrook, *Target Switzerland: Swiss Armed Neutrality in World War II* (New York: Sarpedeon, 1998).
[12] Georges-Andre Chevallaz, *The Challenge of Neutrality: Diplomacy and the Defense of Switzerland* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2001), p. 3.
[13] James Joll and Gordon Martel, *The Origins of the First World War* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007).
[14] Cheallaz, p. 6.
[15] Halbrook, p. 117.
[16] Halbrook, p. 138; H.J., (1943), "Switzerland and the War," *Bulletin of International News*, 20(18): 773-780, p. 779.

on its own, despite the small size of the domestic fascist parties. Later during the war many of these parties were outlawed by the Swiss Federal Government.[17]

The Germans continued to plan for possible invasions of Switzerland but were put off by the potential investment in men and material.[18] The German campaign in the East against the Soviets played an enormous role in reducing the threat of invasion. Nonetheless, the Swiss kept themselves at full alert until April of 1945. The use of Swiss neutrality during the Second World War closely resembled the First. The belligerent powers used Switzerland as a meeting place, as a humanitarian relief conduit and as a source of goods necessary for the conduct of the war yet not obtainable through direct trade.[19] In addition Switzerland served as an internment camp for the troops of defeated European states, including Poland and France.[20] Thus, Switzerland maintained its political independence by making concessions on minor political issues and/or economic matters.[21]

Switzerland attracted critics after the war for its continuation of economic relations with Nazi Germany during the war. The nature of the Swiss economy demanded that such relations continue due to the nearly complete reliance of industry on imported raw materials.[22] The Swiss resisted inclusion into the Axis economic system and maintained economic relations with Germany on their terms, with necessary concessions.[23] The British benefited from economic relations with the Swiss as well, though geography dictated that such a relationship would not be as extensive. Anglo-Swiss trade relations were best described as large smuggling operations and

[17] Halbrook, p. 139.
[18] Halbrook notes that some plans for the German invasion called for as many as 500,000 troops; a massive number of men for such a small country, especially in comparison to other small Western European states the Germans had taken in 1939-40. (p. 137)
[19] One example of this is the British use of German Ziess Cameras in its Army Film and Photography Unit.
[20] Halbrook, p. 111; Halbrook advances the idea that the Poles and French would be re-armed and sent to defend Swiss borders if any German invasion would have occurred. He cites the fact that the interned troops were kept together as a unit and most, especially the Poles, continued to train.
[21] Neville Wylie, "Switzerland: A Neutral of Distinction?" in *European Neutrals and Non-Belligerents During the Second World War*, ed. Neville White (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 331-354.
[22] Cheallaz, pp. 149-150.
[23] Cheallaz, pp. 161-162.

ultimately did some 1.8 million British pounds worth of business by late 1944.[24] This aspect of Swiss economic relations was not well known until well after the war.

Post-Second World War examination has produced scholarship that questions just how Swiss neutrality played out in regards to the Third Reich and the Allies. Two threads have developed out of this dialogue, the idea of national interest versus the idea of national morality. There is little doubt that the Swiss accommodated the Third Reich after 1940.The Bergier Commission, formed in 1996, was tasked with making some sense of the reality of Swiss neutrality in the Second World War.[25] The commission, also known as ICE, examined Swiss wartime neutrality in three major areas: refugees, Federal and private economic concessions to the Axis powers, and restitutions made to victims after the war. ICE came to the conclusion that Switzerland had, to some extent, compromised its national morality in the name of national interest. One example was the Swiss tightening of refugee and immigration restrictions, even going as far as requesting that Germany mark the passports of Jews with a "j".[26] The Swiss also increased their economic dealings with the Third Reich, both in banking and in trade. These aspects all point to the conclusion that Swiss neutrality was compromised in order to stay neutral.

The Swiss held much the same course through the Cold War that had seen them through the previous 45 years. The Swiss government elected to not join the United Nations and stayed away from inclusion in a United Europe. The sticking point for Swiss membership in the UN was the collective security arrangements of UN members, particularly the articles in relation to the transit of armed forces across state boundaries and the placement of military forces at the disposal of the UN Security Council.[27] Swiss relations with the Soviet Union were mixed, with the Soviets alternately criticizing

[24] Neville Wylie, "British Smuggling Operations from Switzerland, 1940-1944," *The Historical Journal* 48, 4 (2005): pp. 1077-1102.
[25] Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland Second World War. 2002. "Publications of the Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland-Second World War." 31 May, 2013. http://www.uek.ch/en/index.htm
[26] Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland-Second World War. *Switzerland, National Socialism and the Second World War.* Pendo, Zurich, 2002. PDF available at http://www.uek.ch/en/index.htm p. 500.
[27] David S. Brackett, *International Relations Ala-Carte: A New Swiss Neutrality in Europe,* Paper 97-4, (The Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1997); Michael M. Gunter, "Switzerland and the United Nations," *International Organization* 30, 1 (1976): pp. 129-152, p. 131-132.

things like Swiss defense spending and praising the policy of neutrality.[28] As during the world wars, Switzerland focused on the provision of humanitarian aid and as a center for cold war diplomacy. Swiss neutrality was a beneficial side effect in that it served as a meeting ground for all sides.

After the end of the cold war Switzerland began to shed the image of absolute neutrality it had maintained through two world wars and the cold war. The first step towards cooperation with the wider European community was in 1997 with Switzerland joining NATO's Partnership-for-Peace program, designed to include the newly democratized Eastern Bloc states into the alliance. [29] The Swiss participation was based on mutual interests with NATO states in humanitarian missions, regional stability, arms control and other areas of non-traditional security.[30] A demonstration of this cooperation came as early as 1995 when Switzerland opened up its airspace, road and rail networks to NATO troops transiting to the former Yugoslavia. Cooperation was furthered by the addition of SwissCoy, a 222 man force sent to Kosovo in October of 1999. SwissCoy is an expression of Swiss solidarity but with a strong streak of independence. The goals for the Swiss in Kosovo match the rest of NATO's KFOR, primarily humanitarian and re-building tasks. The Swiss Government has made clear that the increase in cooperation with NATO is because of mutual interests and is fully compatible with Swiss neutrality.[31]

Switzerland applied and was granted full UN membership in 2002. This, again, represents the erosion of the idea of absolute neutrality in peacetime. The nationwide referendum passed with 55 percent of the vote, a number that demonstrates the

[28] Harto Hakovirta, "The Soviet Union and the Varieties of Neutrality in Western Europe" *World Politics* 35, 4 (1983): pp. 563-585, p. 565.
[29] "Swiss Join NATO Plan, Easing Long Isolation." *New York Times*, July 6, 1997, http://www.nytimes.com/1997/06/22/world/swiss-join-nato-plan-easing-a-long-isolation.html, accessed 21 May, 2013.
[30] "NATO's Relations with Switzerland." *North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2012*, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52129.htm, accessed May 21, 2013.
[31]"SWISSCOY in Kosovo." *Swiss Army. 2012.* http://www.vtg.admin.ch/internet/vtg/en/home/themen/einsaetze/peace/swisscoy.parsys.0003.downloadList.87408.DownloadFile.tmp/swisscoy2013e.pdf, accessed May 21, 2013.

significance many Swiss voters still place on the culture of neutrality.[32] Joining the UN and developing a closer working relationship with NATO is seen by the Swiss government not as a compromise of their neutrality but as a cooperative relationship because these organizations share the wider goals of the Swiss. Indeed, these movements show the difficulty that the Swiss are finding operating as an isolationist neutral in an increasingly globalized world.[33]

The modern Swiss conception of neutrality incorporates a focus on non-traditional security concerns that is more in line with modern ideas of European security. Thus Swiss neutrality still maintains that it will not join the wars of others, but it has relaxed any previous reliance, real or imagined, on impartiality. It is argued that joining NATO's PfP and the UN displays that the traditional benefits of neutrality are slowly giving way to a greater benefit of participation in a globalized Europe, and world.[34] However, a more persuasive argument is that the Swiss reluctance to go all the way and join the EU and its common security policy, shows how melded the Swiss population is to its identity as neutrals.[35]

This closer relationship with the UN and NATO represents a change, but not a fundamental one, in Swiss policy, especially when compared to other West European neutrals. While other small West European neutrals moved toward a pro-European Union stance after the fall of European communism, Switzerland maintained its strict neutrality.[36] While the Swiss have participated in NATO's Partnership for Peace program, their foreign policy is still more impartial than that of contemporaries.[37]

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[32]"Moving towards the UN in Slow Motion." Swissinfo.ch. 2007. http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/politics/Moving_towards_the_UN_in_slow_motion.html?cid=291972, accessed May 21, 2013.

[33] Jonas Hagmann, "Beyond Exceptionalism? New Security Conceptions in Contemporary Switzerland" *Contemporary Security Policy* 31, 2 (2010): pp. 249-272.

[34] Daniel Mockli, "Neutral Switzerland and Western Security governance from the Cold War to the global economic crisis" *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 9, 4 (2011): pp. 282-304.

[35] Kate Morris and Timothy J. White, "Neutrality and the European Union: The Case of Switzerland." *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution* 3, 7 (2011): pp. 104-111.

[36] Jurg Martin Gabriel,"The Price of Political Uniqueness: Swiss Foreign Policy in a Changing World," in *Swiss Foreign Policy, 1945-2002,* eds. Jurg Martin Gabriel and Thomas Fischer (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

[37] Andreas Wenger,"Swiss Security Policy: From Autonomy to Co-operation." in *Swiss Foreign Policy, 1945-2002*, pp. 36-37; Hanspeter Neuhold, "The European Neutrals Facing the Challenges of the 1990s,"

Swiss neutrality in a brief comparison

Thus, we can now see that the Swiss experience of neutrality is very different from that of other neutral states. Perhaps a good starting point to compare Switzerland to other neutrals is to briefly outline some information about neutrality to show how anomalous the Swiss position really is. Table 1 presents information drawn from the universe of neutral states since the Napoleonic era. It is not intended to be complete or exhaustive, merely illustrative.[38] A number of possible inferences can be drawn from Table 1. First, the neutral experience has been historically rooted in Europe. Second, most neutral states have been armed states. Third, most neutral states that are directly threatened by a belligerent are violated. Fourth, neutrals that are buffer states tend to be violated at a higher rate than rim states.[39] Last, Switzerland has been very successful, being un-violated for its entire period of neutrality.[40]

in *The European Neutrals in the 1990s: New Challenges and Opportunities,* ed. Hanspeter Neuhold (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 231-258; Jesse (2006), pp. 7-28.

[38] The authors are currently working on accumulating and cross-referencing previous available lists of neutral states, the traditionally accepted and validated datasets, as well as individual accounts by country specialists, to create a comprehensive list of neutral states. For more information please see AUTHORS OMITTED, "Building a List of Neutral States: An Exploration of the Utility and Limits of Different Methodological Approaches." Unpublished manuscript.

[39] The buffer/rim state inference hinted at by this table is consistent with the results found by Tanisha M. Fazal, *State Death: The Politics and Geography of Conquest, Occupation and Annexation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 97-149.

[40] Complete definitions, explanations, and sources of the categories in Table 1 are included in AUTHORS OMITTED, "Building a List of Neutral States: An Exploration of the Utility and Limits of Different Methodological Approaches." Unpublished manuscript. In short, definitions are as follows. Armed: military personnel and military expense per Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) Dataset; Position: per multiple sources (Buffer = between belligerents, rim = not between belligerents); Directly threatened: per Hostility level in MID dataset; Violated: per Dispute Outcome in MID datset.

Table 1: Neutral States and Their Characteristics

Neutral State	Period of Neutrality	Armed	Position	Directly Threatened	Violated
Austria	Cold War	Yes	Buffer	Yes	No
Belgium	Pre-WWI	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes
Belgium	Interwar-WWII	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes
Costa Rica	Cold War	No	Rim	No	No
Denmark	Napoleonic	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes
Denmark	Interwar-WWII	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes
Finland	Interwar-WWII	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes
Finland	Cold War	Yes	Rim	Yes	No
Ireland	Interwar-WWII	No	Buffer	Yes	No
Ireland	Cold War	No	Rim	No	No
Laos	Cold War	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes
Liechtenstein	Cold War	No	Rim	No	No
Netherlands	Pre-WWI	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes
Netherlands	Interwar-WWII	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes
Norway	Interwar-WWII	Yes	Buffer	Yes	Yes

Spain	Interwar-WWII	Yes	Rim	No	No
Sweden	Interwar-WWII	Yes	Rim	Yes	Yes
Sweden	Cold War	Yes	Rim	No	Yes
Switzerland	Napoleonic	Yes	Rim	No	No
Switzerland	Interwar-WWII	Yes	Rim	Yes	No
Switzerland	Cold War	Yes	Buffer	No	No
Turkey	Cold War	Yes	Rim	Yes	Yes
United States	Napoleonic	Yes	Rim	Yes	Yes
United States	Pre-WWI	Yes	Rim	No	No

For example, the failure of neutrality in Denmark, Belgium and The Netherlands can certainly be seen to include their position as a buffer state between major belligerent powers. Other states, such as Ireland and Sweden, were successful in part because of the geographic location on the rim of conflict. The presence of an armed defense is not, in and of itself, a sufficient condition to deter violation of neutrality. Briefly comparing the Belgian and Swiss experiences during World War II can be illustrative. Both relied on international convention and an armed component. In 1939 Belgium was able to field a nearly 200,000 man army against possible German aggression.[41] Yet, this immediate deterrent did little to hinder the German attack in 1940. The Belgian neutrality was violated but the Swiss neutrality was not.

Work on contemporary Swiss neutrality has also highlighted its anomalous position relative to other European neutrals. We discussed briefly in the first section the change in Swiss neutrality since the 1990s. Table 2 displays information comparing

[41] Fox, p. 180.

contemporary Swiss neutrality to that of other similar neutral states. What is clear from Table 2 is that Switzerland is one of only two states to remain strictly neutral (Ireland is the other). Further, Switzerland is the only neutral to not take a pro-European Union stance. Of course, as detailed above, the Swiss have increased their links with their EU neighbors, but they have not joined the EU.

Table 2: Contemporary West European Neutrals Compared

		Impartial		
	Armed	**Cold-War**	**Post-Cold War**	**Neutrality**
Austria	Yes	Yes	Post-neutrality/Pro-EU*	Practical
Finland	Yes	Yes	Post-neutrality/Pro-EU	Practical
Ireland	No	No	Neutral & Partial	Singular**
Sweden	Yes	Yes	Post-neutrality/Pro-EU	Practical
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	Neutral & Impartial	Prototypical

* Post-neutrality defined by Aguis (2011)
** Singular stance defined by Karsh (1988); Jesse (2007)

To summarize, the Swiss historical experience of successful neutrality sets it apart from other neutrals. Moreover, its current retaining of armed neutrality also is anomalous when compared to contemporary European neutrals. Thus, both historically and currently, Swiss neutrality is "different." So if we believe that Switzerland is the prototypical neutrality, it also has the distinction of being the most anomalous. Certainly this observation is worthy of exploration and explanation.

A model of successful neutrality: the three factors of Swiss success

Previous studies of Swiss neutrality have focused on the maintenance of neutrality as a diplomatic challenge in times of conflict.[42] Others have examined the Swiss concept of defense in relation to its neutral status.[43] These studies all cover the various trials of Switzerland as it strove to preserve and maintain its neutrality in the face of potential aggression by belligerent states. The literature on neutrality highlights the uniqueness of the Swiss in not only their approach to neutrality but also their commitment to an armed defense, and importantly, the international attitude towards this approach.

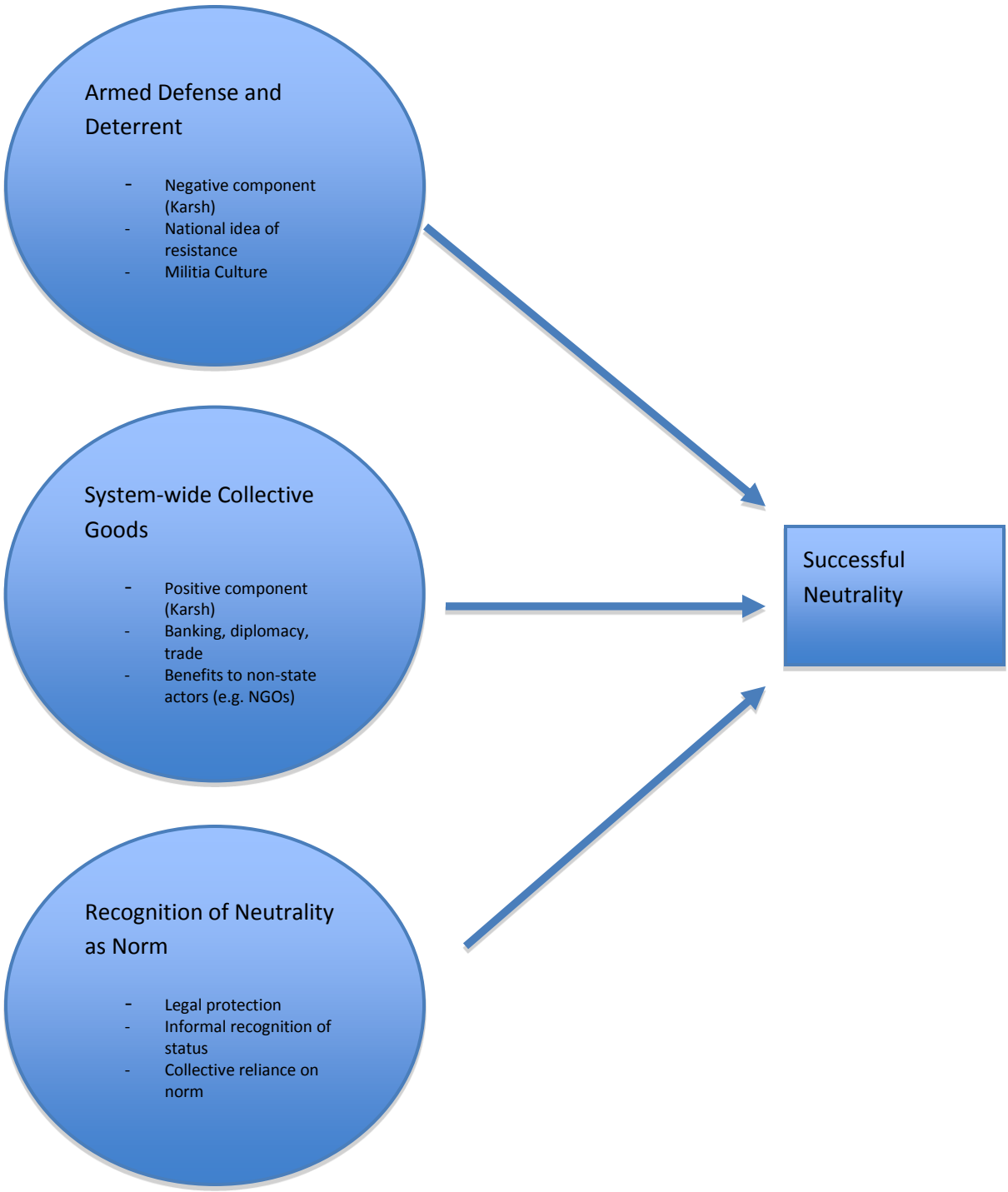
In order to explain and understand the success of Swiss neutrality we present a model based on three attributes: an armed defense, neutrality that offers a system-wide collective good, and the international norm of Swiss neutrality (i.e. system-wide recognition of Swiss neutrality). Figure 1 presents a simplified and outlined version of the model. It shows the three main factors that combined explain the success of Swiss neutrality. Beneath each factor are brief bullets that provide some elaboration and are further outlined in the discussion below.

[42] Chevallaz (2001); Gordon E.Sherman, "The Neutrality of Switzerland" *The American Journal of International Law* 12, 2 (1918): pp. 241-250; H.L.,"Switzerland and the War" *Bulletin of International News* 20, 18 (1943): pp. 773-780.

[43] Halbrook (1998); Dietrich Fischer, "Invulnerability without Threat: The Swiss Concept of General Defense" *Journal of Peace Research* 19, 3 (1982): pp. 205-225.

Figure 1

Model of the Three Factors that Support Swiss Neutrality



Armed defense and deterrent

The negative component makes the cost of violation so high that belligerent powers are deterred from attacking. A number of studies have emphasized the point that neutrals must be ready and willing to defend themselves against an armed attack.[44] The nature of Swiss armed neutrality especially during the First and Second World Wars provides the negative component.

There is much emphasis placed on theories of learning and historical precedent in how neutrals choose to structure their neutrality.[45] Structural conditions combine with the historical experience to lead states to choose either positive or negative neutrality. While Great Powers may guarantee Swiss neutrality the French "guardianship" that took place in the last years of the 18th century and the German threat during the Second World War both highlighted the need for an element of armed deterrence. The French period coincided with the waning years of the Revolution and the ascendance of Napoleon. Napoleon took a special interest in Switzerland, including imposing a tighter unification on the cantons, alliance with France, and recruiting Swiss Regiments for the *Grand Armee.*[46] The allied victories in 1813 were welcomed in Switzerland; even more was the Treaty of Vienna. The French domination of Switzerland highlighted the need for an army and a defendable military frontier so as to present an adequate armed deterrent.

In the aftermath of the First World War some viewed neutrality as needing a guarantee beyond what international law and convention developed. The Hague Agreements (1907) appeared to be bankrupt in the face of decidedly belligerent nations. As in 1914, the maintenance of the neutrals on the eve of the Second World War depended on the interest of the Great Powers in either protecting or violating their

[44] Gerald Stourzh, "Some Reflections on Permanent Neutrality," in *Small States in International Relations*, eds. August Schou and Arne Olav Brundtland (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), pp. 93-98; Karl P. Mueller, "Strategy, Asymmetric Deterrence, and Accommodation: Middle Powers and Security in Modern Europe," (Dissertation: Princeton University(1991)).
[45] Hans Mouritzen, "Past versus Present Geopolitics: Cautiously Opening the Realist Door to the Past," in *Rethinking Realism in International Relations: Between Tradition and Innovation*, eds. Annette Freyburg-Inan, Ewan Harrison and Patrick James (Boston: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 166-187; Dan Reiter, *Crucible of Beliefs: Learning, Alliances and the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).
[46] Sherman, pp. 244-245.

territory.[47] In 1939-40 many European neutrals, notably Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, relied on international law and convention, as they had in 1914, and suffered much the same fate.[48]

This was followed in 1939 with the aggressive German designs on Swiss territory (as outlined earlier in this text). The success of the armed component of Swiss neutrality policy was played out in the subsequent five years of war. Levy examines the success of deterrence through quantitative examination of the data. His conclusion produces several themes, one of which is that military capabilities are, at most, a secondary characteristic on the outcome of the success or failure of deterrence.[49] The concept that trumps military capability is the interests and resolve of the initiator of the conflict or crisis; a determined belligerent is more important than the capability of the neutral in predicting the success of the deterrent policy. A study of selected cases demonstrates that the resolve of the threatened state may be more important than its actual capability. Orne finds that a weakness in the commitment, credibility, or capability of the defender is sufficient to tempt an aggressive opponent.[50] Thus, purely materialist factors are supplemented by non-materialist social or cognitive factors.

Levy and others build a model that distinguishes between general deterrence and immediate deterrence.[51] General deterrence is based on the continuous negation of sources of instability and conditions that can produce crisis or serious dispute. Immediate deterrence seeks to tackle crises as they arise. Unlike the standing strength of a state with general deterrence, immediate deterrence implies preparation as the crisis begins to unfold. Switzerland has maintained a position of general deterrence until very recently. Other neutral states, such as Belgium before the First World War, mobilized to immediate deterrence. For a neutral, deterrence can be a two way street. If a small, neutral state establishes a strong military deterrent this may be interpreted as a threat.[52]

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[47] Hans Morganthau, "The Resurrection of Neutrality in Europe," *American Political Science Review* 33, 3 (1939): pp. 473-486, p. 480.
[48] Wylie, pp. 331-354.
[49] Jack S. Levy, "When Do Deterrent Threats Work?" *British Journal of Political Science* 18,4 (1988): pp. 485-512, p. 510.
[50] John Orne, "Deterrence Failures: A Second Look," *International Security* 11, 4 (1987): pp. 96-124, p. 121.
[51] Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference," *World Politics* 42, 4 (1990): pp. 466-501.
[52] Orne, 1987 p. 97.

A credible deterrent may modify the attitude of the belligerent to the neutrality of the state, thus reinforcing the negative component of neutrality.[53]

Geography is an important aspect to the success of armed deterrence. The geopolitical distinction between a buffer and a rim state can mean all the difference in regards to the outcome of a conflict.[54] Buffer states lie in the heart of a strategically important area, most often between two or more belligerent states.[55] Examples include Belgium between France and Germany and Finland between Sweden and Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries. In contrast, rim states lie outside this strategically important area and only have one or no belligerent on their border. However, in determining the presence of a buffer or rim state, geography is only part of the equation. Finland, for example, could be considered a rim state based on the map, but Russia sought to neutralize it based on the fear of a German attack through Finnish borders. Strategy dictated that, for the Russians, Finland was a buffer state. Neutral buffer states are vulnerable due to both location and neighbors based on historical precedent and realist theories of learning. A neutral buffer state is often at the whim of the powers that surround it.[56]

The armed defense of Swiss neutrality is not just a policy position and an extension of Levy's general deterrence distinction but an ingrained part of the national culture. Shooting is a national sport and firearms hold a special place in the Swiss household. The use of William Tell as a national symbol of resistance has played a vital role in defining the Swiss marksman role as defender of family, home and state.[57] Shooting clubs and rituals are not recent; the idea of sharp shooting competitions and festivals date from at least the late 18th century and the early 19th century.[58] The dual role of sport shooting and defense plays an essential role in the national culture of the Swiss.

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[53] Levy, 1988, p. 485.
[54] Efraim Karsh, *Neutrality and Small States* (New York: Routledge, 1988), pp. 81-82.
[55] Trygve Mathisen, *The Functions of Small States in the Strategies of the Great Powers* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Books, 1971), p. 84.
[56] Fazal (2007), p. 43.
[57] Regina Bendix, "National Sentiment in the Enactment and Discourse of Swiss Political Ritual," *American Ethnologist* 19, 4 (1992): pp. 768-790.
[58] Bendix, p. 775.

The legend of William Tell is the best expression of how the Swiss see themselves: ready to shoot for fun and determined to shoot to defend.

Three essential elements contribute to Swiss armed deterrence. The idea of an armed militia, unique in Western Europe, that have their rifles at home and are always ready to join in the defense of the state. Second, the proliferation of sport shooting amongst all ages regardless of sex that is widespread amongst all areas of Swiss culture. Finally are the national political culture and the idea of resistance of foreign invasion that demonstrated itself best in the legend of William Tell and by General Henri Guisan's Rutli speech in 1940, pledging to never surrender in the face of foreign aggression. These three elements combine to give the Swiss a different, and hardier, approach to armed deterrence than any other neutral nation.

System-wide collective goods (i.e. the positive side of neutrality)

The second attribute is the provision of neutrality as collective good or "positive" neutrality. Neutrality is "positive" in the sense that it is beneficial to all the belligerents.[59] Karsh argues that providing positive benefits to belligerents can create a counter-weight to what said belligerents gain through aggression. The positive component of neutrality is meant to supplement the negative component, an armed deterrence, which provides an additional guarantee of neutrality. Many neutral states in the Second World War utilized this positive component, albeit unsuccessfully.[60]

By providing a collective good the Swiss were historically seen as positive neutral, despite the armed deterrent it presented. Historically, Switzerland was seen as a sanctuary for radicals, intellectuals, and others who were fleeing other European states. Switzerland also attracted international organizations that sought an impartial state in which to manage their global operations. The founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross (IRCC) in Switzerland in 1863 is one example[61]

The provision of neutrality as a collective good is perhaps best seen through the actions of the Axis powers in the Second World War. Despite aggressive rhetoric and

[59] Karsh, p. 33.
[60] Fox, (1959).
[61] Wylie, (2002), p. 349.

diplomacy Germany and Italy made full use of Switzerland as a meeting place and a trade partner. Japanese and German attempts to negotiate in 1944-45 with the Allies were conducted on Swiss territory. Thus, neutral Switzerland acted as a corridor of communication and negotiation for the warring powers, providing a valuable asset to both sides.[62] In the arena of trade, Switzerland attempted to maintain its pre-war trade relations. The Swiss used two arguments to establish that they were impartial, and thus neutral, in their trade relations. First, by not cutting off trade with either set of belligerents they did not take sides in the war. Second, by demanding trade of equal value with any and each power, they were not aiding anyone.[63]

The Swiss also engaged in actions that were not directly at the insistence of those fighting the war. The Swiss humanitarian work, its protection of foreign representatives, and its acceptance and treatment of refugees all provided a positive benefit to the warring nations. While our discussion in the historical section of this paper outlines some of the debates and difficulties of these actions, what is clear is that the Swiss government created a neutral zone that contributed positive benefits that potentially out-weighted any gains from invasion. In addition to acting as a collective good for governments, Switzerland has and currently extends this provision to non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations, such as the Red Cross and the League of Nations. The placement of so many international organizations in Geneva further highlights just how the international community views Switzerland.

Implied is this discussion of both negative neutrality (i.e. armed defense and deterrence) and positive neutrality (i.e. collective goods) is the reliance on a realist paradigm that biases external security threats as the main factor in determining a state's foreign policy. Recently, a number of studies of the choice of neutrality as a foreign policy question whether this realist assumption holds in these cases.[64] In particular,

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[62] Leo Schelbert,"Neutral Switzerland as 'Protecting Power,' in *Switzerland Under Seige, 1939-1945: A Neutral Nation's Struggle for Survival*, ed. Leo Schelbert (Rockport, Maine: Picton Press, 2002), pp. 153-182.
[63] Heinz K. Meier,"Neutrality and the Necessities of Trade," in *Switzerland Under Seige, 1939-1945*, pp. 131-152.
[64] Jesse (2006), pp. 7-28; Karen Devine, "Stretching the IR Theoretical Spectrum on Irish Neutrality: A Critical Social Constructivist Framework," *International Political Science Review* 29, 4 (2008): pp. 461-488. For a counterargument see Conor O'Loughlin, "Irish Foreign Policy During World War II: a Test for Realist Theories of Foreign Policy," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 19, 1 (2008): pp. 99-117.

these studies focus on domestic sources of foreign policy choice in neutral states. This renewed focus on domestic sources has led to an exploration of the meaning of neutrality to those states that purport to use it as a foreign policy. This in turn has led to a renewed discussion of norms and identity-construction in neutral states.

The norm of neutrality

Switzerland is a state that has defined neutrality for the international community. Swiss neutrality is hallmarked by sovereignty and self-determination, the construction of an institution of neutrality recognized by the great powers and the incorporation of neutrality into the strategic culture of the nation. Switzerland not only sees itself as a neutral state, but is *seen* as a neutral state by the rest of the international system. In this section we cast Switzerland in the role of a neutral who has defined the social concept of neutrality to the rest of the international system and become the center of a norm of neutrality. Switzerland has clothed itself in attributes that have provided a national meaning for the culture of neutrality.[65]

The ability of actors within the international system to pursue goals related to security, policy and power is often tied to the development and practice of norms. Norm building is expressed through practice that is constructed on the back of theory. We can define norms as a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity.[66] Norms are established by the evolution of precedents and customary international laws.[67] The formation of norms, rules and shared understanding on a global scale impacts what we want and, to some extent, who we are.[68] Social interaction and ideas are structured, fundamentally, by material power and state interest.[69] Taking cues from both Wendt and Finnemore we see states interacting in the system with

[65] Goetschel, pp. 314-316.
[66] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, 4 (1998): pp. 887-917.
[67] Cristina Badescu and Thomas Weiss,"Misrepresenting R2P and Advancing Norms: An Alternative Spiral?", *International Studies Perspectives* 11, 4 (2010): pp. 354-374, p. 358.
[68] Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 128.
[69] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,1999), p. 254.

significant influence from domestic factors that impact their behavior. Identity and interest form state behavior, behavior that International Organizations play a role in by "teaching" states the norms of what international society should look like. The system shapes the norms and identities of states. Domestic factors play a role as well by ensuring that states react differently to these norms, rules and shared understandings. Internal make-up of states is a significant factor in how it behaves in international society.[70] It is impossible to discount the impact of domestic factors in how states function globally. Shared beliefs and norms compose identity at nearly every level of analysis within the international system. It is these aspects of identity that predict and explain the role of states, individuals and international organizations on the world stage.

Emergent norms have received some attention by scholars. The origin and evolution of norms has been examined by Florini and compared to evolution.[71] Finnemore incorporates evolution into the development of a norm life cycle and how the "ought to" becomes the "is."[72] Price, in an earlier piece, contributes a study on how a norm evolves with work on the development of the chemical weapons taboo.[73] A more recent work on the origination and develop of a norm is the evolution of international election monitoring and how it has partially re-defined sovereignty through intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.[74] Much of the scholarship views the development of norms through an evolutionary cycle; Florini draws direct analogies with the natural sciences in this case. Price's breakdown of the genealogy of chemical weapons provides a case through which large states dominate the dialogue.[75]

In Switzerland's case the large states, which we have referred to as Great Powers, play the most important role in making Swiss neutrality a norm. Two sides to this norm

[70] Peter Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1996).
[71] Ann Florini,"The Evolution of International Norms," *International Studies Quarterly* 40, 3 (1996): pp. 3, 363-389.
[72] Finnemore and Sikkink, pp. 887-917.
[73] Richard Price, "A Genealogy of the Chemical Weapons Taboo," *International Organization* 49, 1 (1995): pp. 73-103.
[74] Arturo Santa-Cruz, "Constitutional Structures, Sovereignty, and the Emergence of Norms: The Case of International Election Monitoring," *International Organization* 59, 3 (1995): pp,. 663-693.
[75] Price, pp. 99-100.

emerge: first, the assurance of neutrality by Great Power convention and second, the adaptation of neutrality into the policy of the state. These sides support one another; if a large power breaks the norm and threatens Swiss neutrality, the armed deterrent comes into play. The historical genealogy of Swiss neutrality illustrates the construction of a unique norm, one that is only applicable to Switzerland.

Throughout various incarnations of the international system (The Congress of Vienna, through the First World War, the death of the League of Nations and the Cold War) Swiss neutrality has been worked into international custom and carried over.[76] While Switzerland maintained its neutrality prior to 1815 it was the Great Powers at the Congress of Vienna that guaranteed its neutrality. The Great Powers recognized Swiss neutrality in the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 with Article 435.

But inclusion into international law alone is not enough to deter aggression. The reliance on international law to ensure neutrality has traditionally failed, illustrated by the Belgium experience in 1914. The Hague Agreements of 1907 codified what the Great Powers believed neutrality to entail within the existing international system, produced Belgian neutrality. German aggression paid little note to these factors in the execution of the Von Schlieffen plan and the role Belgium played in it.[77] Thus, other more informal factors must have contributed, and be still contributing, to the Swiss success.

The unique status of Swiss neutrality has served to make it seen as a norm by many states in the international system. However outside of Switzerland neutrality is far more tenuous and far less effective. Belgium has tried to apply the same three attributes as Switzerland only to fail in two World Wars. Failure of recognition and an armed deterrent led to the Belgians having their country overrun. The subsequent alliance of the Belgian Army and the Allies in the First World War also belied any sort of consistent neutrality. Other neutrals, such as Ireland, Sweden and Norway either were able to shield themselves through geography, politics or by covertly violating their neutrality to preserve it.

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[76] Harold Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna, a study in Allied unity: 1812-1822* (New York: Viking, 1969); Norman Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy 1814-1914* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1992); James Joll and Gordon Martel, *The Origins of the First World War* (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2007); Thomas Zeiler, *Annihilation: A Global Military History of World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, (2011); Walter Lawueur, *Europe In Our Time: A History, 1945-1992* (New York: Penguin, 1992).

[77] Morganthau, p. 480; Wylie (2002), pp. 331-354.

Conclusion

The Swiss success as a neutral state make it both a model to which others may strive, but it also sets them apart as an outlier that will be difficult to replicate. Three decisive factors combine to put the Swiss experience of neutrality far from any other. First, the incorporation of an armed, collective and internationally recognized deterrent stance is something to which no other neutral state can lay claim. Second, the Swiss have been able to creatively and consistently provide a positive component of its neutrality. Last, the historical status of Switzerland has served to create an internationally recognized norm of neutrality that other neutral states have never been able to live up to.

Thus, if the question of what attributes a neutral state "should" possess has been turned into an answer of attributes a neutral state "does" possess, Switzerland has provided an answer, but one that may be difficult for others to recreate. Using Switzerland as a case study or norm, even for other small states, will require careful application of all three factors. Inherent in the model is that both realist considerations, for example and armed defense, and more normative concerns such as identity and recognition interact to strengthen a neutral state against belligerents. In this way, this work suggests that integration of both fields of literature in the discussion of a neutral state's foreign policy is necessary and relevant. Clearly, in order to prove the usefulness of the model, a much fuller examination of neutral state success, particularly in deterring foreign aggression, is needed. The authors encourage research in this direction.