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DIPLOMATICA 5 (2023) 208–228

Diplomatica
A Journal of
Diplomacy and Society
brill.com/dipl

Intermediary Bodies in International Politics: Conceptual and Historical Observations on Northern Europe's Small States in the International System in the 19th and 20th Centuries

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Received: 22 June 2022 | Accepted: 17 July 2023 | Published online: XXXX

Abstract

The article addresses central problems in the field of small state studies. By revisiting Paul W. Schroeder's often neglected term "intermediary bodies" in the international system, it attempts to provide a broader conceptual alternative to established categories of description and definition such as "smallness" and "weakness." In Schroeder's understanding, intermediary bodies affect the international system beyond functioning as mere buffers. Ultimately, intermediaries influence procedures and outcomes substantially and transcend international politics to another level beyond mere (great) power politics. The subsequent remarks explore the utility and viability of the term by practically applying it to two historical examples: the Danish unitary monarchy within the German Confederation and the role of Finland as an intermediary during, before, and beyond the Cold War. Schroeder's concept is thereby introduced into varying international contexts and bridges the gap between the history of the 19th century international system and the later modern period.

Keywords

intermediary body – Paul W. Schroeder – history of the international system – small states – Northern Europe (Scandinavia) – Danish unitary monarchy – Finlandization

 | DOI: 10.1163/25891774-BJA10108
 | ISSN: 2589-1766 (print) 2589-1774 (online)

Introduction

When taking an interest in Scandinavian internationalist diplomacy – as discourse, practice, and experience – it is of critical importance to acknowledge the specific conditions and qualifications following from the fact that the Scandinavian countries have been characterized as "small states" for most of the actual time period in question. This article therefore addresses central problems in the field of small state studies. It does so not by way of the commonly established all-encompassing literature review, but by particularly revisiting the pioneering conceptual work of Paul W. Schroeder on "intermediary bodies" in the international system. By applying this component out of Schroeder's conceptual toolkit to "*Norden*," I intend to present a hitherto neglected conceptual alternative well suited to reinforce recent historiographical tendencies to de-nationalize and re-internationalize the way the international history of the region is often written.[1]

The recently deceased Paul W. Schroeder was undoubtedly one of the most significant voices in post-war international history and furthermore a true bridge builder between disciplines, primarily between historians of international relations and IR practitioners and political scientists. His work on the international system is usually associated with key concepts such as the "political equilibrium" of the Vienna order and his critical assessment of "balance of power" conceptions, largely applied to the 18th and 19th centuries, but also transgressing into the early 20th century. His *Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848*, published in 1994, was widely received and instantly pronounced a classic, despite critical objections by a number of scholars in the field.[2] In Schroeder's own assessment, the reception of the

1 Jonas, M. *Scandinavia and the Great Powers in the First World War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 2, hints at that necessity. Cf. e.g. Larsson, S. et al. "Introduction: Nordic Historiography: From Methodological Nationalism to Empirical Transnationalism." In *Making Nordic Historiography: Connections, Tensions and Methodology, 1850–1970*, eds. S. Larsson, et al. (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 1–24. This is also reflected in the turn towards globalizing Nordic history, see e.g. Fog Olwig, K. "Narrating Deglobalization: Danish Perceptions of a Lost Empire." *Global Networks* 3 (2003), 207–22; Naum, M., and J.M. Nordin. "Situating Scandinavian Colonialism." In *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena*, eds. M. Naum and J. M. Nordin (New York: Springer, 2013), 3–16.

2 Schroeder, P.W. *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). The *American Historical Review* organized a forum around Schroeder's theses already in 1992, cf., among other contributions, see Schroeder, P.W. "Did the Vienna Settlement Rest on a Balance of Power?" 683–706; Kraehe, E.E. "A Bipolar Balance of Power," 707–15; and Gruner, W.D. "Was There a Reformed Balance of Power System or Cooperative Great Power Hegemony?" *American Historical Review*, 97 (3) (1992), 725–32.

book, to which he replied both persistently and collegially, suffered from one central omission: none of his reviewers and not even the subsequent historiography appreciated what he had to say on the place and function of small states in the international system. For Schroeder, this appeared crude throughout, as it limited the entire analytical architecture of his work on the changing international system to the great powers and their increasingly institutionalized relations among each other, which effectively formed an "international system," but by no means a complete one. It furthermore unnecessarily reduced the significance and validity of his conceptual toolkit to his primary research interests in the period around the Vienna Congress, thereby not recognizing the modern, almost contemporary implications of a term like "intermediary body." On a more general level, Schroeder argued that ignoring the existence and function of small states in international politics left conceptions of the system intellectually impoverished.[3]

My subsequent observations take Schroeder's grievance and his more comprehensive approach seriously by probing into and approximating the position and function of small states in the modern international system. In a first line of thought, I intend to engage, albeit briefly, with the conceptual and hence more abstract dimension of the question, touching upon historiographical and IR traditions of speaking about small states, great powers, and the international order. The gist of my argument is indebted to two trains of thought in historiographical debates about the international system, its structure, components, and dynamics: on the one hand, as already indicated, Schroeder's conception of small states as "intermediary bodies," and the reinvigorated discussion about geopolitics and not least about the geopolitics of Northern Europe, on the other. The conceptual approach will be kept to a minimum, though, as I have pondered on this at greater length in another context.[4] On that basis, I will proceed to developing my argument concretely. The main object and focus of my probing will be the international position and behavior – or, as Schroeder would argue, the conduct – of a rather special segment of small states, those of the European North in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[5] In sum, the subsequent remarks intend

3 Schroeder, P.W. "Making a Necessity of Virtue: The Smaller State as Intermediary Body." *Austrian History Yearbook 29* (1998), 1–-8.

4 Jonas, M. *Scandinavia*, 1–18.

5 "Behavior" as a concept of political science as opposed to "conduct," reflecting the historian's preference for agency. Cf. Schroeder, P.W. "International History: Why Historians do it Differently Than Political Scientists." In *Systems, Stability, and Statecraft: Essays on the International History of Modern Europe*, eds. D.R. Wetzel, R. Jervis, and J.S. Levy (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), 285–95, at 295.

to correlate Schroeder's key concept of the small state as an "intermediary body" to the historical geo-strategy, politics, and experience of what is – for the period – probably best accommodated in the meso-regional term "Northern Europe."[6] I thereby challenge a few of the readily established categories of comprehending and depicting Northern European state behavior, largely on three levels: geographically and geopolitically (first), I study the states of the region in some of their often neglected international contexts, emphasizing their respective integration in imperial or federative polities in Central Europe and the Russian Empire. Chronologically (secondly), I move beyond the contemporary historical focus of both this special issue and the gist of research and attempt to link the 19th century to developments of the 20th. This follows on from recent contributions by IR scholars who seem to have recognized the centrality of the 19th century for the "re-shaping of the international order," whose legacy is still with us.[7] Conceptually (thirdly), my remarks do not primarily consider Nordic small state internationalism, but rather venture to study and reassess intermediary bodies in a changing international system. For that, defining what is meant by an intermediary body is central.

Definition: What is an "Intermediary Body"?

It is not that the concept Schroeder came up with was at all new. In early modern political and diplomatic language, however, the term – "*corps intermédiaire*" – had a limited meaning and only applied to the physical, strategic, and geopolitical function of a small state as a buffer between two larger polities. Schroeder comprehensively broadened this conception on three levels. To him, an intermediary body "does not merely physically separate larger states, but also in some clear sense links them, represents a common interest that affects their relationship and helps to define and shape

6 Cf. Troebst, S. "'Historical Meso-Region': A Concept in Cultural Studies and Historiography." In *European History Online* (EGO) (published by the Leibniz Institute of European History), http://www.ieg-ego.eu/troebsts-2010-en. For the pitfalls of the terminology and a review of the existing literature, see Jonas, M. *Scandinavia*, 4.

7 Cf. Spaulding, R.M. "The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine as a Subject of Historical and Theoretical Inquiry." In *Der Wiener Kongress 1814/15, vol. I: Internationale Politik*, eds. T. Olechowski, et al. (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2019), 169–78, 172 (cit.). For the growing body of work on the 19th century in IR see, inter alia, Buzan, B., and G. Lawson *The Global Transformation: History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), especially 46–64; Schouenborg, L. *The Scandinavian International Society: Primary Institutions and Binding Forces, 1815–2010* (London: Routledge, 2017).

it, making it distinctly other than it would be without the intermediary."[8] In other words, the relationship between the intermediary and its immediate international political environment is necessarily reciprocal and interactive. This is not to say that, according to Schroeder's definition, all buffers would automatically constitute intermediaries and that – in turn – small states would only behave as intermediaries. Instead, it is obvious that the usual categories applied to the international political behavior of small states, as described by neo-realists as different as Kenneth Waltz or Stephen Walt, equally much apply. Hiding (primarily as a neutral or an uninvolved free rider), balancing in the face of external threats, as developed in detail by Walt, bandwagoning, and especially hedging – a complex mix of cooperative and confrontational behavioral components – define probably even the majority of conditions and policy choices among smaller polities in the international system.[9] In order to qualify as an intermediary body, however, the small state would also have to have – Schroeder's second criterion – a broader function within the international system, not primarily in terms of pure power political weight or its absence, probably best reflected in Stalin's mocking question to the French foreign minister Pierre Laval in May 1935: "Oho! … The Pope? How many divisions does he have?"[10] Rather, this function is likely to be expressed through the "effects" the intermediary has within the system by catalyzing or inhibiting, by generally influencing procedures and outcomes without being an active component of the process, let alone a directly involved party in a given power-political competition.[11] Thirdly and, as Schroeder admits, most elusively, the intermediary body would have to possess a "transcending" function, "raising international politics to another level" beyond mere power politics. As both promise and ambition, often in alliance with other smaller

8 Schroeder, P.W. "Necessity," 3.

9 On the small state level cf., among a steadily growing body of literature, *Small States and Alliances*, eds. H. Gärtner and E. Reiter (Heidelberg: Physica, 2001); *Small States in International Relations*, eds. C. Ingebritsen, et al. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Ciorciari, J.D., and J. Haacke. "Hedging in International Relations: An Introduction." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19 (3) (2019), 367–74. For Schroeder's attempt to engage with the IR concepts practically (and critically): "Historical Reality vs. Neo-Realist Theory." *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), 108–48, and the ensuing, though intellectually less rewarding debate: Elman, C., M.F. Elman, and P.W. Schroeder "History vs. Neo-Realism: A Second Look." *International Security* 20 (1) (1995), 182–95.

10 Laval had suggested in Moscow that it would be in the interest of the entire European left, if Stalin would allow for more tolerance of Catholicism in the USSR. Stalin's words appear to be attested only by Churchill. See Churchill, W. *The Second World War*, 6 vols. (London: Houghton, 1948–54), vol. 1: *The Gathering Storm*, 121.

11 Schroeder, P.W. "Necessity," 4.

entities, this would entail an orientation towards the somewhat virtuous aspect of international politics, its regulation, indeed domestication through mechanisms of "mediation, law, agreement on some higher goal, or even an actual reconciliation of opponents in the pursuit of some common aim."[12]

It is primarily in the final of Schroeder's criteria, in transcending state politics onto a different level of international cooperation and organization, that the – then – Nordic states in the course of the 20th century have made their most significant contribution. This has been recognized in Nordic research and reflected in debates on the Nordic states' documented propensity for and culture of peace, good governance, and – subject of this issue – internationalist involvement. Schroeder's contention that the region as a whole would have to be seen as an "intermediary body" is echoed in, as one of the more prominent examples, Clive Archer's persuasively argued portrayal of the "Nordic area as a 'zone of peace.'"[13] A little after Schroeder, Christine Ingebritsen described aspects of what Schroeder terms the transcending function of the intermediary in international politics as the Nordic capacity for "norm entrepreneurship."[14] If historicized against the backdrop of the IR debates on – and in – the Nordic region in the 1990s, Schroeder and his conceptualization of "intermediary bodies" appear to have been far less orphaned than he seems to have believed himself.[15]

The broad appreciation of the Nordics' often argued "special role" in international politics should nonetheless not obscure that agreement, consensus, and regional integration have themselves been products of a gradual historical evolution, often inhibited and ruptured, not the teleological vanishing point of Nordic history. Subsequently, I will illustrate that Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland have traditionally – that is chronologically earlier and frequently in tandem with common Nordic policies – and rather successfully functioned not primarily as geostrategic buffers, but as intermediary bodies in the international system. While some of my examples are known, others have

12 Ibid., 5.

13 Most succinctly: Archer, C. "The Nordic Area as a 'Zone of Peace.'" *Journal of Peace Research* 33 (4) (1996), 451–67. See as well Archer, C. "Introduction." In *The Nordic Peace*, eds. C. Archer and P. Joenniemi (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 1–23.

14 Ingebritsen, C. "Norm Entrepreneurs: Scandinavia's Role in World Politics." *Cooperation and Conflict* 37 (1) (2002), 11–23. In IR scholarship the terms has since then gained quite some currency. Cf. Wunderlich, C. "Dedicated to the Good: Norm Entrepreneurs in International Relations." In *Rogue States as Norm Entrepreneurs. Norm Research in International Relations*, ed. C. Wunderlich (Cham: Springer, 2020), 15–55.

15 His 1996 Kann lecture indicates the level of frustration at the lack of reception, as he (undoubtedly selectively) perceived it. Cf. as well the references to Nordic, especially Norwegian peace research since the 1990s in the concluding remarks.

been argued on different premises and usually without acknowledging the international political implications of the small state in question. The gist of my argument is illustrated by way of two more substantial historical examples, the Danish unitary monarchy within the German Confederation, on the one hand, and the role of Finland as an "intermediary" during, before, and beyond the Cold War. These cases are suited to bridge the divide between the 19th century and later modern approaches, which are furthermore touched upon by reference to a number of contemporary historical examples, including that of the changing conceptions and self-conceptions of Sweden and Norway in the international arena.

On "Intermediary Bodies" and the Geopolitics of Northern Europe

The Danish Unitary Monarchy and the German Confederation: Inverting the Perspective

The first historical case I will engage with is both counter-intuitive and goes partly against the gist of previous research. Even if fully-fledged international organizations are mostly a phenomenon of the 20th century, I suspect there is a lot to be said in favor of locating their precedents, most of them proficiently organized international forerunners, about a century earlier.[16] They can be found, as I will argue, in both the structures of empire(s) and in post-imperial federative polities. The last category in particular suffers quite some neglect in historiography, which tends to narrate the 19th century along the dichotomy of empires and nation building. Against this, Andreas Fahrmeir has recently justifiably pointed to federative entities as one norm of state organization among many since the late 18th century.[17] The first example to which I would like to draw attention involves dealing with such a case: the function of the Danish unitary monarchy ("*helstat*") as an intermediary body within

16 Gram-Skjoldager, K., et al. "Introduction." In *Organizing the 20th-Century World: International Organizations and the Emergence of International Public Administration, 1920–1960s,* eds. K. Gram-Skjoldager, et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 1–12, at 4, noting – with R. Koselleck – of a "*Sattelzeit*" for international organization, beginning with the League of Nations in 1920.

17 Fahrmeir, A. "Innere Nationsbildung im 19. Jahrhundert. Der Deutsche *Bund* im internationalen Vergleich." In *Deutscher Bund und innere Nationsbildung im Vormärz (1815–1848)*, ed. J. Müller (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2018), 207–25. For the Swedish case see Eng, T. *Det svenska väldet: Ett konglomerat av uttrycksformer och begrepp från Vasa till Bernadotte* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2001).

the German Confederation and hence also within European international politics.[18]

The genesis and composition of the German Confederation, the "*Bund*," which can only be touched upon, point to its character as a precursor or even an early form of international organization. Its function and nature for the peace-making process of 1814/15 and the Vienna Order could be summed up as follows: At its inception at the Vienna Congress, the German Confederation was founded as a hybrid between older constitutive features of the Holy Roman Empire (HRR), the composite state of the early modern period par excellence, on the one hand, and a systemic federative integration of the German-speaking Central European space, on the other.[19] This did not necessarily entail elements of nation building, but allowed for the prospective further integration of the Confederation in virtually all fields of statehood and governance, including the sensitive issue of military affairs – all in all, a sophisticated solution for a "federative nation."[20] Besides its core "German" member states, three somewhat external monarchs were part of the organization, Britain through its personal union with Hanover, the Dutch king through Luxemburg (respectively Limburg after 1839), and my case in point, the king of Denmark as duke of Holstein (and Lauenburg).[21] This was nothing unusual for the period and simply mirrored the

18 Here, we actually face two problems of conceptual rendition in English: Danish "*helstat*" only handily translates into German (as "*Gesamtstaat*"), but not properly into English. What I refer to is probably best covered by the terms "unitary" or "composite" monarchy, as derived from debates among historians of the early modern period. The second difficulty rests with the established English translation "German Confederation" for "*Deutscher Bund*," which appears semantically highly deficient, as the "*Bund*" was neither a confederation nor a federation, but rather a historically grown hybrid of the two. For the latter, cf. Jonas, M. "The German Confederation as an International Organization: a Historiographical Essay on Current Debates." *Diplomatica* 2 (2020), 305–23. On pragmatic grounds, I subsequently simplify by occasionally using "Denmark" and "Confederation."

19 Elliott, J.H. "A Europe of Composite Monarchies." *Past & Present* 137 (November 1992), 48–71, on the concept "composite monarchy"; Stauber, R. "Der Deutsche Bund als föderative Ordnung in der Mitte Europas. Möglichkeiten und Chancen aus der Perspektive von 1814/15." In *Deutscher Bund und innere Nationsbildung*, ed. J. Müller, 31–48; Müller, J. *Deutscher Bund und deutsche Nation 1848–1866* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2005), 31–57.

20 Cf. Langewiesche, D. "Föderativer Nationalismus als Erbe der deutschen Reichsnation. Über Föderalismus und Zentralismus in der deutschen Nationalgeschichte." In *Föderative Nation. Deutschlandkonzepte von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, eds. D. Langewiesche and G. Schmidt (München: Oldenbourg, 2000), 215–42. Cf. as well Müller, J. *Deutscher Bund und deutsche Nation*, 15–29.

21 Gall, L., ed. *Quellen zur Geschichte des Deutschen Bundes* (München: Oldenbourg, from 2000 onwards, abbreviated QGDB), here QGDB I/2, doc. 250: Deutsche Bundesakte, June 8, 1815, 1503–18, art. I, at 1508. On the Danish context cf. Nørregård, G. *Danmark og Wienerkongressen 1814–15* (København: Gyldendal, 1948), 154–69.

composite character of the HRR. Only with the advent and assertive potency of the "warmongering trinity of nation, language, and territory," the century's "original sin," the imperial, federative, and composite elements, structures, and patterns of the Confederation became increasingly sidelined.[22]

The history of Denmark's and the Danish monarchy's relation to and role within the Confederation has traditionally been written as one of emerging rival nationalisms over the issue of the duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg. Eighteen sixty-four thereby essentially forms either the nucleus of impending catastrophe – in Danish eyes – or the prelude to the mythicized Wars of Unification in German perceptions and not least in traditional historiography. None of this is wrong, and there is a lot to be said in favor of seeing emerging nationalisms (and regionalist identities) at the heart of the constellation framed by the two Schleswig Wars of 1848–52 and 1863–64. There is, however, a lot within the highly complex history of the Confederation and of its effectively Danish component that remains obscure and misunderstood if the historical landscape of the 19th century is entirely limited to the teleological emergence of modern nation states. In almost pathological detail, such a pattern of ahistorical, nationalist back projection can be found in the apparently recurrent debates in the Danish public about the alleged "treason" of the Danish king Christian IX at the Vienna negotiations that eventually settled the Second Schleswig War in October 1864. In 2010, Tom Buk-Swienty reanimated the old ghost once again, claiming to have found proof that would incriminate Christian IX to have attempted to facilitate Denmark's accession to the German Confederation.[23] Apart from rather old news being artificially scandalized, the actual allegation Buk-Swienty's conveys how little is understood of the Confederation and the Danish unitary monarchy's place in it.[24]

One often overlooked problem that went hand in hand with the Prussian-dominated process of German national unification in the 1860s is the disappearance of the small and middle states of the Confederation, which ushered in what Schroeder and Wolf D. Gruner have described as a systemic vacuum. The demise of those "lost intermediaries," in particular in the period between 1866 and 1870, left the Vienna state system profoundly impoverished, upsetting not only the judiciously calibrated balance in German Central Europe

22 Siemann, W. *Metternich: Stratege und Visionär* (München: Beck, 2016), 521.

23 Buk-Swienty, T. *Dommedag Als 29. juni 1864* (København: Gyldendal 2010).

24 Much earlier Danish historiography has already sufficiently established the context, for instance, Niels Neergaard and Erik Møller, see Møller Jørgensen, C. "Dommedag Als." *TEMP – Tidsskrift for Historie* 1 (1) (2010), 185–97, at 189–90.

but the equilibrium of the European continent as a whole.[25] With the smaller polities within the Confederation disappearing, the literally international dimension of the organization vanished as well, as the constitutional presence and weight of the somewhat "external," non-German monarchs evaporated. On this dimension, the presence and influence of external monarchs onto the Confederation's policy and development, little has been written, with the exception of the better-known British case.[26] Britain, however, had already become effectively externalized with the dissolution of the personal union with Hanover in 1837, caused by Victoria's accession to the throne. This had furthermore absorbed Hanover into the affairs of Central Europe and indicates why Bismarck's illegal and illegitimate dissolution of the kingdom in 1866 remained without consequences.[27]

Opposed to the British case, the Danish political fusion with the Confederation lasted until 1864, outliving in particular the fundamental turbulences of the 1848–49 revolutions and the First Schleswig War.[28] One could probably go as far as to say that the emergence of the "Bund" at the Congress of Vienna somewhat enabled and consolidated the existence of the

25 Schroeder, P.W. "The Lost Intermediaries: The Impact of 1870 on the European System." *International History Review* 6 (1) (1984), 1–27; Gruner, W.D. "Die Rolle und Funktion von Kleinstaaten im internationalen System 1815–1914: Die Bedeutung des Endes der deutschen Klein- und Mittelstaaten für die europäische Ordnung [1985]." In Gruner, W.D. *Deutschland mitten in Europa. Aspekte und Perspektiven der deutschen Frage in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Hamburg: Krämer, 1992), 107–72; Gruner, W.D. "Die süddeutschen Staaten, das Ende des Deutschen Bundes und der steinige Weg in das deutsche Kaiserreich (1864–1871)." In *Der preußisch-österreichische Krieg 1866*, eds. W. Heinemann, L. Höbelt, and U. Lappenküper (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2018), 241–301; Gruner, W.D. "Die süddeutschen Staaten. Vom Deutschen Bund zum Neuen Deutschen Bund (1866–1870)." *Historische Mitteilungen* 30 (2018), 63–97.

26 An exception are the works by Wolf D. Gruner: e.g. *Großbritannien, der Deutsche Bund und die Struktur des europäischen Friedens im frühen 19. Jahrhundert. Studien zu den britisch-deutschen Beziehungen in einer Periode des Umbruchs 1812–1820*, 2 vols. (München: Oldenbourg, 1979); Gruner, W.D. "England, Hannover und der Deutsche Bund 1814–1837." In *England und Hannover*, eds. A. Birke and K. Kluxen (München: Saur, 1986), 81–126.

27 van den Heuvel, C. "Closer than Ever Before. Hannover und Großbritannien am Ende der Personalunion 1814–1837." In *Hannover, Großbritannien und Europa. Erfahrungsraum Personalunion 1714–1837*, ed. R.G. Asch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2014), 408–39; Bertram, M. "The End of the Dynastic Union (1815–1837)." In *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History*, eds. B. Simms, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 111–27.

28 Brengsbo, M. "National Regionalisms before Political Ideologies: Schleswig-Holstein in 1848." In *Historiography and the Shaping of Regional Identity in Europe: Regions in Clio's Looking Glass,* eds. D.E. de Boer and L. Adao da Fonseca (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 237–56; Brengsbo, M. "Schleswig(-)Holstein 1848: Legitimism, Nationalism, Constitutionalism and Regionalism in Conflict." In *Schleswig Holstein: Contested Region(s) through History*, eds. M. Brengsbo and K.V. Jensen (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2016), 177–92.

early modern Danish "*helstat*," which had been compromised by its association with Napoleon and the loss of Norway, as stipulated by the Treaty of Kiel in mid-January 1814.[29] With the return of Napoleon and Denmark's involvement in the renewed coalition against him, the Danish delegation – with the king, Frederick VI, in attendance – succeeded in preserving, or rather in reinventing Danish statehood as a unitary polity.[30] Four bodies of constitutional law defined Denmark's relationship to the German Confederation, most importantly the "*Bundesakte*" of 1815, the "*Wiener Schlussakte*" of 1820 (Final Act), which effectively formed the second constitutional framework of the Confederation, the Federal War Constitution ("*Bundeskriegsverfassung*") of 1822, establishing a federal military force and its respective institutions, and the Executive Order ("*Exekutivordnung*") of 1820, which decreed procedures and sanctions if a member state violated federal law. Within the legislative institutions of the Confederation in Frankfurt, the Federal Assembly's (inner) Council and Plenum, Denmark received through Holstein – with Lauenburg – one respectively three votes, more or less in line with medium-sized powers such as Baden or the two Hesse polities, the Electorate Hesse and the Grand Duchy of Hesse.[31] In the Vienna Final Act of 1820, the "*Bund*" furthermore conceived itself as an "indissoluble association," which explicitly precluded an exit from the organization. Rooted in the conflictual politics of the HRR, it was also impossible for member states, including Denmark, to join alliances directed against the Confederation.[32] Throughout the subsequent half a century, the question of the Danish "*helstat*" and its relation to German-speaking Central Europe therefore possessed an overarching European dimension. Both London Protocols of 1850 respectively 1852 explicate the centrality of the

29 Nørregård, G. *Freden i Kiel 1814* (København: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1954), 254–61; *The Peace of Kiel 1814. A Fateful Year for the North*, ed. S. Kinzler (Neumünster: Wachholtz 2014), primarily the contributions by Martin Krieger and Michael Brengsbo.

30 Nørregård, G. *Danmark og Wienerkongressen*, 142–53; *Danmark og Den Dansende Wienerkongres*, eds. O. Villumsen Krog and P. Ulstrup (København: Det Kongelige Sølvkammer, 2002), especially the contributions by Claus Bjørn and Hans Kargaard Thomsen.

31 Through art. IV, Denmark was also a full member of the inner council of the assembly and did not have to share its vote as smaller polities. Cf. QGDB I/2, doc. 250: Deutsche Bundesakte, June 8, 1815, art. IV and VI, 1509–11.

32 "Vienna Final Act (in short "*Wiener Schlussakte*"). In *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*, vol. 1: *Deutsche Verfassungsdokumente 1803–1850*, ed. E.R. Huber (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978), 91–99. Cf. Gruner, W. "Der Deutsche Bund, das 'Dritte Deutschland' und die deutschen Großmächte in der Frage Schleswig und Holstein zwischen Konsens und Großmachtarroganz." In *Der Wiener Friede 1864. Ein deutsches, europäisches und globales Ereignis*, eds. O. Auge and U. Lappenküper (Paderborn: Schönhingh, 2016), 101–40, at 104–6.

unitary monarchy for preserving Europe's peace and equilibrium. The 1852 settlement, by and large a victory for Copenhagen, furthermore restored the Danish position within the Confederation, with article III stating that the contracting parties agree upon reinstating the Danish monarch – as duke of Holstein and Lauenburg – in those "rights and duties" derived from the 1815 "*Bundesakte*" and the existing federative laws ("*Bundesrecht*").[33] The question of the Danish unitary monarchy remained thus systemically linked with the federative structure and the politics of the Confederation. In especially London's assessment, echoed by imperial Russia and Austria, the existence of a Denmark as a composite state and as an integral component of the Central European sphere was indispensable. As an evidently pre-modern product, the Danish monarchy assumed a literally conservative role within the Confederation's politics, almost as "natural" as Metternich's German policies in the decades after the Vienna Congress. By their very existence, composite states such as Denmark and Austria were equally much systemic opponents and principal targets of the burgeoning national movements in Central Europe and the "warmongering trinity of nation, language, and territory" that went with them.[34] In geostrategic and security-political terms, the continued presence of the Danish monarchy south of the Eider prevented a potential Prussian hegemony over northern Germany, along with the institutionalized safeguarding of Hanover's integrity and sovereignty. By holding on to especially Kiel as the main Baltic Sea harbor, Denmark both checked and balanced Prussia's evolving ambitions in the maritime arena. That it could do so effectively, Copenhagen had demonstrated during the First Schleswig War, and even in 1864, the Royal Danish Navy retained its superiority over Prussia and Austria with few difficulties.[35] In that respect, Denmark and its north German possessions functioned as both a physical buffer, an implicitly anti-Prussian constitutional constant within the "*Bund*," and a balancing element in the broader European context.[36]

Merely episodically, the intimidating intricacy of the Schleswig-Holstein Question is mirrored in Denmark's ambiguous place and multifaceted relations vis-à-vis the German Confederation. It certainly merits reviewing the

33 Beseler, G. *Der Londoner Vertrag vom 8. Mai 1852 in seiner rechtlichen Bedeutung* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1863), Appendix A – D, 38–47, including the French original versions of the two protocols of August 2, 1850 respectively May 8, 1852.

34 Siemann, W. *Metternich: Strategе und Visionär* (München: Beck, 2016), 521 (cit.).

35 Sondhaus, L. *Naval Warfare, 1815–1914* (London: Routledge, 2001), 91–94.

36 Frandsen, S.B. "Klein und national: Dänemark und der Wiener Frieden 1864." In *Wiener Friede*, eds. O. Auge and U. Lappenküper, 225–38; Höbelt, L. "Österreich und der Deutsch-Dänische Krieg. Ein Präventivkrieg besonderer Art." In ibid., 163–84.

historical and historiographical record and to explore this association anew, especially for the first half of the 19th century. The perspective, as suggested here, would have to be less informed by the Schleswig Wars and by the looming experience of 1864, but rather interested in assessing Denmark's position in the "variable geometry" of European international politics and the continent's state system.[37]

"Finlandization" before the Event: Historicizing Finland as an Intermediary Body in the Russian/Soviet Imperial Sphere

My second example bridges the 19th and 20th centuries deliberately, to illustrate the degree to which small state behavior in the international system is informed by underlying conditions, especially the geopolitical context. Finland, my case in point, has recently (again) gained a certain, if problematic currency among proponents of disciplines such as Strategic Studies. Unwittingly, the country seems to have provided a recipe for crisis resolution in the context of the Ukraine conflict. The key to that was the rather notorious concept of "Finlandization." When the suggestion of somewhat "finlandizing" Ukraine or indeed a post-Soviet sphere of influence in Russia's immediate geopolitical backyard came up, the Finnish political scientists Tuomas Forsberg and Matti Pesu forcefully pointed to the limitations and deficiencies of the argument and developed the singularity of the Finnish experience.[38] By implication, Forsberg and Pesu negated the existence of an ideal type of "Finlandization," handily divorceable from the concrete eponym, and hinted at the ambivalent record both in terms of foreign and domestic policy. Their core argument was historical in nature and situated "Finlandization" in the country's immediate political context of the Cold War. Here, the concept appears both as a combat term of Cold War propaganda and as a security political vehicle of the Finnish elites. Despite its clearly pejorative character, the then Finnish president, Urho Kekkonen, confidently turned the actual essence of the term on its head, thereby creating an affirmative notion of Finland's allegedly "finlandized" position in international politics. Whilst insisting that the country would have

37 The term is adopted and generalized from debates on European economic integration processes. Cf. de Witte, B. "The Future of Variable Geometry in a post-Brexit European Union." *Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law* 24 (2) (2017), 153–57.

38 Schroeder, P.W. "Necessity," 18, suggested the neutralization of the region as an "intermediary zone" in the 1990s, thereby straying slightly "from history into present politics." Cf. Palo, M.F. *Neutrality as a Policy Choice for Small/Weak Democracies* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 351; Forsberg, T., and M. Pesu. "The 'Finlandisation' of Finland: The Ideal Type, the Historical Model, and the Lessons Learnt." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 27 (3) (2016), 473–95.

to be seen as a case *sui generis*, Kekkonen portrayed "Finlandization," as he redefined it, as an exercise in enhancing peace and international security, or – to speak with Schroeder – almost the ideal "intermediary body."[39]

Notwithstanding my general agreement with Forsberg's and Pesu's historical approach, their genealogy of the term and the behavior associated with it does not extend far enough. As I have come to see it, the Finnish ability to mold the country's policies according to the larger international context amounts to a learnt practice evolved in tandem with the development of statehood within the Russian Empire.[40] That practice is not covered by neorealist conceptions of small states like "hiding" or "hedging," but involves a more active role as a transmitter and intermediary between imperial Russia, later the USSR, and – crudely phrased – the West. Essentially, Finnish exceptionalism in this regard originates with the recognition that the development of statehood could not be divorced from Russia and Russian geostrategic interests. This conception evolved early on in the first decades after the former Swedish province of Finland had been absorbed into the Russian Empire, based on the Diet of Porvoo in 1809 and the ensuing constitutional framework. Pacifying a war-torn society and its elites, the Russian emperor, Alexander I, granted the Finnish estates their accustomed rights and privileges and reinforced and developed Finland's status as a grand duchy, an autonomous polity and, as it was contemporarily held, "nation among nations." The intensely symbolic and political link between the imperial center and its newly acquired periphery was their personal union, which saw successive Russian tsars also function as grand duke (or rather princes) of Finland.[41] However, the actual constitutional make-up and political substance of the relationship developed in the decades after the formation of the principality. With a few exceptions, consecutive

39 Among a host of literature on the problem cf. e.g. Jakobson, M. "Substance and Appearance: Finland." *Foreign Affairs* 58 (5) (1980), 1034–44; Singleton, F. "The Myth of 'Finlandisation'." *International Affairs* 57 (2) (1981), 270–85; Majander, M. "The Paradoxes of Finlandization." *RUSI Journal* 144 (4) (1999), 76–83.

40 Vasquez, J.A. *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 86–87, speaks of power politics and *realpolitik* as a "learned behavior." Levy, J.S. "The Theoretical Foundations of Paul W. Schroeder's International System." *International History Review* 16 (4) (1994), 715–44, at 728–29.

41 Tommila, P. *Suomen autonomian synty 1808–1819* (Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus, 1984); Jussila, O. *Suomen suuriruhtinaskunta 1809–1917* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2004), 61–65; Nesemann, F. "Finnlands 'grundlegende Gesetze, Rechte und Privilegien'. Die Bedeutung der Zusicherungen Alexanders I. auf dem finnischen Landtag von 1809 aus russischer Sicht." In *1809 und die Folgen. Finnland zwischen Schweden, Russland und Deutschland*, eds. J. Hecker-Stampehl, et al. (Berlin: BWV, 2011), 155–78; Jussila, O. "How Did Finland Come under Russian Rule?" In *Finland and Poland in the Russian Empire. A Comparative Study,* eds. M. Branch, et al. (London: Hurst, 1995), 61–73.

generations of Finnish decision-makers were acutely aware that their state's existence as an autonomous entity depended on sustaining Russian goodwill, and that one fared better in cooperatively engaging with the Empire rather than unproductively fighting it, as – in Finnish perceptions of the period – the Polish case would indicate. The most graphic and influential example of this position is to be found in the country's foremost philosopher, J.V. Snellman – a Hegelian, who established himself as the main voice of the Fennomanic movement. Snellman's position, though a product of his philosophical outlook, became intensely political, especially against the backdrop of the Polish Uprising of January 1863. In contrast to the Polish revolt against imperial rule, Snellman advocated cooperation and compromise instead of conflict, unwavering loyalty to the tsar and the Russian administration, fostering a gradual, not a confrontational process of nation building. Snellman's Finland – an autonomous, eventually parliamentary civil society – was supposed to emerge in tandem with and not in antagonism to imperial Russia. His "Krig eller fred för Finland?" published in early May 1863, swiftly became the "classical tractate of Finland's real-political tradition."[42] It also made its author one of the country's most influential politicians, as Snellman successfully capitalized on the tsar's and his administration's goodwill and managed to push through a number of substantial, indeed existential reforms. With the liberal reforms and the tsar's concessions of the 1860s, involving the establishment of a national assembly in 1863, the emancipation of the Finnish language as an official language (besides Swedish), and the institutionalization of municipal sovereignty in 1865, imperial authority consolidated further.[43] In many ways, but especially in the arena of constitutionalist politics, Finland emerged as one of the main laboratories for imperial reform, with Snellman its main impetus and future point of reference.[44] It thereby transcended its position at the north-eastern fringes of the imperial periphery and developed significantly in political, constitutional, and not least economic terms, especially from the fin de siècle onwards.

42 Klinge, M. *Finlands historia III: Kejsartiden* (Helsinki: Schildt, 1993), 212.

43 Jussila, O. *Suomen perustuslait venäläisten ja suomalaisten tulkintojen mukaan 1808–1863* (Helsinki: SHS, 1969); Nesemann, F.: *Ein Staat, kein Gouvernement. Die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Autonomie Finnlands im russischen Zarenreich, 1808 bis 1826* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 2003), 37–85.

44 Schweitzer, R. "Government in Finland. Russia's Borderland Policy and Variants of Autonomy." In *Finland and Poland in the Russian Empire: A Comparative Study*, eds. M. Branch, et al. (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies), 91–110; Kurunmäki, J. "The Formation of the Finnish Polity within the Russian Empire: Language, Representation, and the Construction of Popular Political Platforms, 1863–1906." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 35 (1–4) (2017–18), 399–416.

Occasional periods of imperial stagnation, pressure, and repression notwithstanding, the grand duchy survived comparatively unscathed. On the contrary, even under the pre-1914 distress in Finnish-Russian relations, Russian imperial rule over Finland as an autonomous grand duchy was at no point directly challenged. What the opponents of the so-called Russification programs advocated throughout was the restoration and protection of the allegedly agreed legal status and *modi operandi* in the bilateral relationship between Helsinki and St. Petersburg. The status of Finnish autonomy had indeed been consolidated in the wake of the 1905 revolution. The new constitution of 1906, which effectively transformed Russia into a constitutional monarchy, redefined Finland's position within the empire along the lines of an enhanced autonomy. If not formally, then at least in effect, this reform retracted the restrictions of the February Manifesto of 1899 as the emblematic embodiment of St Petersburg's so-called Russification policies. It primarily resulted in the establishment of an unicameral parliament in 1907, the *Eduskunta*, based on universal suffrage and eligibility, which made Finland into one of the most progressively governed states in Europe, certainly more in line with the British imperial decentralization towards the dominions around the same period than with any other comparable example of imperial rule in the borderlands between the Russian, Ottoman, and German empires.[45] It is here, in Finland's systemically complex position within the Russian Empire, that the origins of the exceptional position of Finland in international politics in the 20th century can be found. A generally affirmative integral component of the Russian Empire, consolidating the imperial system, while also sustaining, further developing, and – where necessary – insisting on its autonomy and effective sovereignty (in terms of the existing personal union).

With the imperial umbrella rather suddenly gone and Finland obtaining independence in late 1917, the country unsuccessfully attempted to fill the security void with an orientation towards alliance formation and an initially strong, then waning commitment to internationalism, mostly in the shape of the League of Nations and – from 1933 – the "Oslo Alliance." From the mid-1930s, the country gravitated towards an incubating, but patently unconsolidated Nordic bloc. As opposed to the Scandinavian states, however, Helsinki sustained its commitment to the League and to conceptions of collective security in an increasingly anarchic international system.[46] When it got absorbed into

45 This argument is developed in detail here: Jonas, M. *Scandinavia*, 87–110.

46 Soikkanen, T. *Kansallinen eheytyminen – Myytti vai todellisuus? Ulko- ja sisäpolitiikan linjat ja vuorovaiktus Suomessa vuosina 1933–1939* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1984); Selén, K. *Genevestä Tukholmaan. Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikan siirtyminen Kansainliitosta pohjoismaiseen yhteistyöhön 1931–1936* (Forssa: SHS, 1974).

the emerging Second World War, diplomatically isolated and militarily ill prepared, the Finnish decision-makers in politics and the military opted for a reorientation of their security policies. From the end of the so-called Winter War, the Finnish government moved systematically closer to National Socialist Germany, eventually forming Hitler's northern flank in the offensive against the Soviet Union. The "bandwagoning" aspect in Finland's behavior as a small state in the early 1940s, trying to capitalize on Hitler's expansionist war of conquest and extermination in the East, appears strategically obvious. However, the more remarkable characteristic of the country's position in the German orbit seems to me to reside in the relative autonomy and comparatively large room for maneuver Finland carved out for itself. I have hinted at this phenomenon earlier, especially when comparing Finland to its pendant at the southern flank of "Barbarossa" and the war against the USSR, Romania.[47] As if derived from the Finnish imperial experience, Helsinki's position in the German orbit between 1941 and 1944 constituted a case "*sui generis*," as attested by the chief German diplomat in Finland at the time.[48] On the one hand, the government in Helsinki volunteered the northern half of the country to be effectively occupied by German troops and – in all but name – conducted a coalition war alongside National Socialist Germany. Finland, on the other hand, at no point declined to the level of a satellite and managed to extract itself skillfully from the war by concluding a separate peace with the Soviet Union against Hitler's explicit will.[49]

Inverted again, and this time more or less "returning" to the Russian post-imperial sphere, the Finnish state of the post-war period aligned its existence as closely with the Nordic states as with the USSR. Having survived, even if barely, the threat of Sovietization in the immediate aftermath of the war, the so-called "Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance of 1948" (in short: YYA Treaty) between Helsinki and Moscow stabilized Fenno-Soviet relations and is justifiably viewed as the cornerstone of Finnish policy towards the USSR in the subsequent decades. The two central strategists of Finland's security political orientation, the presidents Juho K. Paasikivi and – from 1956 – Urho Kekkonen, had early on recognized the centrality of stable and sustainable relations with the Soviet Union and build their foreign policy

47 Jonas, M. "Hitler's Satellites? Finland and Romania in Nazi Foreign Policy and War Strategy, 1940/1941–1944." In *World War II Re-explored: Some New Millennium Studies in the History of Global Conflict*, eds. J. Suchoples, et al. (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019), 483–507, with further references.

48 Jonas, M. *NS-Diplomatie und Bündnispolitik 1935-1944. Wipert von Blücher, das Dritte Reich und Finnland* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011), 335–61, with further references.

49 Jonas, M. "Hitler's Satellites," 503–7.

framework, later on rebranded as the Paasikivi-Kekkonen doctrine, on that premise.[50] As a source of intellectual orientation, the critical reception, and adaptation of Snellman's Hegelian historicism remained a constant among the Finnish political elites well into the years after the Second World War.[51] This is prominently reflected in Paasikivi himself, who wrestled most of his life with the country's national philosopher, and even more in Kekkonen. Despite their differences, both agreed upon Snellman's essential recognition that a small state would have to know the limits of its weight in international politics and act accordingly. The apparent continuity of political behavior is thereby apparently premised on a genealogy of thought on Finnish statehood and indeed on learned practices dating back to the mid-19th century. Succinctly, Erkki Tuomioja, has stated that "the roots of a security policy instrument such as the YYA Treaty go far beyond the existence of the Soviet Union."[52]

It is then, against the backdrop of the Cold War, that Finland's impressive capacity for small state realism – and not least opportunism – transitioned fully onto the regional and international stage. As the intermediary body par excellence, the country not only pursued and promoted international engagement in the Nordic context and within the United Nations, both actually in tandem with one another and mutually reinforcing. As reflected in the policy's figurehead, Kekkonen, Helsinki also – and most influentially – functioned as the genuinely neutral, non-aligned enabler of the twin process of detente and rapprochement during the Cold War. A concise expression of this ambition can be found in a collection of essays, edited by the Finnish politician, academic, and foreign policy advisors of Kekkonen, Keijo Korhonen. Under the emblematic title, *Urho Kekkonen – rauhanpoliitikko* – politician of peace – seconded the 1975 CSCE conference in Helsinki and clearly aimed at establishing Kekkonen and with him Finland as the archetype of an indispensable intermediary in Cold War international politics.[53] Finland's enhancing international political profile had been accompanied by and could even be seen as a product of a systematic campaign of cultural diplomacy that different Finnish state agencies and the country's foreign ministry had been

50 Visuri, P. *Paasikiven Suomi suurvaltojen puristuksessa 1944–1947* (Helsinki: Docendo, 2015); Apunen, O. *Paasikiven-Kekkosen linja* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1977).

51 Jussila, O. Maakunnasta valtioksi. Suomen valtion synty (Helsinki: WSOY: 1987). See as well the excellent essay by Savolainen, R. "Paasikivi's Russian policy and Snellman," https://jkpaasikivi.fi/en/paasikivis-russian-policy-and-snellman.

52 Cited in Viitala, H. "SN-seura, kansalaisyhteisö ja YYA." In *Suomi ja YYA* (= Snellman-instituutin julkaisuja 12), 53–101, 108. Savolainen, R. "Paasikivi's Russian Policy."

53 *Urho Kekkonen – rauhanpoliitikko*, ed. Korhonen, K. (Keuruu: Otava, 1975). The title of the English translation, simultaneously published by Heinemann, makes this intention even plainer: *Urho Kekkonen: Statesman for Peace* (London: Heinemann, 1975).

engaged in, as Louis Clerc has recently demonstrated in admirable detail.[54] In the lead-up to the CSCE, Finnish diplomats, policy-makers, and negotiators perceived themselves as crucial in brokering deals on sensitive issues such as the principle of "non-inference in internal affairs" in the humanitarian policy field of the negotiations. Their increasing confidence is mirrored in the perception of the United States and the USSR, both of whom seized upon Finland as a go-between when it came to resolving the manifold impasses of the negotiations.[55] Internally, Kekkonen seized upon that international status and his privileged relations to the Soviet leadership in order to consolidate his continued grip on power. The identification of president and country had thereby at any rate delicate implications for Finnish domestic politics and the polity as a whole.

With the CSCE process, Finnish foreign policy created a lasting legacy and the model of the intermediary small state punching significantly above its allegedly "natural" weight. By means of international mediation and organization, Finland had successfully moved on from the existential notion of the small, powerless polity in the international system, whose primary purpose was survival.[56] Instead, Kekkonen's Finland and along with it the other Nordic states had successfully reinvented themselves as proficient components of the international system capable of "transcending" international politics onto a different level of legitimate and authoritatively juridified interaction.[57]

Preliminary Conclusions (By Way of More Examples)

If it is regarded as useful to apply Schroeder's concept of the "intermediary body" to the examples I have outlined above, it would certainly make sense to employ the term as well for an analysis of the remaining polities of Northern Europe and of the region altogether. I am only able to indicate how this could translate concretely. Both Sweden and Norway form rather obvious cases in point. After the 1905 dissolution of the union with Norway, Sweden lost all its residual claims to great power status and, in the wake of the First World

54 Clerc, L. *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland: Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State* (London: Palgrave, 2022).

55 Snyder, S. *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War. A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 24–26; Clerc, L. *Cultural Diplomacy*, 228–29.

56 Jakobson, M. *Finland Survived: An Account of the Finnish-Soviet Winter War, 1939–1940* (Helsinki: Otava, 1984[2]), stresses this aspect particularly.

57 Schroeder, P.W. "Necessity," 4–5.

War, effectively reinvented itself as a kind of "humanitarian super power," particularly in terms of its own identity.[58] For the repositioned country and its elites, however, there was quite a distance to be covered until one had successfully stripped oneself of previous self-conceptions and "unlearned" the logic of power politics in the process. With the end of the First World War, condensed in the accommodating international legal response to the League's decision in the Åland dispute in 1921, Sweden's future orientation rested with organized internationalism, initially with the League, after 1945 with the UN. Besides that, in both World Wars, the country functioned as one of the central platforms for peace negotiations and mediation between the warring coalitions. This intermediary role was made possible because of the country's comparatively strict neutrality course and apparent lack of association with any of the belligerent fractions. Norway, on the other hand, had less ability to mediate in the international arena, but seized on every given opportunity to enhance its internationalist profile. From Francis Hagerup and the Norwegian international legal scholars at the 1907 Hague Peace Conference and Erik Colban in the League's General Secretariat of the 1920s to Trygve Lie's tenure as UN General Secretary, to name but a few, Norway – along with Canada – became the embodiment of the engaged internationalist, at least in its self-conception and international perception.[59] The counter-tendencies to this internationalist transformation are apparent, though. Jeremy Black's caution applies with equal legitimacy to the assumed Nordic traditions and their ensuing historiographical narratives in this field: "It is all too easy to reify national attitudes and policies, to make them appear clearer, coherent, and more obviously-based on readily-agreed national interests than is in fact the case."[60] I have touched upon this problem in particular with regard to Swedish domestic politics. But even – some would say: especially – in the Norwegian case, the transformation as described here was undoubtedly not teleological or linear and certainly no product of a quasi-organic, continuous Norwegian

58 Agius, C. *The Social Construction of Swedish Neutrality: Challenges to Swedish Sovereignty and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Malmborg, M. *Neutrality and State-Building in Sweden* (London: Palgrave, 2001).

59 See de Carvalho, B., and I.B. Neumann. "A Great Power Performance: Norway, Status and the Policy of Involvement." In *Small State Status Seeking: Norway's Quest for International Standing*, eds. B. de Carvalho and I.B. Neumann (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 56–72; Pharo, H. "Den norske fredstradisjonen – et forskningsprosjekt." Historisk Tidsskrift (Norge) 84 (2) (2005), 239–55; Pharo, H. "Norway's Peace Tradition Spanning 100 Years." *Scandinavian Review* 93 (1) (2005), 15–23; Skånland, Ø.H. "'Norway is a Peace Nation': A Discourse Analytic Reading of the Norwegian Peace Engagement." *Cooperation and Conflict* 45 (1) (2010), 34–54.

60 Black, J. *Rethinking Military History* (London: Routledge, 2004), 142.

development towards internationalism and humanitarianism (or Nordic, for that matter).[61]

With that, an almost excessive amount of time and ground has been covered, necessarily making my historiographical exploration of Schroeder's "intermediary body" more sweeping and pointed than any specialized treatment would have done. As I see it, the principal potential associated with Schroeder's "intermediary" is the term's far greater conceptual elasticity, without it being rendered arbitrary and hence useless. Furthermore, the concept aptly encompasses the discourse, politics, and ambitions of Scandinavian internationalist diplomacy as a practice and tradition suited to impact the conduct of international relations creatively – the apparent confines in terms of geo- and power politics notwithstanding. By adopting and disseminating mechanisms and virtues such as mediation and cooperation, peacebuilding and the rule of law, and increasingly as well global development, the small states of Northern Europe have substantially contributed to transcending the character, the norms and workings of the international order. The effect and legacy of that contribution are still with us and have shaped both conceptions and self-conceptions of "*Norden*" up to the present day.[62]

61 Cf. Jonas, M. *Scandinavia*, 1–17.

62 See as well the aptly entitled collection: *The Politics of Smallness in Modern Europe: Size, Identity and International Relations since 1800*, ed. S. Kruizinga (London: Bloomsbury, 2022).