



Contribution ID: 324

Type: **Paper Abstract (Closed Panels)**

Sweden and the League of Nations: The partisan contestation of national identity and collective security

Friday 27 June 2025 11:30 (20 minutes)

When the Swedish Social Democratic Party shifted its stance on NATO membership in the spring of 2022, broad parliamentary consensus to divert from Sweden's tradition of non-alignment to pursue collective security was achieved. A century earlier Sweden had contemplated similar trade-offs before joining the world's first international organisation based on the principles of conflict mediation, disarmament, and collective action. Yet, neither in 2022 nor in 1920 such decisions were taken without opposition. This paper explores Sweden's engagements in the League of Nations, and places its recent divergence from the traditional non-alignment policy in a historical perspective. While the options before the First World War had been between national neutrality or military alliance, the question was to what extent Sweden should have trust in collective security. Special attention is therefore given to Sweden's participation in the LoN in times of crisis and conflict, including critics' responses to these engagements. An emphasis is placed on how the small and post-neutral state made sense of the dilemma between its traditional security practices and the new internationalist ideals. Drawing on a wide range of archival sources, the paper illustrates how contestation often took place across dimensions of partisan affiliation and ideological discourse, generating both shared and competing understandings of Sweden's role and identity in institutionalised international cooperation on issues of security and defence.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?

International Relations, International History

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?

Yes

Author: EDSTRÖM, Zigne (Stockholm University)

Presenter: EDSTRÖM, Zigne (Stockholm University)

Session Classification: Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance

