

## **Research Expose**

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### **Title**

Neutral States, Peace and Security within International Institutions in Regional Perspective

### **Keywords**

Neutrality, foreign policy, international institutions, Europe, Central Asia, security, constructivism, institutionalism

### **Pitch Point**

The Cold War pushed some states to join the non-alignment movement which was inspired by the practice of neutrality of neutral countries. With the end of this conflict, the world political order experienced structural changes. The newly founded European Union and globalization once again led many scholars to re-evaluate neutrality as an irrelevant concept in the new world order. Whilst some countries abandoned their neutral policies, some historical neutral states, such as Switzerland and Austria, re-endorsed their adherence to neutrality as a foundational doctrine of their foreign policy. In addition, some nascent states emerging from the breakup of the Soviet Union, such as a Central Asian state like Turkmenistan, also adopted neutral policies. This means that, contrary to the opinions of many scholars, neutrality still bears relevance in post-Cold War politics.

### **Introduction**

This research project aims to examine the role of three permanent neutral states within international institutions. The role played by Switzerland, Austria and Turkmenistan within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations (UN), as well as their behaviour respective of their regions through these institutions will be analyzed in this study. The cases of Afghanistan, and Ukraine and nuclear non-proliferation will be observed.

Austria, Switzerland and Turkmenistan serve as case studies because all three countries have neutrality enshrined into their constitutions and respectively adhere to “permanent” or “perpetual” neutrality de jure. Additionally, these states are recognized as being neutral by the international community. Their commitments to long-term neutrality differentiate them from the countries that practice neutrality temporarily either adhere to the non-alignment policies. Since this project aims to analyze the role of neutrality in its quintessence, these formally and long term neutrality committed countries are selected as research cases studies.

### **Research Questions and Purpose**

The research project seeks to answer the following relational and descriptive questions:

1. Why did the chosen case studies opt for permanent neutrality?
2. What are the concept and peculiar features of neutrality belonging to each individual state?
3. How do permanent neutral states form their concept of neutrality and transfer it to international politics individually and via international institutions?
4. What role do they play in security affairs individually and collectively in international institutions and their respective regions via their foreign policies?
5. What effects and functions do neutral states perform concerning security in international institutions and their geographical regions?

The objective of this research is to analyze the participation of neutral countries in security affairs individually and collectively through international institutions, shifting away from a narrow focus on simple abstention from war. In other words, the research aims to elaborate the significance of neutrality and the role of permanent neutral states within international institutions and their respective geographical regions from a security perspective. The research will explore the concept of neutrality with emphasis on peculiar features of every case country. The Ph.D. project will examine the rationale of neutral countries in order to become neutral. By focusing on their foreign policies and their conduct within international institutions, this enterprise will explore what neutrality and neutral countries can contribute to crisis management and conflict prevention as well as conflict solution.

### **Methodology**

To explore the aforementioned questions, this study will apply a qualitative, case-oriented, and comparative methodology with a clear historical approach and dimension.

International institutions are vehicles for the evolution of international politics. As such, scholars have paid special attention to them, particularly in the wake of the Cold War. Using theories of institutionalism and constructivism, combined with a historical-comparative approach, this study will scrutinize the role of permanent neutral states with regard to their security functions within international institutions and respective region. Three permanent neutral countries that are Austria, Switzerland, and Turkmenistan - will be examined in order to explore the horizons of neutrality. A detailed analysis of precise variables will be conducted to investigate these case at multiple levels mentioned below.

Tabulated Summary		
1	<b>Micro Individual State Institution Level</b>	The role of a single neutral state in a given institution and region
2	<b>Micro Comparative Level</b>	The role of three neutral states in a single institution and region
3	<b>Overall Individual State Level</b>	The role played by a single neutral state in institutions and regions
4	<b>Macro Comparative Level</b>	The roles played by all three neutral states in institutions and regions

*\*On level 3 is analyzed the role of one county in institutions and regions.*

*\*On level 4 is analyzed the role of all three countries in institutions and regions.*

### Sources

Books and research articles on the role of permanent neutral states in international institutions and their impact on global security will be used as secondary sources. Primary sources will stem from databases of various research institutions including, but are not limited to the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, SIPRI<sup>1</sup>, MGIMO<sup>2</sup>, ESOC<sup>3</sup>, Swiss Peace, Research Database Alliance in Austria, archives of the states and international organizations, and historical documents<sup>4</sup>. Gathering information on the role of neutral states, the data will be collected from the international institutions and foreign affairs ministries. Interviews and consultations with representatives to international institutions and heads of the diplomatic missions will be conducted in flexible approach, carried out in-person or remotely. A standard questionnaire and case relevant tailored questions will be presented to every interviewee prior to the interview. On the basis of the questionnaire, the interviewee will select their preferred method for being interviewed.

### Interviews are planned with the following persons:

Representatives of States to International Organizations and Heads of the International Organization's Missions:

1. Ms. Natalia Gherman – the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UNRCCA
2. Mr. Philipp Saprykin – the Deputy Head of the UNRCCA

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<sup>1</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

<sup>2</sup> The Institute of International Studies MGIMO

<sup>3</sup> Empirical Studies of Conflict

<sup>4</sup>

- Constitutional Law on the Neutrality of Austria (26 October 1955)
- The Treaty of Paris (20 November 1815) Act on the Neutrality of Switzerland
- The Constitutional Law of Turkmenistan about permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan (27 December 1995, No. 99-1)
- Formal foreign policy lines by the case studies' Ministries of Foreign Affairs
- The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/50/80 and the resolution A/RES/69/285

3. H.E. Ambassador Alexander Marschik – Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN
4. Mr. John MacGregor – Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat
5. H.E. Ambassador Clemens Koja – the Permanent Representation of Austria to the OSCE
6. H.E. Ambassador Florian Raunig – the Department for the OSCE of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. H.E. Ambassador Dr. Gabriela Sellner – Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in Vienna
8. H.E. Ambassador Wolfgang-Amadeus Bruelhart – the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE, the UN and other International Organizations

Academicians:

1. Dr. Heinz Gaertner – Chair of the Strategy and Security Advisory Board of the Austrian Armed Forces, Chair of the Advisory Board of the International Institute for Peace in Vienna, Former academic director at the Austrian Institute of International Affairs, Lecturer at the Department of Political Science at the University of Vienna and at Danube University
2. Dr. Michael Gehler – Director of the Institute of History at University of Hildesheim, Corresponding Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences for Abroad
3. Dr. Laurent Goetschel - Director of Swisspeace Institute, Professor of Political Science at the University of Basel
4. Dr. Myrat Hadzyyev - Doctor of Law, Honorary Elder of People's Council of Turkmenistan
5. Mag. Dr. Günther Hauser – Senior Researcher and Lecturer at the Institute for Strategy and Security Policy at Austrian Defence Academy
6. Dr. Pascal Lottaz - Assistant Professor at the Waseda Institute for Advanced Study Japan, Member of Advisory Board of the International Institute for Peace in Vienna

The following tentative questionnaire with combination of open ended and multiple choice questions will be used for interviews:

1. How relevant do you judge the neutrality in contemporary Europe, especially when most of the region's countries are in the European Union?
2. Do you think neutrality is relevant for today's politics and why so?
3. Do you think that the role of neutral countries bears more importance in times of conflict rather than in times of peace?
4. What role does (name of country) play in relation to security in special region and in particular institution (name of institution)?
5. What inputs vis-à-vis peace and security has (name of country) contributed to the institution, region?/How do you think (name of country) has contributed vis-à-vis peace and security to the institution and the specific region?

6. Do you recall any historical case(s) of cooperation between neutral states for achieving peace and security objectives in some institution or region?
7. Do you believe that permanent neutral countries have a special role to play within international affairs towards peace and security compared to countries that practice neutrality without de jure status and those belonging to military alliance? If yes, is that symbolic or practical? What special role is it?
8. What do you think is the difference between a permanent neutral country (PNC) and non-permanent neutral country (NPNC) such as alliance-free Finland and Sweden or other non-aligned countries, in terms of capacity to contribute to peace and security?
9. **Turkmenistan's question** – Turkmenistan is the only country that has been twice recognized as a permanent neutral country by the UNGA resolutions A/RES/50/80 in 1995 and A/RES/69/285 in 2015. Do you think that acknowledgment of Turkmenistan's neutral status by the UN and its member states makes the country's status a special one? If yes, could you please elaborate on this peculiar feature and its significance for Turkmenistan's neutral status?
10. **Switzerland's question** - In the Ukrainian war with many parties involved, Switzerland joined all EU sanctions and froze Russian financial assets placed in its banks. That raised opinions that Switzerland took direction towards Europe and acted non-neutral. Unlike as in the 2011 Libyan crisis when Switzerland sanctioned the financial assets of Colonel Gaddafi allocated in its banks in line with the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) mandate, this time the neutral country sanctioned Russian assets without such authorization. Another instance was when during WWII the Nationalist-socialists ruled Germany invaded its neighbour countries, Swiss banks continued servicing German accounts. In the case of the Russian invasion in Ukraine Switzerland applied a different approach towards Russia. How the guesses of non-neutrality around this Swiss decision can be addressed? How such a decision can be explained with regard to the Swiss policies of perpetual neutrality?

Gathered data will be measured and analyzed by factoring in timeframes, regions, international institutions, and the conduct of the neutral state.

### **Significance**

This project aims to identify patterns and to develop a workable theory about the role of permanent neutral states' impact on security within international institutions and their respective geographical regions. It is significant for positioning permanent neutral states and their policies within the international community. It will also help reveal whether neutral policies can serve as tools for peace and security.

The research attributes special attention to Turkmenistan, a relatively young neutral state located in the Central Asian region with possibilities ranging from the prospects of the neo great game (Stavljanin, 2013) up to integration towards security and development via international institution suchlike the European Union community model. The examples of

Swiss and Austrian neutrality models demonstrate that permanently neutral states may play a mixed game of integrating and remaining distant to supranational entities. Thus, besides supplying the information regarding the functions of permanent neutral states, the research will also assemble and contribute data, rectifying the dearth of research on Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality.

**The dissertation's structure will tentatively consist of the following chapters:**

1. Introduction
2. Different types of neutralities
3. Research literature review
4. Chapters of case studies analysis on the subject of foreign policy, participation, and conduct of neutral states within international institutions and their geographical regions
5. Results and discussion about impact and contribution of neutral states to security affairs in international institutions and respective geographical regions
6. Conclusion

**Planned Work Schedule October 2021 – September 2025:**

*The dissertation writing includes presenting the yearly interim report to the doctoral board between April and August, as well as regularly attending scientific seminars and conferences.*

October 2021 - March 2022	Writing introduction chapter
April 2022 – September 2022	Writing literature review
October 2022 – March 2023	Writing study cases analysis chapter
April 2023 – September 2023	Conducting case study analysis at the University of Vienna
October 2023 – March 2024	Conducting study case analysis in a field research
April 2024 – September 2024	Conducting a seminar for bachelor or master students; cooperate with partnering institution
October 2024 – March 2025	Writing conclusion chapter
April 2025 – September 2025	Finalizing and defending the dissertation

*(Word count: 2140)*

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