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THE CHANGE OF STRATEGIC CULTURES AFTER THE RUSSIAN INVASION
OF UKRAINE IN 2022. THE CASES OF GERMANY AND FINLAND

MASTER'S THESIS

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CONFIRMATION

I confirm that I am the author of the submitted Master's Thesis: *The Change of Strategic Cultures After the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Cases of Germany and Finland*, which has been prepared independently and has never been presented for any other course or used in another educational institution, neither in Lithuania, or abroad. I also provide a full bibliographical list which indicates all the sources that were used to prepare this assignment and contains no un-used sources.

Augustė Nemčiauskytė

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Summary: This research strives to analyse the strategic culture changes in Germany and Finland following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Three generations of strategic culture theory were used to examine the influence of historical context, individuals' behaviour and recent events on the construction of foreign and security policies of Germany and Finland. Two case studies combined with the 1st generation of strategic culture theory were used to examine the historical background which led to the cautious and reserved German strategic culture, and Finland's neutrality. To determine the exact changes in strategic cultures, this study used discourse analysis and document analysis of official governmental publications on security and foreign policy. Two interviews with Lithuanian diplomats working on Germany and Finland files were conducted to inspect the findings of the thesis. The results of the research provide an understanding of how German and Finnish strategic cultures has changed following the Russian invasion to Ukraine in 2022, and how it impacted the strategic planning of foreign and security policy.

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INTRODUCTION

After the end of the Cold War, the West (NATO and the EU) viewed Russia as a rather friendly state that posed no great danger to the Western countries and the world. Russian integration into the Western world began, with agreements with the EU to import/export deals, especially in the energy field. For many decades the EU states based their security and defence on membership in NATO, completely trusting the military Alliance to save them from all kinds of threats. Unexpectedly for the West, in 2008 Russia attacked Georgia and took two regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia; in 2014 Russia attacked Eastern Ukraine and occupied the Crimean Peninsula; finally, in 2022 Russia with the help of Belarus launched a wide-scale invasion of Ukraine where war is still ongoing. However, neither the case of 2008 nor 2014 changed the attitudes of Western states toward Russia significantly, except restrained speeches were made and mild sanctions were implemented.

The case of 2022 is notably different as European states, even those that proclaimed cooperation and avoided confrontation with Russia, began increasing their security, militarily and energetically, investing in the defence not only expecting NATO (mostly the US) to save them. A few days after the invasion, on the 27th of February German Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholtz addressed the Bundestag with what today is known as the *Zeitenwende* speech aimed at reversing the cautious defence policy of the state. It is considered to be the turning point that affected not only German but European security policy. On the 17th of May Finland applied for membership in NATO ending its centuries-long neutrality policy which previously did not allow military alliances.

Both of the examples show how Russian aggression brought a new security perspective of Europe and that the two mentioned states took action which in the first place is a change of strategic culture. Germany had what some authors called a ‘pacifistic’ and ‘demilitarized’ strategic culture while Finland focused solely on national defence. Decisions to invest in the security sector and join the collective defence alliance fundamentally challenged existing strategic cultures and their implementation made the change.

The aim of the research: to analyze strategic culture changes in Germany and Finland, and determine if the change was only declared in words or if it had a practical effect on the mentioned countries’ security policies.

Defended statement: the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 prompted a strategic culture change in German and Finnish foreign and security policies.

Research question: what were the main changes of strategic cultures of Germany and Finland, and whether they were profound or superficial?

Tasks of the research:

1. To provide theoretical background for the research of this thesis using the strategic culture theory and explain how it applies to the research topic.
2. To conduct a comprehensive case study of Germany's strategic culture prior to 2022 and compare it with the policy after the Zeitenwende speech by doing discourse analysis and documents analysis.
3. To conduct a case study on Finland's strategic culture before the Russian invasion of 2022, and afterwards by performing discourse analysis and document analysis. The turning point is chosen to be a decision to apply for membership in NATO.
4. To determine if the changes in the strategic culture of Germany and Finland were formal or practical and had real effects on the security policies of the mentioned states.

The object of the research: the strategic cultures of Germany and Finland.

Methodology:

1. Case study – this method will be used to analyse the changes in Germany and Finland's strategic cultures that happened after the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The goal of using this method is to understand what changes were made and how they affect further developments of security policies. The goal of using this method is to examine what strategic culture prevailed before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and then collect evidence of change that happened due to the war and security dilemmas it presented.
2. Document analysis - this method will be applied to analyse such documents as the National Security Strategy of Germany, Defence Policy Guidelines and Government Report on Finnish foreign and Security Policy to find out the change in chosen states' security policies and determine whether strategic culture has changed formally or practically. The goal of using this approach is to examine if the change was only formal and does not go beyond the statement or is it practical change that forced governments to take measures such as allocation of financial resources, procurement, and infrastructural transformation.
3. Discourse analysis – this method will be applied to analyse Olaf Scholz's Zeitenwende speech given in the Bundestag on the 27th of February 2022 and previous President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö delivered in Brussels on April 4th, 2023. The themes, language, and rhetoric of the speech will be analyzed in order to understand the underlying messages and constructs. At the same time comparison between words and actions will be done, to understand if the messages given to the public later were met with real decisions. This method will help to analyze the extent of the strategic culture change and determine if the Zeitenwende and Finland 's

accession to NATO was simply a speech or an actual turning point in German and Finland's foreign and security policies.

4. Interviews – interviews with Lithuanian diplomats working with Germany and Finland will be used to examine how professionals working with these states view the change of strategic cultures in the mentioned states and its effects on security policy. It will be used as an additional method to see if the diplomats conform the results of the research. The semi-structured interview method appears to be the most suitable approach for the research as it will allow me to ask the same questions that are the core of the thesis but have the liberty to clarify the answers by asking follow-up questions. This method will provide an opportunity to examine different views on the issue of strategic culture change by diplomats.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is apparent that Germany chose a path of cautious strategic culture following the aftermath of the Second World War. When the security crisis hit the international arena, the US asked for help from its allies to manage the situation in Iraq, Germany was the one country to be the first to refuse. Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen referred to the situation as a conflict in Germany's multilateral and diplomacy-oriented strategic cultures.¹ The author also emphasizes two schools of thought regarding Germany's security policy that emerged after the defeat: left pacifist 'never again war' and center-right 'never again alone'. Gradually, those ideas converged and inhabited assumptions from both camps. Germany was urged to seek cooperation and partnerships while creating trust between the involved parties, with emphasis on demilitarised international affairs, and circumscription of Bundeswehr's role to the territorial defence of Germany and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies.

Tappe and Doeser tried to summarize other scholars researching German strategic culture, findings. The list includes such terms as 'civilian power', 'skepticism', 'anti-war', 'anti-militarism', and 'pacifism'.² The authors claim that there were two shifts in German strategic culture in idealpolitik and realpolitik directions, following the non-linear development of strategic culture. Idealpolitik is described as a strategic culture that views international politics as a positive-sum game. In this case, violence is considered to be inefficient because conflicts are avoidable. Realpolitik, on the other hand, is completely opposite. In this case, hard and coercive strategies are preferred over accommodationist and cooperative strategies.³ It appears that those two opposite strategies reached a

¹ Dalgaard-Nielsen, A., „The Test of Strategic Culture: Germany, Pacifism and Pre-emptive Strikes,“ *Security Dialogue*, 36 (2005), 339–359.

² Tappe, J., & Doeser, F., „A machine learning approach to the study of German strategic culture,“ *Contemporary Security Policy*, 42 (2021), 450–474.

³ Tappe, J., & Doeser, F., „A machine learning approach to the study of German strategic culture,“, 463.

balance around 2001 with realpolitik gaining a higher degree of notice in comparison with the situation in the 1990s.

Political researcher Xue Mi concluded that even though some foundational elements of German strategic culture have been maintained, since 2014 it is showing signs of exhibited changes, especially in the field of geography of security concerns, understanding of security threats, and the role of Russia.⁴ This change is described as a shift toward a normative dimension that highlights the importance of values and rules. Therefore, it means that Germany's security concerns are no longer restricted to regional European issues and expand to further fields. It can be said that Germany began to understand that Russia poses a threat to global security, not only a European one and that instability in the old continent means destabilization of the world. Thus, Germany's role is not confined to regional security anymore and it is seen in its strategic culture.

Despite Xue Mi's optimism about changing strategic culture after 2014, some scholars have completely opposite opinions. In 2021 Bastian Giegerich and Maximilian Terhalle published a book on Germany's strategic culture calling it inadequate. These authors claim that the strategic culture of Germany until 2021 endangered Germany and its allies due to its inability to meet contemporary strategic challenges.⁵ It is claimed that Germany has a historic duty to defend the liberal values of the Western order instead of doctrinal rejection of the use of military force. Terhalle and Giegerich encourage Germany to adapt its strategic culture to conform to other Western nations and perceive the world through a strategic lens. In doing so Germany would establish a new security policy that is suitable to meet contemporary security challenges and remove the danger to some extent from itself and its allies.

On the 27th of February Federal Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholtz addressed the Bundestag and announced *Zeitenwende*, a historical turning point of German foreign and security policies. This turn brought high expectations and challenges that some would argue were not fulfilled one year after the famous speech was delivered. Previously mentioned Giegerich with another author Schreer concluded that while some progress was made in the geo-economic arena, the execution of the geopolitical part of the plan does not appear convincing.⁶ Authors doubt that the German government in fact understands Russia as a menace to national security which threatens to fail *Zeitenwende*'s promises. Scholars emphasize the importance of Bundeswehr reform as a major part of security policy change that would address key challenges of readiness and procurement.

⁴ Mi, X., „Mapping Continuity and Change in German Strategic Culture, 1999–2022,“ *German Politics*, (2023), 1–27.

⁵ Giegerich, B., & Terhalle, M., „Germany's troubled security policy,“ *Adelphi Series*, 58 (477) (2018), 41–62.

⁶ Giegerich, B., & Schreer, B., „*Zeitenwende* One Year On,“ *Survival*, 65 (2023), 37–42.

When learning about the strategic culture of Finland scholars base their arguments on Finnish security policies that date back to the 17th century King Gustavus Adolfus's military reform which was based on conscription and characterized by its high mobility.⁷ The creation of the so-called 'people's army' led to homeland defence using the population's knowledge of local geography and climactic conditions that are specific to the Nordic region. For centuries living near Russia which has dominated the neighbourhood as a great power the previously mentioned measures led to balancing behaviour that attempted to compensate for the asymmetrical dynamics of the state. At the time of the war with the Soviet Union Finland had already developed a neutrality-based strategic culture known for credible defence capabilities that would inflict high costs on the possible aggressor.

Howlett and Glenn also draw a conclusion on Finland's relationships with NATO concerning the country's non-alignment policy. It appears that the end of the Cold War also marked the end perception that Russia poses an imminent threat to national security. Thus, Finland became less constrained in terms of relationships with NATO which resulted in its participation in the 'Partnership for Peace' initiative.⁸ Authors conclude that strategic cultures tend to be slow when change is considered showing signs of continuity, however, ideas, discourse, and influence of new generations play an important role in changing the strategic cultures.

Henrikki Heikka proposed the idea that Finland's return to Europe was not a change of strategic culture but rather a continuation of Finn's centuries-long dedication to republican strategic culture. This theory is based on the principle of non-domination that was proclaimed through the defence of an anti-hegemonic political order prevailing in Europe.⁹ The author begins the article by describing the mainstream idea of Finland's security dilemma – to maintain strong defence capabilities in order to avoid the interests of the Soviet Union and NATO in Finland's territory. This kind of strategic culture is defined as a hard case lacking 'culture' in strategic culture. Republican strategic culture is defined as a culture that materializes anti-hegemonic strategic cultures, disperses power, and uses a variety of military tools to preserve anti-hegemonic peace settlements in Europe and the world order.

Antti Seppo and Tuomas Forsber picture Finland as a state whose strategic culture is mostly dependent on the smallness of the state, which led to a focus on national security instead of international security missions.¹⁰ The authors dig deeper explaining that national defence plays a

⁷ Howlett, D., & Glenn, J., „Epilogue: Nordic Strategic Culture,“ *Cooperation and Conflict*, 40 (2005), 121–140.

⁸ Howlett, D., & Glenn, J., „Epilogue: Nordic Strategic Culture,“ *Cooperation and Conflict*, 130.

⁹ Heikka, H., „Republican Realism: Finnish Strategic Culture in Historical Perspective,“ *Cooperation and Conflict*, 40 (2005), 91–119.

¹⁰ Koskimaa, V., & Raunio, T., „Effective and democratic policymaking during a major crisis: an in-depth analysis of Finland's decision to apply for NATO membership after Russia attacked Ukraine,“ *Journal of European Public Policy*, (2024), 1–24.

pivotal role in building Finland's national identity which is remembered positively due to the successful defence of the state against the Soviet Union during the Second World War. The text continues by stating that those events formed the strategic culture of Finland that to this day affects the development of security policies and answers questions such as how Finnish armed forces should be organized and even used. Furthermore, Finland's strategic culture is explained as a product of the Cold War era when Finland managed to maintain rather good relationships with the Soviet Union, mostly by choosing a non-alignment policy. It is said that understanding the fact that the Soviet Union was a great power, and that Finland was not made the security situation clear.

The Famous *Zeitenwende* speech was delivered by Olaf Scholtz in Bundestag, Finnish President Sauli Niinistö and Prime Minister Sana Marin held a joined press conference where it was stated that Finnish non-alignment policy needs to be reconsidered proposing to start a dialogue on potential membership in NATO.¹¹ The main reason behind the decision was named to be a rapid change in Finland's security environment. Society which previously was not supportive of the abandonment of neutrality suddenly became positive about the change. At the same time, governmental institutions such as the President, Prime Minister, and Eduskunta (Parliament of the Republic of Finland) had to make a united decision regarding the security situation of the state. Finland's NATO report did not directly recommend joining the alliance; however, it stated that potential membership is viewed in a positive light. This stance marked a change in Finnish security doctrine.

To conclude the literature review, there are some scholarly volumes written on the strategic culture of Germany and Finland. Those issues include explanations of how the strategic cultures formed, what influenced their development, and what problems they create nowadays. However, there are cases when authors have different opinions or provide explanations that oppose ideas of the other scholars. Also, most of the articles on the topic of strategic culture were written some time ago and do not take recent events and changed security situations into consideration. Thus, this thesis attempts to answer the question of how the strategic cultures of Germany and Finland changed and whether the change was a formal or practical one as well.

STRATEGIC CULTURE THEORY

For a long time, the world's security policy was formed around the aftermath of the Cold War which shaped the strategies of security development in various countries. It was the time when strategic culture studies gained attention as scholars rediscovered that culture does affect states'

¹¹ Seppo, A., & Forsberg, T., „Finland,“ in *Strategic Cultures in Europe*, ed. H. Biehl, B. Giegerich, and A. Jonas, (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013).

security strategies and their behavior in the international arena. To briefly introduce the concept of strategic culture and its importance before dwelling deeper into the matter, strategic culture is defined as: “A strategic culture is a number of shared beliefs, norms, and ideas within a given society that generate specific expectations about the respective community's preferences and actions in security and defence policy”.¹² Therefore, in the following chapter strategic culture and its effects on security policy will be analysed to understand the linkage and the causality of culture and national security policy.

Even though the period after the Cold War is considered to be the golden age of strategic culture studies as the theory was rediscovered after being forgotten for some time, philosophers from ancient times have already thought of it and made a connection between national security and culture in classic works. As Jeffrey S. Lantis wrote, when describing the Westphalian system Clausewitz defined three major elements of war: the government that sets objectives to be achieved; the army that fights the war; and the people (or the society) that supports it. At this moment, strategy plays a role not only in defeating the enemy and winning on a battlefield but also in the elimination of the enemies' morale.¹³ Here it is clear that the main elements of war are equally distributed without one getting more importance than others. Thus, people's support for the cause is as much necessary as the active fighting part or the ideas of the leadership. It is at this moment when culture starts to play its role in shaping security policy – through the society that either accepts the goals of the government or not.

One of the most notable scholars of strategic culture, Alistair Johnson, divided the theory into three generations of studies, each of them focusing on specific aspects of culture and serving its purposes by filling the gaps left untouched by the previous generation. The first generation emerged in the early 1980s and focused on explaining why the nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union was perceived differently on a strategic level by both sides.¹⁴ The theory highlights the importance of the cultural dimension, most importantly historical context, and its influence on strategic choices. Three levels of input into a state's strategic culture were defined: a macro-environmental level which focuses on geography and ethnocultural characteristics and history; a societal level made of social, economic, and political structures; and a micro level consisting of military institutions and the level of civil-military relations.¹⁵ This part is an important aspect of the research of the thesis as the mentioned levels of impact played an important role in constructing security policies of European states that are based on post-World War II realities. These experiences

¹² Biehl, H., Giegerich, B., and Jonas, A., *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 12–13.

¹³ Lantis, J. S., „Strategic Culture and National Security Policy,“ *International Studies Review*, 4 (2002), 87–113.

¹⁴ Johnston, Iain, Alastair, „Thinking about Strategic Culture,“ *International Security*, 19 (1995), 32–64.

¹⁵ Johnston, Iain, Alastair, „Thinking about Strategic Culture,“, 37.

strongly impacted Germany's and Finland's strategic cultural developments, such as Finnish neutrality or cautious German security policies that continued to shape their national security agendas for decades onwards.

The second generation of literature on a strategic culture that appeared in the mid-1980s noted the difference between what leaders are claiming to be doing and deeper motives for what they really do. Authors of the second generation see strategic culture as a tool to establish political hegemony in the decision-making process with which states legitimize the use of violence against assumed enemies.¹⁶ To simplify the claim, the second generation instrumentalizes strategic culture to serve the purposes of leaders and includes justification of violent actions in case the need arises. Even though scholars describe it as instrumental, it does not mean that it belongs to the political or military elites of the states. It is rather a product of historical experiences, like different states having experienced different historic developments as a result of exhibiting different strategic cultures or even languages of strategic culture.¹⁷ In this specific research paper, the second generation of studies will be applied when analysing the changed strategic behaviour of government officials following the Russian invasion to Ukraine in 2022, and the decisions they made.

The third generation of strategic culture studies that emerged in the 1990s is described as narrowly focused on specific strategic decisions as dependent variables, and rigorous or even eclectic in its formulation of ideational factors. While some academics utilize military culture, political-military culture, or organizational culture as their independent variables, all of them unanimously take realist structure as their aim and concentrate on situations where structural-materialist ideas of interest are unable to explain a given strategic decision.¹⁸ It is important to notice that the third generation of strategic culture escapes the tautological traps of the first generation by simply excluding behavior as an element of the approach. It leads to the conclusion that the cultural values of the third generation have a lesser historical foundation and are a result of more recent practices. It does not for this specific research project, it means that German and Finnish strategic cultures are less based on historical developments but are rather responses to modern experiences. Thus, it is not the past that shaped the strategic cultures of the mentioned states, and this research should focus on what has affected these countries lately. In light of the topic of the thesis, the main development that altered strategic cultures is Russian aggression, both rhetorical and practical.

While focusing on different aspects, the three generations of strategic culture attempt to define what in fact makes the concept, and what are the most important factors affecting the strategic culture of states. Thinking in terms of commonality between the three generations, while the first and the

¹⁶ Johnston, Iain, Alastair, „Thinking about Strategic Culture,“ , 39.

¹⁷ Klein, H., „Hegemony and Strategic Culture,“ *International Organization*, 54 (2000), 109–146.

¹⁸ Johnston, Iain, Alastair, „Thinking about Strategic Culture,“ , 41.

second generations pay major attention to historical development and its interpretation, the third one adds another dimension or layer to the foundations built by the two earlier generations. It encourages one to expand their focus on recent events and notice the impact on strategic culture development, an impact that is responsive to the dynamic policies of the international arena. Therefore, the three generations do not object nor contradict the influence of other generations but rather complement one another by filling the gaps. Therefore, all three generations will be used in this thesis adding valuable insights to the research from historical perspective, to strategic behaviour of government representatives and adaptability to recent events.

State identity is an important factor of national security policy that is influenced by cultural environment and that determines states' behavior and their basic character. Scholars highlight three levels of international cultural environments under which national security policies are constructed: formal institutions and/or security regimes. Belonging to certain alliances could be considered a form of institutionality, like NATO and OSCE (The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). The second layer is world political culture which includes rules of sovereignty, norms of international law, and standardized social and political technologies implemented by professional networks or social movements, such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International. Finally, the third layer focuses on international patterns of amity and enmity that political scientists believe affect cultural dimensions.¹⁹ Even though the authors have provided an example of the US having somewhat similar positions (geographically) to Canada and Cuba, one state is considered to be an ally while the other is portrayed as a threat. To apply this theory to the topic of the thesis, Germany, Finland, and Russia have opposing cultural environments, different political cultures, and follow dissimilar international patterns. This leads to clashing positions in terms of state identity which affects state behavior.

When thinking about strategic culture Alistair Johnson has struggled with the definition of the term. Mostly, because the word 'culture' is vague and hard to define. Some would agree that culture could be defined as "collectively held semi-conscious or unconscious images, assumptions, "codes," and "scripts" which define the external environment".²⁰ However, Johnson raises a question, if a definition of a culture is like the one provided above, what culture does in a behavioral sense? How does something that is a collection of symbols lead decision-makers responsible for national security policies to behavioral choices? Johnson has deduced that the level where preferences take over actions is the moment when strategic culture starts to affect behavioral choices.²¹ It means that states assume on an operational level what strategic options are the most efficient when their environment indicates a threat. Decision-makers begin to strategize what would work best for dealing with the assumed

¹⁹ Katzenstein, P. J., „The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics,“ *Foreign Affairs*, 76 (1997), 123.

²⁰ Johnston, Iain, Alastair, „Thinking about Strategic Culture,“ . 44.

²¹ Johnston, Iain, Alastair, „Thinking about Strategic Culture,“ ,44.

threat in terms of means: if the problem can be managed through diplomacy it does not require the use of force.

The main factors influencing strategic cultures of countries consist of such things as historical memory and experiences which include past defeats and victories.²² Another aspect to consider is the geopolitical environment which is affected by the geographical location of a state and strongly impacts the strategic decisions and behaviors of leaders.²³ For example, states located in hostile regions might prioritize their security more than countries in stable regions. Political systems and ideologies have an influence on the decision-making in the field of security policy, so, actors, shared narratives, threat perception, and identities shape the strategic culture of the state.²⁴ For instance, democratic nations might prioritize transparency, multilateralism, and cooperation while authoritarian regimes focus on control, secrecy, and one-sided actions. It is also important to consider military doctrines and capabilities of states as it is a crucial component of strategic culture theory that impacts states' readiness to adapt to changes and react to threats.²⁵ A state with well-developed technologies and military might choose a more assertive approach to foreign and security policy while countries with limited capabilities might opt for deterrence and defensive strategies. Finally, national identities and values have a strong influence over strategic culture.²⁶ Finland, which prioritized self-reliance was famous for its non-alignment policy while German strategic culture was influenced by international cooperation in the defence field since the Cold War era.

Another important aspect to consider when analyzing theories is whether the approach is top-down, meaning it is more influenced by leaders, elites, and policymakers, or bottom-up which is impacted by societal factors such as public opinion and cultural values. Strategic culture theory balances both approaches as factors influencing it including shared culture, historical experiences, values, and identities that rise from the societal level, as well as the role of leadership in shaping political system and military doctrine. The interlace of bottom-up and top-down approaches in Germany and Finland, the states that are democratic is visible, while in authoritarian countries top-down approach might be observed more often. So, the strategic culture approach is inherently both top-down and bottom-up. It recognizes that while leadership and institutional frameworks play a significant role in shaping strategic culture, individual interpretations and actions are equally vital in

²² Al-Rodhan, N., „Strategic Culture and Pragmatic National Interest,“ *Global Policy*, July 22, 2015, <https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/22/07/2015/strategic-culture-and-pragmatic-national-interest>.

²³ Al-Rodhan, N., „Strategic Culture and Pragmatic National Interest,“ *Global Policy*, July 22, 2015, <https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/22/07/2015/strategic-culture-and-pragmatic-national-interest>.

²⁴ Johnson, J. L., „Strategic Culture: Refining The Theoretical Construct,“ *Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office*, 2006, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Strategic-Culture%3A-Refining-the-Theoretical-Johnson/b6f5c3817f3d9d7389e9912f74eed238016ce302>.

²⁵ Johnston, Iain, Alastair, „Thinking about Strategic Culture,“, 30.

²⁶ Schühly, A. M., „The Influence of Culture on Strategic Management and Its Processes,“ in *Cultural Influences on the Process of Strategic Management*, MIR Series in International Business, (Cham: Springer, 2022).

constructing and evolving it. This duality allows for a more nuanced understanding of how strategic culture influences decision-making processes in organizations and states.

To conclude, strategic culture theory is complicated and intricate due to the complexity of what makes the definition of the term. It also is studied through what nowadays is called three generations of strategic culture studies, each of the generations focusing on different subjects to study and analyse. Combined together, from examining deep historical and geographical context, the correlation between political leaders' declarations of activity and what was actually done, and the study of more recent events surrounding states, it is possible to construct a picture that could explain the strategic culture of the chosen state. Taking a look at states' identities and civilizational belonging could also add a more thorough understanding of how these states construct their perceptions of threats and allies.

1. PRE-2022 STRATEGIC CULTURE OF GERMANY

In this part of the thesis focuses on the historical context of German foreign and security policy influenced by World War II experiences using a case study method. Pacifist approach to armed conflicts and their solutions, low military expenditures and energy dependence will be examined featuring the 1st generation of strategic culture theory which emphasises the importance of historical experiences to strategic decisions.

1.1 Historical Background and Pacifism

German foreign policy after the loss of World War II took a pacifist turn for decades ahead. It completely rejected war as a means to deal with international crises, no matter what initiated the conflict, who the victims are and what are the expectations of the other side. Most of the time, pacifist politicians advocate for diplomatic solutions, even offering to host negotiations or mediate the clashing sides' talks. This is what defined German politics in the international arena since the end of WWII.

Carrying the shame of wartime atrocities committed by the Third Reich, its successor the Federal Republic of Germany, already traumatized by war and its consequences was challenged again. The militarization of the Democratic Republic of Germany, the constant rivalry between the two worlds, Western liberal democracy vs Communism, with Berlin at the center of it left deep scars in German society and people's minds. The first fundamental lesson that Germany learned from its complicated history and the part the country played in WWII is „Never again“.²⁷ A promise that Germany will do everything in its power to stop armed conflicts and the consequences they bring. As Amrita Narlikar writes, the second lesson and imperative that formed German policy for the following decades was „never alone“ which pushed the state toward multilateralism.²⁸ In practice, those promises mean that Germany will choose diplomatic solutions over the use of military power (mostly through the EU or its predecessor the EC), so the atrocities of war do not repeat and that Germany will not fight alone (thus, will not be responsible alone).

It is said that the reunification of Germany in 1990 was met with complete military abstinence from conflicts outside of European borders as the mission of the Bundeswehr was understood as solely defence of Germany.²⁹ Following this path led Germany to be the first European country that categorically refused to participate in the Gulf War and aid its NATO allies in the US-led mission. The same history repeated in the Iraqi War, known as the Second Gulf War. However, there is one

²⁷ Narlikar, A., „Germany in the United Nations Security Council: Reforming Multilateralism,“ German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24812>.

²⁸ Narlikar, A., „Germany in the United Nations Security Council: Reforming Multilateralism,“, .2

²⁹ Dalgaard-Nielsen, A., „The Test of Strategic Culture: Germany, Pacifism and Pre-emptive Strikes,“ Security Dialogue, 36 (2005), 339–359, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010605057020>.

major difference between the stance of Germany during the period of both conflicts – contribution in other ways than military participation. In 1991 Germany allocated financial and material support for the US-led coalition while in 2003 the country engaged in a counter-coalition building process trying to attract other war sceptical states to support its position.³⁰ Hence, it is possible to claim that the more time has passed since the end of the Cold War, the further Germany went in its pacifist ideology. Having analyzed the German position toward the war in the Gulf author Anja Delgaard Nielsen derived her own definition of German security culture: „German security culture as the central values and operational beliefs behind the day-to-day positions of German decision-makers on specific out-of-area operations. Culture is conceived as a system of beliefs composed of self-perceptions (Germany’s role, interests, and obligations in international security), beliefs about the generalized other (aversions and threat perceptions), and operational beliefs about the efficacy and legitimacy of different ways of protecting German interests and dealing with the threat environment (the efficacy of diplomatic versus more forceful means)“³¹ This quote summarizes the paragraph by explaining that German strategic culture was formed by domestic factors such as interests, threat perceptions, and belief systems.

Contrary to the Gulf situation where Germans did not participate in military operations, the Bosnian war that took place between 1992 and 1995 is a different story. Germany joined the NATO mission and actively contributed militarily to the cause. Alice H. Cooper described this situation where the German position toward military intervention differed significantly and found one major factor distinguishing the two cases. The author suggests that even though both wars (in the Gulf and Bosnia) raised the question of whether the use of force was justifiable, „Never again“ and German history in WWII played its part.³² Apparently, the war in Bosnia had unequivocal elements of fascism such as concentration camps and ethnic cleansing programs that triggered Germans’ consciousness. Thus, the use of force and participation in NATO allies' missions became an appropriate response as a means to prevent fascism from spreading and doing more damage.

To conclude this subchapter, it is possible to say that the experience in WWII left deep impressions on German society that continued to affect its views on security and strategic culture. Later cases where Germany was asked to contribute to military force operations continue to prove the statement. Operations in the Gulf illustrate that if Germany does perceive a threat from a state it will not contribute in military ways even if the NATO allies ask and lead the mission. For those tasks, diplomatic ways should be employed rather than invasions. In the case of Bosnia though, where Germany did contribute to the allies' missions proves that the experience of WWII and fear of fascism

³⁰ Dalgaard-Nielsen, A., „The Test of Strategic Culture: Germany, Pacifism and Pre-emptive Strikes,“, 340.

³¹ Dalgaard-Nielsen, A., „The Test of Strategic Culture: Germany, Pacifism and Pre-emptive Strikes,“, 342.

³² Cooper, A. H., „When Just Causes Conflict With Accepted Means: The German Peace Movement And Military Intervention in Bosnia,“ *German Politics & Society*, 15 (1997), 99–118, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23737424>.

spreading in Europe encouraged Germans to act and stop the developments.

1.2 Financing the Bundeswehr

When analyzing strategic culture and its change it is important to review the financial side of the equation. It is necessary to understand how much financial resources Germany allocated before the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 to understand whether the situation was perceived as a possible threat to European security and stability. This subchapter will focus on the financial side of German security aiming to determine how has the funding for the military (the Bundeswehr) changed throughout the years since the Cold War to nowadays.

It is important to note that from 1945 to 2022, like most European states, Germany based its security policy and defense plans on NATO.³³ This plan perfectly aligned with the pacifist notion that rejects war as a means of dealing with conflicts. There is no need to allocate finances to something that the state does not believe in, thus there is no need to prepare. But in the case of a serious security threat, NATO allies will rush for German aid. The organization became the main security guarantor with Washington carrying the burden of financing European security. It allowed Germany to keep its military spending extremely low, meaning the Bundeswehr, the armed forces of Germany, faced major financial difficulties.

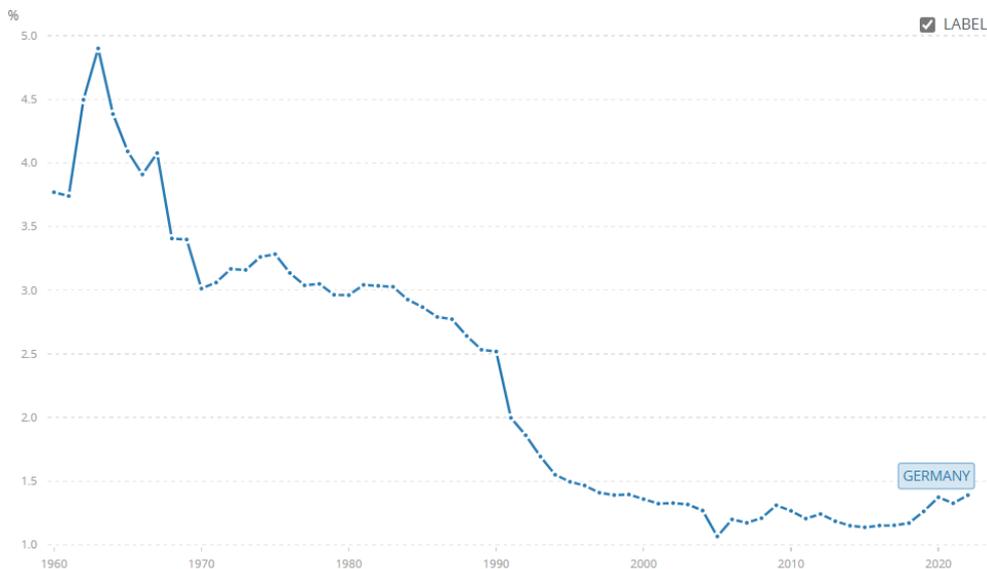
The Cold War years were the last time when Germany was seriously concerned about its security and allocated a significant percentage of GDP for the Bundeswehr's needs. According to the World Bank data³⁴, in 1963 the state provided 4.9 % of GDP, the mentioned amount was never reached again. Since then, it continued to decrease annually in 1966 dropping to 3.9 % to never return to the previous 4 %. In 1984 military expenditures dropped to 2.9 % and again, never returned to the previous 3 % of GDP. In 1992 Germany allocated 1.9 % which marked the beginning of decades ahead when military spending did not reach 2 % again. The decrease in military expenditures matches the end of the major global security issue – the Cold War. During previous decades Germany was forced to maintain a budget for the Bundeswehr in order to secure itself from the danger of the USSR. Once it disappeared the finances were allocated elsewhere, leaving the German military budget record-low.

To illustrate this predicament the World Bank offers statistical data on military expenses of the states where in 2005 Germany allocated 1.1 % of GDP towards its defence. From that year to 2022 the highest percentage of GDP to military expenditures was 1.4 % reached once in 2020. The

³³ Nissen, C., Banke, C. F. S., Schmidt, J. L., Olesen, M. R., Mouritzen, H., Rahbek-Clemmensen, J., Pedersen, R. B., Butler, G., & Andersen, L. R., „EU Security And Defence Policy,“ in *European Defence Cooperation And The Danish Defence Opt-Out: Report on the developments in the EU and Europe in the field of security and defence policy and their implications for Denmark* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2020), 25–39, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25193.9>.

³⁴World Bank, "Military expenditure as a percentage of GDP, Germany," World Bank Data, accessed December 5, 2025, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=DE>.

crucial years for European safety were 2008 marked by the Georgian War and 2014 known for Eastern Ukraine and the Crimean occupation, both initiated by Russia. During these years, Germany allocated 1.2 % and 1.1 % of GDP accordingly, which continued to be raised maximum of 0.1 % the following year. To demonstrate the situation visually, a table from the World Bank is provided.



Military expenditure (% of GDP) – Germany (World Bank data [Military expenditure \(% of GDP\) - Germany | Data](#))

In 2014 NATO member states, represented by the Heads of State or Government, reacted to the Ukraine War by agreeing to commit 2 % of GDP to defence spending. It was done to ensure Europe’s military readiness to react to security threats.³⁵ As it is visible from the table above, Germany has not reached the given number once since the agreement was made. The closest Germany got to keeping its word was in 2020 and 2022 when 1.4 % were allocated. According to Marcus Jaeger, a researcher from Internationale Politik Quarterly financially and economically Germany is capable of committing the agreed 2 % of GDP for defence but it is hard legally and politically.³⁶ Apparently, to allocate finances for military expenditures the government needs a coalition agreement and manage a Constitutional law that mandates to limit a „debt brake“ to 0.35 %

To conclude this subchapter, it is clear that Germany used to allocate high percentages of GDP

³⁵NATO, „Defence Expenditures and NATO’s 2% Guideline,“ NATO, accessed December 2, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_82793.htm

³⁶ „Why Germany Can and Should Increase Defense Spending,“ Internationale Politik Quarterly, accessed December 2, 2024, <https://www.ip-quarterly.com>.

to military expenditures during the Cold War years that continued to decrease significantly after it ended. Since 1995 the percentage has been quite constant, fluctuating slightly but never rising above 1.4 %. Most significant events to European security, 2008 and 2014 did not affect German positions significantly and the country maintained its low expenses for defence.

1.3 Energy Diplomacy

The pacifism of Germany was accompanied by the extensive search for ways to reduce the possibility of war through economic means. As the country does not have enough resources, especially gas, and oil, it has to rely on imports to ensure the supply. The Russian Federation appeared to be a good partner for Germany, capable of delivering large quantities of the necessary resources for an acceptable price. This strategic partnership allowed Germany to become the „civilian power“, the aftermath of WWII when Germany decided to concentrate its power and abilities on economic growth and industrialization.

Mariusz Ruszel, a Polish expert in energy economics, declared that Germany understood its energy security as ensuring a stable supply of resources at an affordable price.³⁷ It is interesting that according to this statement, energy security is not a complete independence or an ability to get resources from many suppliers but an economic compromise. However, energy security is not separate from security which translates to military ties and engagements, and that are easy to weaken when not matched. Russia used the Soviet strategy of weakening and dividing the allies in order to have an upper hand in geopolitical matters.³⁸ This tactic creates a conflict between the allies that profit from the import of resources from Russia and those that consider it a threat and try to differentiate energy suppliers and be independent.

The beginning of Germany's dependence on Russian gas resources lies within the Nord Stream 1 project that was planned in 2005. For Russia it helped to solve 2 problems at once: firstly, the new pipeline allowed Russia to bypass Ukraine which was profiting from being the main transit country of gas supplementing its budget significantly and increasing political independence; secondly, the pipeline tied Europe, especially Germany, to Russia as it became dependent on it to provide the necessary amounts of gas.³⁹ Ilya Zaslavskiy claims that Nord Stream 1 was not as profitable for Russia as it expected to be and did not meet the European demand, however, it did help to reach previously mentioned goals for Kremlin. At the time, it was not an ideal partnership but there was no concrete evidence of Russia posing a threat to European security, most of the warnings could

³⁷ Ruszel, M., „Strategic Goals of Energy Security Policy of The Federal Republic of Germany,“ *Politeja*, 50/5 (2017), 113–130, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26564287>.

³⁸ Ozawa, M., & Iftimie, I. A., „Russia's Energy Policy as a Foreign Policy Instrument,“ in *Russia's Energy Policy: Dependence, Networks and Special Relationships* (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2020), 13–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27709.8>.

³⁹ Zaslavskiy, I., „The Kremlin's Gas Games in Europe: Implications for Policy Makers,“ *Atlantic Council*, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17117>.

have been based on guesses and assumptions by states that previously suffered from the Kremlin regime.

European security situation changed significantly with Russian invasions to other European states. While the war in Georgia did not cause substantial reactions from the international community, the case of the occupation of territories in Ukraine in 2014 is a different situation. European countries began to perceive Russia as a threat, strive for energy independence and even increase financial the defence sector. Germany, on the other hand, maintained a rather positive position toward Russia which led to making concessions for the purpose of building another pipeline for natural gas – Nord Stream 2. This project continued to further complicate relations between the allies and partners as the pipeline bypassed a few European states that had the infrastructure to deliver the product, similar to what Nord Stream 1 did with Ukraine. This project violated fair competitiveness principles allowing Germany to profit while Central and Eastern European countries faced losses.⁴⁰

Germany had planned on becoming the energy distribution center of Europe which was possible due to a well-developed infrastructure. Germany had pipeline connections to the surrounding states which would have allowed it to fulfil this goal which was strengthened by favourable import prices. While Central and Eastern European states bought natural gas from Gazprom (Russia) at higher prices, Germany did not face such illegal practices.⁴¹ It allowed Germany to buy more gas at a cheap price and distribute the supply to other states that would have to pay more. The position of the natural gas distribution center required to ensure the constant supply that the partnership with Russia offered, thus making Germany dependent energetically and economically.

To summarize this subchapter, Germany understood energy security as the ability to ensure a stable supply of gas at an acceptable price rather than energy independence and differentiation of suppliers. It resulted in building Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines that made Germany dependent on Russian gas supply but also fed the German ambition to become industrial and economic power. It also helped Russia to weaken and divide allies' positions as doing business with Russia became controversial, not only in terms of security but also fair competition. Thus, Russia employed an old Soviet tactic that Europe, and Germany, failed to recognize or chose to ignore. German energy diplomacy and strategic partnership with Russia in the energy sector allowed Germans to profit in the short term, but the question of whether it will not cost more in the future remains unanswered.

⁴⁰ Zaslavskiy, I., „The Kremlin’s Gas Games in Europe: Implications for Policy Makers,“.

⁴¹ Ruszel, M., „Strategic Goals of Energy Security Policy of The Federal Republic of Germany,“ *Politeja*, 50/5 (2017), 113–130, 122–123, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26564287>.

2. POST-2022 STRATEGIC CULTURE OF GERMANY

On the 27th of February, 2022 three days after Russia invaded Ukraine German Chancellor Olaf Scholz delivered a speech that started what became known as the *Zeitenwende*, or „the turning point“ of German foreign and security policy. Thus, this chapter focuses on German strategic culture change after the *Zeitenwende* speech using discourse analysis method, complemented by document analysis, and tries to determine whether the promised change happened and to what extent. Interview with a Lithuanian diplomat was conducted to inspect the findings of the thesis. The 2nd and 3rd generations of strategic culture theory was applied when analysing the change with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 serving as a catalyser to the transformation and the recent event that shaped the strategic culture and behaviour of government officials.

2.1 *The Zeitenwende Speech and the Turning Point*

The *Zeitenwende* speech delivered by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to the Bundestag as a response to the wide-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine signified a major shift in German foreign and security policy. The so-called „historical turning point“ marked a deep break in German and European relations with Russia which was considered an important partner until the invasion. The first major change mentioned in Scholz’s speech was a public and official condemnation of the Russian war against Ukraine, naming the war inhuman, a violation of international law, impossible to justify, and calling Putin’s regime oppressive.⁴² It is an important change of rhetoric from the speech delivered by then-Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2014 when the war in Ukraine, the reason behind the statement, was shadowed by thoughts about changing world and security meaning with a short mention of violated Ukraine’s territorial integrity and unity.⁴³ Careful statement of 2014 which was designed to disguise disapproval of Moscow's actions toward the sovereign European states was changed by a strong position that clearly condemned the war and challenged Putin’s regime directly. It signifies a changing strategic culture where Russia is viewed as an oppressor rather than a partner that Europe should please.

Scholz announced five courses of action for Germany to take that were the essence of the *Zeitenwende* and the real features of the transformation. Firstly – support for Ukraine in a desperate situation including weapons for the country’s defence as the only possible response.⁴⁴ According to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy data, Germany ranks 2nd in total monetary support for

⁴² Scholz, O., „Policy Statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag,“ February 27, 2022, Berlin, accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.bundestkanzler.de>.

⁴³ Merkel, A., „Policy Statement by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel on the Situation in Ukraine,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.bundestkanzler.de>.

⁴⁴ Scholz, O., „Policy Statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag, 27 February 2022 in Berlin,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.bundestkanzler.de>.

Ukraine (15.692bn €) and 17th in total support in percentage of GDP (0.396%). To dive deeper into allocations, Kiel Institute's data shows that in military support Germany maintains its ranks the same as in total allocations, making monetary value 11.043bn € (2nd) and percentage of GDP 0.279% (17th). Financial allocations are 1.407bn € which grants a 5th place while it equals to 0.036% of GDP and grants a 16th place. In humanitarian support, Germany ranks 2nd in monetary value with 3.243bn € which translates to 0.082% of GDP, and 7th place. From the numbers, it appears that Germany keeps its word on support for Ukraine in a desperate situation, distributing allocations to the most needed spheres. However, military support is questionable as sometimes decisions to deliver weapons take a long time to adopt and require pressure from NATO allies, mainly the US.⁴⁵ It proves that even though Germany is providing significant aid to Ukraine and keeps the promise given in the Zeitenwende speech, there are areas where it could do more, especially considering the size of the German economy (smaller states provide more allocations in GDP) and European security situation. Hence, the strategic culture is changing according to the 2nd course of action suggested in the speech, however, considering this point the process is slow and has room for improvement.

The second course of action talks about diverting Putin from the path of war. An interesting aspect is that this point addressed Putin specifically.⁴⁶ It was not directed at Russia as a state, Moscow as the capital, or the Kremlin as the decision-making center but at Putin personally. It shows that he is seen as a responsible party and the whole country and regime is associated with him first. This leads to the essence of the second course – sanctions on an unprecedented scale toward oligarchs, Russian businesses, banks, and technology.⁴⁷ Sanctions were designed to affect specific individuals, most of them close to Putin, so the regime would feel the consequences, not the Russian people. As stated by Chancellor Scholz, the reconciliation of the German and Russian people after WWII remains an important goal, signaling the continuous importance of the 1st generation of strategic culture despite recent events. True to its word, Germany did implement sanctions on Russia and supported them on the EU level to a certain extent. However, in June 2024 Berlin blocked the adoption of new EU-level sanctions targeting liquified natural gas.⁴⁸ Also, it was mentioned that Germany has been standing in the way of closing a loophole that allowed the transit of luxurious products to Russia through Belarus. Therefore, even though Germany did implement sanctions on both, the national and EU levels, it could be more thorough and precise.

It was understood what danger Russia's war in Ukraine caused to international security and

⁴⁵ „Germany Makes U-Turn on Sending Heavy Weaponry to Ukraine,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/b42f0dee-4ec2-4ba4-99f9-0ed760cd408e>.

⁴⁶ Scholz, O., „Policy Statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag, 27 February 2022 in Berlin,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.bundestkanzler.de>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ „Germany Blocks First-Ever Sanctions on Russian Gas – POLITICO,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/>.

stability, especially in Europe. Hence, the third course of action mentioned in the *Zeitenwende* speech revolved around the idea that it is necessary to prevent Putin's war from moving over to other European countries with the possibility of involving a NATO member-state. Scholz has noted that Germany will maintain its unconditional collective defence obligations to NATO, emphasizing the security of the Central and Eastern European countries.⁴⁹ This course of action consists of five gestures that Germany did to demonstrate its determination with actions: firstly, it was mentioned that Germany deployed additional troops to Lithuania where they lead the NATO battlegroup; secondly, Germany has extended and enhanced their participation in the police mission in Romania, a state which borders Ukraine and thus, has a complicated security situation especially concerning airspace; thirdly, Scholz has expressed willingness of Germany to contribute to the establishment of new NATO unit in Slovakia, another country bordering war-torn Ukraine; fourthly, German navy is told to be helping to secure three seas that are most important to Europe: Baltic, North and the Mediterranean with additional vessels and, finally, the Chancellor expressed German willingness to participate in the defense of NATO allies' airspace with anti-aircraft missiles, a technology proven to hold a significant importance in Russia's war against Ukraine.⁵⁰ It was a significant change for Germany to have their soldiers in another European country that was not at war, thus deploying troops to Lithuania and expanding military personnel was an important factor. Therefore, the strategic culture that Germany has had since the end of WWII which ensured the state's security in NATO and allowed little engagement was changed by the strategic culture that deepened and expanded Germany's contributions to collective defence with the alliance. It is another example of how recent events help to shape and adapt strategic culture to the state's needs in a constructive way.

When talking about contributions to NATO it is important not to forget the national defence sector which tells not only what a country is doing for the collective needs of the alliance but for its own benefit. As it was established in the previous chapter, Germany led a pacifist and anti-militarist strategic culture as a result of its experiences in WWII. One of the main features of this strategy was the low military expenditure that Germany has maintained for decades. In the *Zeitenwende* speech, Chancellor Scholz stated that Bundeswehr needs new and strong capabilities to do what is needed to secure peace in Europe: „[...] we need aeroplanes that fly, ships that can set out to sea and soldiers who are optimally equipped for their missions”.⁵¹ The fourth point of strengthening national armed forces required financing which in the *Zeitenwende* speech was granted in the form of a one-off sum of 100 billion Euros and a goal of achieving 2 % of GDP toward defence after a year. Scholz also

⁴⁹ Scholz, O., „Policy Statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag, 27 February 2022 in Berlin,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.bundestkanzler.de>.

⁵⁰ Scholz, O., „Policy Statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag, 27 February 2022 in Berlin,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.bundestkanzler.de>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

addressed parliamentary groups of the Bundestag to secure the special fund in the Basic Law of Germany. The last time the Constitution of Germany was amended was in 2014 which means that changes to the Basic Law were not implemented as well as the promised number of GDP which in 2023 reached 1,5 %⁵². Moreover, there is no information on what Germany will do after 100 billion Euros is used and there will not be additional funds for the Bundeswehr needs. Therefore, even though it is a positive development to increase military expenditure by creating a special fund and planning an increase of GDP in spending, it is not enough. It is not said whether Germany expects to modernize its forces enough with 100 billion euros or whether additional funding will be required when the mentioned sum is used. Hence, concerning Bundeswehr's finances, the strategic culture appears to be changing slowly, without long-term planning, and already failing to achieve some goals.

Finances are a complicated topic due to the 2009 balanced budget amendment or the debt brake implemented by the first Angela Merkel cabinet which ruled that the German annual budget deficit should not exceed 0,35 % of GDP.⁵³ In 2024 Bundesbank president Joachim Nagel suggested reforming the debt brake due to a stagnant economy but nothing was achieved yet. Certain exceptions are allowed, as in 2020 when the amendment was suspended in order to allow Germany to deal with the costs of the COVID-19 pandemic. The same tactic was used in 2022 and 2023 to ensure a one-off sum of 100 billion Euros fund to modernize the Bundeswehr and aid the economy.⁵⁴ So, it is possible to work around the law and have a bigger budget deficit but this decision requires a parliamentary majority to pass and the government has to do additional work every time it is needed during specific circumstances.

Finally, the fifth course of action mentioned by Scholz in the Zeitenwende speech focused on the energy sector and German dependence on individual suppliers. Chancellor promised to do more in order to differentiate energy supply as it is a crucial step to achieve secure energy imports.⁵⁵ An important part of the speech was given to renewable resources and climate-neutral policy, aiming for Germany to become carbon-neutral by 2045. It is clear that Germany sees its future in the energy sector through the climate change prism and addresses modern global challenges. On the other hand, renewable resources provide ground to refuse the Russian supply of natural gas and oil, the resources Germany became dependent on Russia for. Furthermore, Germany made a decision to rapidly build two Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals in Brunsbüttel and Wilhelmshaven as a long-term

⁵² „German Armed Forces Overview: Military Size, Army Structure,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.defenseadvancement.com/resources/overview-of-the-german-armed-forces/>.

⁵³ „Germany's Debt Brake and the Art of Fantasy Budgeting,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2024/07/11/germanys-debt-brake-and-the-art-of-fantasy-budgeting>.

⁵⁴ „Germany's Cabinet Agrees to Lift Debt Brake Again for 2023,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-cabinet-agrees-to-lift-debt-brake-again-for-2023/a-67564655>.

⁵⁵ Scholz, O., „Policy Statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag, 27 February 2022 in Berlin,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.bundestkanzler.de>.

solution to ensure energy security. The terminals that today store gas later could be used to import green hydrogen.⁵⁶ Therefore, it appears that in the energy sector German strategic culture has changed significantly, from dependence on Russian resources to suppliers' differentiation and renewable energy. Without refusing its primary idea of being a European stronghold of the economy and industry Germany is looking forward to maintaining this position with environmentally friendly measures that not only help to fight climate change but also ensure energy security.

Concerning Nord Stream pipelines, in 2024 two days before the war in Ukraine began Chancellor Scholz ordered the Ministry of the Economy to withdraw a supply security report on NS2, a crucial part of the certification process putting the launch on hold.⁵⁷ It was a measure taken as a response to Putin recognizing two breakaway regions of Ukraine, Donetsk and Luhansk. On September 26, 2022, a sabotage act severely damaged NS1 and a section of NS2 pipelines, completely stopped the processes with Ukraine pointed as the responsible party for the attack⁵⁸. Even though operational processes were not active during the explosions, and Germany was not receiving gas via pipelines at that moment, the situation forced authorities to take the energy security question to another level demonstrating the vulnerability of infrastructure.

To conclude this chapter analysing the *Zeitenwende* speech, German strategic culture did change due to the Russian war in Ukraine, igniting developments in military and energy fields. True to its promise, Germany does support Ukraine financially and militarily (weapons), supports sanctions on the EU level, implements them on a national level, and increased its contributions to NATO initiatives. Germany also issued a one-off sum of 100 billion Euros for the Bundeswehr's modernization and began energy sector differentiation with renewable resources. However, the military sphere remains problematic as the preferred NATO standard was not reached as planned with a lack of long-term vision toward financing Bundeswehr when the the 100 billion Euro fund will be emptied. The energy security sphere is the most transformed one, changing from complete dependency on Russian resources to building LNGs and turning to renewable sources. Hence, the level of change of strategic culture differs depending on a field but all of Scholz's mentioned courses of action were acted upon and moved forward.

2.2. National security strategy

German government led by Chancellor Olaf Scholz has published a National Security Strategy published in June 2023 following strategic changes encouraged by the *Zeitenwende*. It is the newest available document concerning Germany's foreign and security policy. The document provides

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ „Gas Pipeline Nord Stream 2: Links Germany and Russia, Splits Europe,“ accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.cleanenergywire.org/factsheets/gas-pipeline-nord-stream-2-links-germany-russia-splits-europe>

⁵⁸ „Nord Stream Sabotage: How Are Key Players Reacting?“, accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/nord-stream-sabotage-how-are-key-players-reacting/a-69964635>.

insight into the direction that German security policy is following by outlining strategic objectives, and plans related to national security. Considering the Zeitenwende speech to had to mark a turning point in German strategic culture, the mentioned report will be examined using a document analysis method. This would help to understand if the strategic changes mentioned in the Zeitenwende speech were profound and whether they were reflected in the national security strategy.

At the beginning of the document, the Strategy is defined in three words: robust, resilient, and sustainable.⁵⁹ A robust strategy means that Germany is prepared to defend peace and freedom within the state while maintaining commitments to NATO and the EU with national and collective defence as a core task. Resilience is defined as respect for human rights, rule-based order, democracy, and freedoms that are ensured in German society. Also, it is stated that competitiveness is based on innovativeness and technological sovereignty. Sustainability stands for fighting climate change, transformation of agriculture, and swift reaction to health crises and pandemics. It appears that the National Security Strategy is divided into three major spheres, and this subchapter will focus on the „robust“ part that analyses national and collective defence strategy.

In the part called „Our security identity“ German history is reminded noting that in the early years, the Federal Republic received help that allowed to build the prosperous state that Germany is today. Due to this reason, it bears a special responsibility to ensure European security, peace, and stability.⁶⁰ This point proves that Germany continues to be influenced by its complicated history and it is reflected in strategic planning, especially in the field of security. Hence, the 1st generation of Alistair Johnson’s strategic culture theory maintains its importance in German policy-making and has to be taken into consideration when analysing the security strategy of Germany.

In response to the changing security landscape in Europe, the federal government strengthened the Bundeswehr’s defence capabilities with a special fund (100 billion Euros) that would close the technological gap and enhance the capabilities of the armed forces.⁶¹ It is mentioned that Germany will allocate 2 % of its GDP to defence needs over a multi-year period which will work in part with the special fund. Therefore, the German government is determined to make Bundeswehr one of the most effective conventional armed forces in Europe which is able to respond to security threats rapidly. True to the set goal, 2.1 % of GDP was allocated for defence in 2024⁶² demonstrating that planning made in the National Security Strategy bears results. This example illustrates a significant shift from a previously cautious strategic culture to a more robust one.

⁵⁹ „National Security Strategy: Robust. Resilient. Sustainable. Integrated Security for Germany,“ accessed January 3, 2024, <https://www.nationalesicherheitsstrategie.de/National-Security-Strategy-EN.pdf>.

⁶⁰ „National Security Strategy: Robust. Resilient. Sustainable. Integrated Security for Germany,“ accessed January 3, 2024, <https://www.nationalesicherheitsstrategie.de/National-Security-Strategy-EN.pdf>, 19.

⁶¹ Ibid, 33.

⁶² MSN, “Germany Aims to Boost Defense Spending to 3.5% of GDP,” MSN News, accessed January 3, 2025, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/germany-aims-to-boost-defense-spending-to-35-of-gdp/ar-AA1wXaqH>.

In the Strategy the Bundeswehr is regarded as the cornerstone of both, national and collective defence, requiring Germany to expand its military presence across Europe. It means that the German brigade is planned to be deployed to Lithuania and join the NATO mission of strengthening the Eastern flank. It is noted that German commitment to NATO is unwavering and their obligations within the Alliance remain steadfast. Moreover, it is stated that The Federal Government is dedicated to enhancing NATO capabilities and executing all aspects of the Alliance's Strategic Concept from June 2022, which includes human security.⁶³ Thus, it is possible to claim that Germany is returning its focus on commitments to the alliance and its role in ensuring peace and stability in Europe.

Under the chapter on Resilience, the National Security Strategy focuses on energy security questions, stating that the government will try to reduce one-sided dependencies by turning toward green energy and resource efficiency. Although the issues of dependence are expected to be reduced, Germany does not intend to cease fossil fuel imports but instead plans to diversify the sources.⁶⁴ These statements coincide with Scholz's Zeitenwende speech where it was claimed that Germany's energy future lies in green energy and the diversification of energy suppliers. The intent to continue fossil fuel imports demonstrates that Germany plans to maintain its status as an economic and industrial center of Europe.

The National Security Strategy is complemented by another document published by the German government, the Defence Policy Guidelines 2023 where it is claimed that the Zeitenwende was provoked by the Russian war in Ukraine.⁶⁵ According to the document, the war encouraged Germany to reconstruct its security policy which includes focusing on the Bundeswehr as a national and collective defence guarantor and a core instrument of security policy. Robustness and resilience are two keywords used to describe what the armed forces of Germany have to demonstrate to comply with new security challenges. Also, it calls for a common approach binding the government and the society to achieve integrated security. The permanent deployment of a brigade in Lithuania is called to be unprecedented in the history of the Bundeswehr and that serves as a significant demonstration of the Alliance's collective strength.⁶⁶ A hope is that in the future, forward presence will become standard practice for the Bundeswehr, signifying a strategic reorientation was expressed. It shows that Germany has profoundly transformed its approach to the security situation and is adapting its policies to meet modern security challenges.

The 2023 Defence Policy Guidelines of Germany emphasize a significant shift in the

⁶³ National Security Strategy: Robust. Resilient. Sustainable. Integrated Security for Germany,“ accessed January 3, 2024, <https://www.nationalesicherheitsstrategie.de/National-Security-Strategy-EN.pdf>, 33.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 54

⁶⁵ Federal Ministry of Defence, Defence Policy Guidelines 2023 (Germany: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2023), accessed January 3, 2025, <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/5702804/7ee6065595ceb56b8bd13cbf44659582/defence-policy-guidelines-2023-data.pdf>, 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 9.

Bundeswehr's strategic orientation, focusing on national and collective defence. The guidelines highlight the necessity of modernizing the Bundeswehr to ensure its readiness and effectiveness in responding to current and future security challenges. This includes increasing defence spending, enhancing military capabilities, and ensuring the Bundeswehr is equipped with the necessary resources and infrastructure.⁶⁷ Similarly to the National Security Strategy, the Defence Policy Guidelines note that a key objective is to allocate at least 2% of Germany's GDP to defence spending, in line with NATO Capability Targets and the creation of a special fund (100 billion Euros). Therefore, the German government focuses on a significant increase in defence spending, efficient procurement processes, and close cooperation with the defence industry to ensure the Bundeswehr's capacity to meet security challenges.

Defence Policy Guidelines emphasize a steadfast commitment of Germany to NATO and the importance of collective defence. The document stresses the need for a comprehensive and internationally oriented defence policy, which involves close cooperation with NATO allies on training, exercises, and armament.⁶⁸ By prioritizing these efforts, Germany reaffirms its dedication to fulfilling its obligations within NATO and contributing to the security and stability of the Alliance. Moreover, this commitment highlights Germany's role in maintaining peace and security in Europe and the global arena, in alignment with NATO's strategic objectives. This way Germany also strengthens the European pillar in the context of NATO by emphasizing the Bundeswehr's role as guarantor of security and stability in the continent. It is an important change from the previous policy which drove German armed forces toward international crisis management operations abroad⁶⁹ but now is focusing on returning the forces to their primary task – defence and deterrence of Germany and the Alliance.

To conclude the document analysis, the National Security Strategy and the Defence Policy Guidelines underline the importance of the Bundeswehr as a core of the security policy, a guarantor of defence and deterrence. To strengthen the armed forces Germany raised an objective to increase financing by allocating 2 % of GDP and creating a one-off special fund which will help to reach the recommended capability target of NATO, modernize its military, and improve preparedness for nowadays security challenges. Germany sees itself as a benefactor of NATO's protection during the Cold War, thus it is important to become a donor state of providing security having in mind the changed circumstances. The *Zeitenwende* is named a result of Russian war in Ukraine in 2022 which changed the security situation in Europe, thus required a response.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 13-15.

⁶⁸ Federal Ministry of Defence, Defence Policy Guidelines 2023 (Germany: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2023), accessed January 3, 2025, <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/5702804/7ee6065595ceb56b8bd13cbf44659582/defence-policy-guidelines-2023-data.pdf>, 15-16.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 6.

2.3 Interview results

As a part of the research an interview with a Lithuanian diplomat working with Germany file on the topic of Germany's strategic culture change after the war in Ukraine began was conducted. Mr. Saulius Kalvelis, a senior counsellor at the Directorate for European Bilateral and Regional Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania was interviewed. Overall, 9 questions in relation to the topic of the thesis were asked. This subchapter aims to examine the results of the interview and understand whether the answers confirm the research results.

The first question of the interview focused on the most important defence policy changes that Germany implemented since the beginning of the Russian invasion to Ukraine. Mr. Kalvelis said that Berlin made a great progress in shifting its foreign and security policy. Two factors were mentioned as a sign of the change: decision to create a special fund (100 billion Euros) and decision to allocate 2 % of GDP for defence needs.⁷⁰ The diplomat mentioned a survey conducted in late 2024 according to which around 70 % of population supported the decision to increase defence spending. It confirms what was founded by doing discourse and document analysis, that the most significant updates reflecting changing foreign and security policy were decisions to increase finances allocated for the Bundeswehr. However, Mr. Kalvelis also spoke about the fact that the 100 billion Euros fund might not be enough to satisfy the needs of the military. This issue was addressed in the research as well, it was noted that there was no plan made for when the fund is used, neither in the National Security Strategy 2023 nor in the Defence Policy Guidelines 2023.

When asked about the energy security and German dependence on the Russian gas, Mr. Kalvelis expressed that Germany went from the biggest importer of the Russian resources to building LNG terminals and diversifying their energy suppliers. New contracts with Norway and Gulf countries were mentioned.⁷¹ This line confirms the result of the research stating that Germany achieve progress in the energy field by refusing Russian resources, finding new gas suppliers and building infrastructure projects that will benefit the state now and in the future. The diplomat also mentioned the changed relations between Germany and Russia in trade which decreased significantly. He called bilateral relations with Russia a "key part of [German] strategic culture" that ended in 2022, and sanctions policy was an important factor in this change. It appears that the decision to implement sanctions to Russia was a big step for Germany that altered strategic culture of the state.

To a question about long-term goals of Germany regarding security policy Mr. Kalvelis answered that German non-nuclear status will not allow the state to become a guarantor of European security. According to the diplomat, the deployment of a brigade in Lithuania is a valuable addition

⁷⁰ Annex 1, 61.

⁷¹ Annex 1, 61.

to changing security situation in Europe.⁷² However, Mr. Kalvelis expressed that Germany is still somewhat hesitant to take on a leading role in Europe, especially when security matters are discussed.⁷³ Having found that Germany has an ambition to be a core security provider to Europe, the answer indicates that there is space to improve the strategy. As a reason behind the German reluctance to take initiative, Mr. Kalvelis mentioned its complicated history and collective memory of the Holocaust that continue to strongly influence the German society. It proves that the historical context remains an important factor when foreign and security policy strategy is concerned.

Another positive change noted by Mr. Kalvelis is the decision of the German government to send weapons to Ukraine. It is a change from the previous policy of never sending weapons to conflict areas.⁷⁴ The fact that Germany became a largest weapons supplier to Ukraine in Europe signals a positive step toward the changed strategic culture. Here, the diplomat expressed a concern that finances will play an important role, and Germany needs to maintain its focus on security policy and defence to achieve operational readiness. In the research it was founded that there is no plan for further financing after the special fund will be used which prompts doubts whether the actions correlate with security ambitions. However, strong support for Ukraine

To conclude, the interview confirmed many aspects of the research stating that German strategic culture has changed since the *Zeitenwende* began. The most important changes include increased military expenditures, like achieving the recommended 2 % of GDP and creation of the special fund. The changed energy policy is confirmed to be one of the greatest changes that stopped German dependence on the Russian resources which resulted in new contracts of supply and new infrastructure projects. However, certain challenges like financing and historical context influence continue to strongly affect foreign and security policy of Germany.

3. PRE-2022 STRATEGIC CULTURE OF FINLAND

This chapter of the thesis aims to analyse the strategic culture of Finland prior to 2022 Russian invasion to Ukraine using a case study approach. Historical context of neutrality policy, the influence of self-reliance on military expenditures, and energy security will be analysed as a part of broader Finnish foreign and security policy framework, employing the 1st generation of strategic culture theory.

3.1 Non-alignment policy of Finland

After the end of WWII when most of the European borders were settled Finland happened to

⁷² Annex 1, 61.

⁷³ Annex 1, 62.

⁷⁴ Annex 1, 62.

have 1,300 kilometres long border with the Soviet Union. It not only made Finland to be a periphery of the Western world but also situated the state in the influence sphere of the USSR. To secure the fragile situation in 1948 the “Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance” was signed by both parties ensuring that Finland would not join military alliances led by the Western allies, most importantly the US. This agreement forced Finland to maintain neutrality and this way strongly restricted its foreign affairs options as other organizations were also included on the list, such as the EU and OECD with only exception made to join the UN.⁷⁵

Finland joined the EU in 1995 and the OECD in 1969, meaning it took decades to join these international organizations. Nevertheless, Finland’s choice to become a member state of the EU and OECD, as well as the previously mentioned UN shows that the state has been leaning toward the Western World. Anna-Lena Kirch described Finland joining the EU as abandoning the stance of political neutrality but retaining formal military non-alignment.⁷⁶ This approach allowed Finland to maintain good bilateral relations with Russia, an important trade partner, but also increase security which Finland thought was guaranteed by the EU. Scholar Henrikki Heikka connected Finland’s loss of political neutrality and European direction with republican realism, a strategic culture assigned to Finland, based on the principles of non-domination and the defence of the non-hegemonic political order.⁷⁷ According to the author, Russia (then the USSR) has never accepted republican ideas which have influenced Finland to continue with this type of strategic culture.

Finland has a vast territory however its limited population makes it a small country. Its smallness could be defined by already mentioned moderate population size which results in little influence in organizations like the EU’s Council of Ministers or European Parliament where the number of votes is dictated by the size of states’ populations; and limited resources that are available.⁷⁸ Being a small state strongly influenced Finland’s identity which also resulted in certain foreign and security policy decisions, making it rely on international organizations to ensure its security, and encouraged an overall Nordic cooperation. Becoming a member state of the EU for Finland meant an improved security situation and guarantees which was necessary due to the continuous non-alignment policy.

Another important part to consider when analyzing the strategic culture of a state is threat assessment, or in other words, what does the country consider to be a threat? Finland, in the post-Cold War era determined that its security might be threatened not only by military forces of other

⁷⁵ A.-L. Kirch, “The End of Neutrality and Non-Alignment?: Finland Is Seeking Stronger Nordic and Regional Cooperation in Its Foreign and Security Policy,” in *“Small” States in International Politics*, ed. G. Wahlers (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2015), 6–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10119.4>.

⁷⁶ A.-L. Kirch, “The End of Neutrality and Non-Alignment?,” 7.

⁷⁷ Heikka Henrikki, “Republican Realism: Finnish Strategic Culture in Historical Perspective,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 40 (2005): 91–119, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45084416>.

⁷⁸ A.-L. Kirch, “The End of Neutrality and Non-Alignment?.”

states, regional conflicts, organized crime groups, terrorism, but also climate change, epidemics, environmental and technological factors.⁷⁹ This observation leads to the conclusion that Finland's understanding of threats to national security is broad, covering many different areas and adapted to a period. However, despite the wide range of threat assessments, before 2014 Russia was perceived as a state that sought cooperation with Europe with a tendency to concerning political and societal developments.⁸⁰ Therefore, having formed a framework of threats to national security, Finland emphasized the importance of international organizations in preventing the mentioned dangers, this way reasoning its small state identity and features of strategic culture.

Despite the official neutrality and non-alignment policy, Finland managed to secure a partnership with NATO. Since 1994 Finland (together with its Nordic neighbour Sweden) has been working with NATO under the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program framework.⁸¹ Additionally, Finland participates in the Planning and Review Process (PARP) that furthers development capabilities and strengthens intermobility. Partnership with NATO without becoming an official member state allowed Finland to maintain its part in the "Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance", thus have rather positive relations with Russia, and cooperate with an advanced military alliance and develop technologically advanced military forces that interconnect with the defence of Europe.

To conclude this subchapter, Finnish strategic culture since the beginning of the Cold War could be described as political and military neutrality based on a non-alignment policy to maintain fragile relations with the Soviet Union. Later the agreement to not join alliances of Western forces lost its political meaning and became strictly for military purposes. Finland's strategic culture continued to be affected by a small state and peripheral state that fell under the influence of the Soviet Union, identity. Slowly Finland found its voice in international organizations like the EU which became a security guarantee for the state. Later, Finland's prioritization of international organizations and attempts to resolve conflicts with their help became a trademark. An important strategic choice of Finland was to form a comprehensive list of threats well-adapted to modern times combined with a partnership with NATO, which allowed the state to develop technological and tactical advancement.

3.2 Funding the Armed Forces

Finland's decades-long non-alignment policy toward military alliances, which began at the

⁷⁹ Ulf Möller and Ulf Bjereld, "From Nordic Neutrals to Post-Neutral Europeans: Differences in Finnish and Swedish Policy Transformation," *Cooperation and Conflict* 45, no. 4 (2010): 363–386, doi: [10.1177/0010836710386870](https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836710386870).

⁸⁰ Ulf Möller and Ulf Bjereld, "From Nordic Neutrals to Post-Neutral Europeans: Differences in Finnish and Swedish Policy Transformation," 372.

⁸¹ A. Domisse, *Enlargement to the North?: Sweden, Finland and NATO* (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2016), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10063>.

beginning of the Cold War, meant that the state had to completely rely on itself to defend its territories in case of need. To do that Finland had to mobilize its population and invest in the state's defence by financing the armed forces – *Puolustusvoimat*. To understand Finland's strategic culture toward the military it is necessary to overview finances and means the state allocates annually to support its defence. Thus, this subchapter will focus on the Finnish defence sector including Constitutional facts and quantitative data on how much of annual GDP is allocated to the military needs.

One of the tools to achieve readiness for action is conscription to the military which is mandatory for all men over 18 years old and the law is enshrined in the Constitution of Finland as Chapter 12, Section 127: "Every Finnish citizen is obligated to participate or assist in national defence, as provided by an Act. Provisions on the right to exemption, on grounds of conscience, from participation in military national defence are laid down by an Act".⁸² This law provides an insight that the Finnish understood that non-alignment meant that foreign armies would not help Finland defend itself, thus the only way to ensure security was to rely on its own people. According to 201 data, mandatory military service is well regarded in society with around 82 % of people supporting the practice.⁸³ It is one of the highest numbers in Europe when compared to Germany (22 %) and the Netherlands (16 %) which do not have mandatory military service, and thus respondents voted for willingness to defend their country.⁸⁴ Therefore, when analysing Finnish strategic culture the first thing that comes to mind is self-reliance where the efforts of every individual matter. This position is a Constitutional law which means it is a part of the foundation of the state and highly supported by the Finnish population.

Mandatory military service requires large financial investments to support the conscripts and other personnel, buy the necessary equipment, pay salaries, etc. Hence, it is important to analyse how much of its annual GDP Finland used to allocate for the needs of the armed forces. According to the World Bank data⁸⁵ on military expenditure, the highest GDP Finland assigned for its military was 2.5 % in 1962, the year marked by the Cold War and the Cuban missile crisis. It was the first and last time from 1960 to 2022 (the data available) when over 2 % were allocated for defence. Thus, it could be argued that this amount was a reaction to the international security crisis that encompassed the entire world. During the later years of the Cold War percentage fluctuated from 1.4 % to 1.9 % never rising above 2 %. After the end of the Cold War numbers remained similar except for the period

⁸² Laws of Finland, Act on the Protection of Privacy in Electronic Communications (2018), accessed December 31, 2024, https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990731_20180817.pdf.

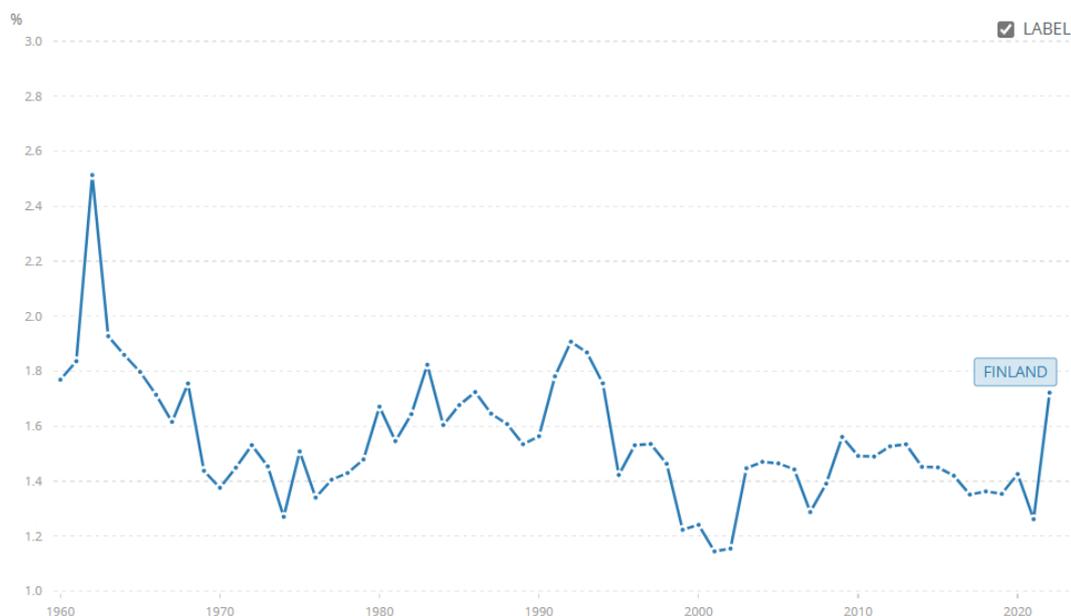
⁸³ *Foreign Policy*, "Finland's Military Conscription Is Designed to Counter Russia's Aggression," *Foreign Policy*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/16/finland-conscription-russia-military/>.

⁸⁴ *Lawfare*, "The Mentality that Finland's Mandatory Military Service Brings to NATO," *Lawfare*, accessed December 30, 2024, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-mentality-that-finland-s-mandatory-military-service-brings-to-nato>.

⁸⁵ World Bank, "Military expenditure as a percentage of GDP, Finland," World Bank Data, accessed December 30, 2025, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=FI>.

between 1999 to 2001 when the percentage dropped to 1.1 % and 1.2 %. It could have been a result of the early 2000s recession and Finland like many countries at the time had to save money. Therefore, it appears that Finland reacted to international events when it comes to financial decisions but maintained support for the defence sector, nevertheless.

2008 and 2014 security crises in Europe did not affect Finland's policy towards financing the armed forces significantly. When the Georgian War began in 2008 the Finnish government allocated 1.4 % of its GDP for military needs but in 2010 the number increased to 1.6 %. However, the same cannot be said about 2014 when Russia invaded Ukraine as Finland maintained 1.4 % of its GDP until 2021. Even though the numbers do not reach the recommended NATO standard of 2 % (Finland was not a member state of NATO, and thus was not obliged to conform to the recommendation but as a partner of NATO could have used it for guidance), the latest data from 2022 illustrates Finland's determination to prioritize the defence sector and shows that it is an important topic to society.



Military expenditure (% of GDP) – Finland (World Bank data [Military expenditure \(% of GDP\) - Finland | Data](#))

To conclude the subchapter, it is clear that the importance of national defence is a fundamental principle of Finland and Finnish society. Constitutional law of mandatory military service is well regarded among the people illustrating how determined Finns are to serve their country. The ability to defend themselves without outside powers' help, which correlates with non-alignment principles, is the most famous feature of Finnish strategic culture, and it turns into actions to finance the armed forces. Finland stayed constructive and maintained continuous support for its military adapting to specific times and threats.

3.3 Energy sector

Most of the European states have limited natural resources which means that governments

were forced to look for import solutions to support their economies. When analysing strategic culture and perception of threats it is important to review energy policies to understand the connections between European states and the main natural gas provider – Russia. It is necessary to determine how dependent on Russian natural gas Finland was and how the situation evolved with the changing security situation over time. This subchapter focuses on analysing the Finnish energy sector in order to answer those questions focusing on natural gas import ways to Finland.

Based on the long-term contracts dating back to the Cold War period, gas from Russia was imported to Finland via the Imatra border point. From 1970 to 2020 almost all the methane gas that was brought to Finland came through this pipeline from Gazprom.⁸⁶ This fact proves that energy sector dependence was a serious problem in Finland and a reason behind the need to maintain positive relations with the Russian Federation. The Kremlin used gas prices as a pressure mechanism to punish countries that did not comply with Moscow-dictated rules and having only one source of gas, Gazprom, completely dependent on Russia Finland had to navigate international relations with precision and care.

Seeking to change the situation in the energy market Finland began building the Balticconnector pipeline that first connected Finland with Estonia and later with Latvia.⁸⁷ The planning began in 2015 as a part of an energy diversification project aimed at decreasing dependence on gas provided by Russia this way creating an alternative for Finland which was isolated from the European gas market. Apparently, it was a good time to begin the process of distancing from Moscow due to a changed security situation in Europe, more specifically, the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The construction of the pipeline began in 2018 and was finished in 2020 which also marked the year it began working. Even though most of its supply came from Russia, it was a bi-directional pipe that allowed to import natural gas through Estonia in case of need.⁸⁸ The energy sector diversification process marked a changed security strategy toward Russia. The EU which for Finland symbolized security proved this position by financing the Balticconnector pipeline which transformed the security situation in the Baltic Sea region and energy independence from Russia.

To conclude this subchapter, Finland's energy security situation was not exceptional to other European countries and was marked by a strong dependency on Russian natural gas resources. The agreements to supply gas dated back to the Cold War era and only began to be diversified in 2020

⁸⁶ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, “Radical Events in the Finnish Gas Market: Security of Supply Ensured,” *Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://tem.fi/en/-/radical-events-in-the-finnish-gas-market-security-of-supply-ensured>.

⁸⁷ European Commission, “Balticconnector Gas Pipeline and Running from 1 January 2020,” *European Commission*, accessed December 31, 2024, https://commission.europa.eu/news/balticconnector-gas-pipeline-and-running-1-january-2020-2020-01-08_en#:~:text=The%20first%20gas%20pipeline%20between%20Finland%20and%20Estonia%2C,in%20the%20region.%20Energy%20Commissioner%20Kadri%20Simson%20said%3A.

⁸⁸ Elering, “Balticconnector,” Elering, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://elering.ee/en/balticconnector>.

when the Balticconnector pipeline with Estonia was built. The project, financed by the EU to solve energy sector isolation significantly improved the security of the Baltic Sea region and proved the EU's role as a security guarantor to Finland. Finland's strategic culture toward the energy market became that of independence, featuring diversification projects while for example, Germany was building another connection with Russia and deepening the dependence.

4. POST-2022 STRATEGIC CULTURE OF FINLAND

A major sign symbolizing the shift in Finland's foreign and security policy was the decision to apply for membership in NATO. As explained in the previous chapter, the significance of this act lies in a long history of neutrality and non-alignment policy, features that were used to describe Finland's strategic culture since the beginning of the Cold War. Similar to the German *Zeitenwende*, Finland's application was catalyzed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, thus it is necessary to examine the reasoning that influenced the decision-making in the government to shift the country's long-lasting strategic culture. In this part of the research the 3rd and the 2nd generation of strategic culture will be employed considering the Russian war in Ukraine to be the recent event that has altered Finland's foreign and security policy, and strategic behaviour of the government representatives. The chapter will consist of three subchapters, one aiming to analyse the speech given by Sauli Niinistö in Brussels, the second one examining the government report on Finnish foreign and security policy, and finally, a subchapter analysing the interview with a Lithuanian diplomat working with Finland file.

4.1 Losing neutrality

The original statement by the President of Finland Sauli Niinistö and Prime Minister Sanna Marin released on May 12th, 2022 addressing intentions to apply for membership in NATO is short in length and does not provide significant insides behind the decision, it simply states the fact that the Finnish government must apply for the membership in NATO as it would strengthen both, the alliance and Finland itself.⁸⁹ For this reason, a speech by President Sauli Niinistö delivered during the accession ceremony in Brussels a year later will be used instead, as it is longer and provides more information about the decision-making process to be analyzed.

The first statement of the President's speech noted that the military non-alignment period of Finland's history has come to an end and the new era begins as the state became the 31st member state of NATO.⁹⁰ At the very beginning, the most important statement was made that the neutrality policy that defined Finland's strategic culture for decades since the end of WWII has changed, and the state chose to become a part of a military alliance. Remembering what was discovered in the previous chapter, that Finland prioritized memberships in international organizations to guarantee its

⁸⁹ Government of Finland, "Joint Statement by the President of the Republic and Prime Minister of Finland on Finland's NATO Membership," *Government of Finland*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/10616/joint-statement-by-the-president-of-the-republic-and-prime-minister-of-finland-on-finland-s-nato-membership#:~:text=Now%20that%20the%20moment%20of%20decision-making%20is%20near%2C,NATO%2C%20Finland%20would%20strengthen%20the%20entire%20defence%20alliance>.

⁹⁰ Sauli Niinistö, "Speech by President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö at the NATO Accession Ceremony in Brussels, 4 April 2023," *Office of the President of the Republic of Finland*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://www.presidentti.fi/niinisto/en/speeches/speech-by-president-of-the-republic-of-finland-sauli-niinisto-at-the-nato-accession-ceremony-in-brussels-4-april-2023/>.

security it was natural to join an organization that was formed on the basis of defence purpose. However, this fact does not take away the significance of the decision to join NATO because to achieve that Finland had to change its strategic culture from an individualistic non-alignment approach to collective defence methods. This statement is supported by the results of surveys conducted before the application process. Yle poll showed that in February 2022 support for NATO membership rose from 53 % to 76 %, and settled in March with 62 %.⁹¹ Another survey by the Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA) conducted in November 2022 indicated that 78 % of people had a positive view toward membership in NATO.⁹² Hence, the decision to join the alliance was a reflection of societal attitudes and changed perspectives among the people.

Another point mentioned in the speech touched upon the reasons behind the action. Even though it did not mention Russia or related titles anywhere in the text, it is clear that Finland's decision was encouraged by the changed security situation in Europe after the invasion of Ukraine. President Niinistö clarified it by stating that Finnish membership is not targeted against anyone and it does not change the founding principles of Finland, such as belief in peaceful resolution of international disputes.⁹³ Also, he reminded that Finland is a Nordic country that prefers stability and a peace-guaranteeing approach to its foreign and security policy. Therefore, this point suggests that Finland changed the way it chooses to protect itself and be associated with a particular alliance instead of neutrality but it did not change the principles that guide Finland's policies. Also, it shows that membership in NATO is in coordination with the country's values.

Strengthening security and stability is the reason why states aspire to become member states of NATO, and Finland was not an exception. In the speech, Niinistö emphasized what was mentioned in the original statement about intentions to join the alliance: that it will strengthen Finland and its position in the international arena and improve regional stability, but it will also benefit NATO by strengthening the alliance.⁹⁴ This line conveys a strong message, that Finland will not be another state that depends on NATO to survive but will significantly contribute to the defence of the region and the whole alliance. President reminded that the core principle of the security policy of Finland is the defence of their own territory, but the difference is that the Finns are not doing it alone anymore. This point connects with the beginning of the speech where the new era was mentioned repeating a message that the non-alignment period is over. Strategic culture, even though maintained its main

⁹¹ Yle, "Finland's NATO Membership: Finland and Sweden in NATO Will Strengthen the Alliance," *Yle*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://yle.fi/a/3-12437506>.

⁹² Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Survey: Majority of Finns Support NATO Membership," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/finland-nato-survey-membership/32145117.html>.

⁹³ Sauli Niinistö, "Speech by President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö at the NATO Accession Ceremony in Brussels, 4 April 2023," *Office of the President of the Republic of Finland*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://www.presidentti.fi/niinisto/en/speeches/speech-by-president-of-the-republic-of-finland-sauli-niinisto-at-the-nato-accession-ceremony-in-brussels-4-april-2023/>.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

value, the defence of territory, has changed from individual to collective.

Additional value to the alliance that the President spoke about connects to the military expenditures that directly benefit the security situation. Niinistö spoke about long years of work to ensure Finland and NATO's compatibility which was encouraged by the partnership. In the previous chapter, it was established that Finland maintained a stable amount of GDP throughout the time allocated for military and defence needs. It was also noted that numbers were reflections of global security challenges. Finland joined NATO with 2.3 % of GDP in 2023 allocated for defence⁹⁵ fulfilling recommendations of the alliance that some long-time members were not able to achieve. This action proves the state's determination to be a valuable member of the organization which strengthens the alliance significantly.

One aspect that was not mentioned in the speech but is worth noticing is energy security. In the previous chapter, it was established that Finland was not an exception to the general European trend of buying cheap natural gas from Russia and developing dependence problems. According to Yle, Finland continued to import Russian gas after the war in Ukraine began in 2022 due to contracts that were signed before and were about to be valid for another several years.⁹⁶ Despite recommendations to terminate those contracts Finnish authorities continued the import. However, in May 2023 Finland was forced to take action and terminate agreements due to the dispute with the Kremlin over the currency of payments.⁹⁷ Gasum did not agree with Gazprom's demand to pay in Rubles instead of Euros which would have been favourable to Russia but negative to Finland. Therefore, the strategic culture toward the energy security of Finland did not show significant changes, as imports from Russia continued after the war began and were terminated only when it became unfavourable for Finland itself.

To conclude, Finland's strategic culture changed from an individualistic approach to a collective defence idea which was proven by membership in NATO. Previously known for its neutrality and non-alignment policy Finland became a member of the military alliance stepping down from its historic agreement. Despite joining NATO Finland maintained its Nordic identity featuring stability and belief in peaceful conflict. High military expenditure, and hitting the target of GDP allocation prove that not only Finland but NATO as well benefited from this membership, strengthening both, Finland and the alliance. However, notable changes in defence policy cannot be observed in the field of energy security as Finland stopped imports of Russian gas only in 2023 after it became

⁹⁵ Reuters, "Newest NATO Member Finland to Spend 2.3% of GDP on Defence," *Reuters*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/newest-nato-member-finland-spend-23-gdp-defence-2023-08-28/>.

⁹⁶ Yle, "Finland's Defense Spending to Increase: Government Approves New Budget," *Yle*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20023215>.

⁹⁷ Yle, "Finland's Defense Budget for 2024 Set to Rise Amid NATO Membership," *Yle*, accessed December 31, 2024, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20032869>.

unfavourable to pay in Rubles. Hence, contracts were terminated not because of a change in strategic culture but due to the Kremlin's unrealistic requests.

4.2 Governmental approach to foreign and security policy

The government report on Finnish foreign and security policy was published in 2024 and is the newest document on the topic of Finland's security. The report examines Finland's international operating environment and the factors driving change. It outlines the main priorities and objectives of Finland's foreign and security policy, including the fundamental policies related to Finland's NATO membership. Due to the reason that Finland's membership in NATO is viewed as a most important sign of changed strategic culture, it is important to analyze what has been done on a governmental level in foreign policy and security fields. Document analysis method will be applied to examine the report and determine profound changes in strategic culture.

In the beginning, the report states that Finland's security is ensured by three key elements: a robust national defence capability integrated into NATO's deterrence and defence; memberships in both the European Union and NATO; and increasingly strong bilateral cooperation on foreign and security policy and defence with key allies and partners.⁹⁸ This sentence illustrates the importance of NATO in Finland's security and that it became an integral part of strategic planning. It is also stated that NATO membership signifies a new chapter for Finland as the state now evaluates its security through the lens of NATO's collective defence and enhances the security of the entire alliance.⁹⁹ This is a confirmation of what was said by President Niinistö, that Finland's membership in the alliance is beneficial for both sides and signifies a new era of foreign and security policy for Finland.

According to the report, membership in NATO also resulted in increased cooperation with Nordic-Baltic countries, mostly NB8, and the US. For Finland Baltic Sea and the Arctic region are important areas that, as stated in the report, Russia poses a threat to.¹⁰⁰ Becoming a member state of NATO addressed these security challenges by strengthening deterrence and defence in these areas. It is stated that Finland considers the defence of the Arctic region as an inseparable part of the Euro-Atlantic area that must be protected under a collective defence approach.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the information in the report allows to claim that joining NATO improved cooperation with Finland's neighbours Nordic-Baltic countries and enhanced Euro-Atlantic relations. It is mostly seen in the defence planning of the Arctic region and the Baltic Sea.

It is important to note that despite having security guarantees from NATO, Finland did not renounce its national defence capacities. As stated in the report, Finland upholds and enhances a

⁹⁸ Government of Finland, *Finland's Defence Strategy and Military Preparedness for 2024* (Helsinki: Government of Finland, 2024), https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/165723/VN_2024_35.pdf?sequence=1.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 11.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 37.

robust national defence capability, grounded in general conscription and a comprehensive defence strategy.¹⁰² It means that Finland is determined to maintain strong national defence capacities and does not plan to revoke the mandatory conscription law. However, these capabilities now become a part of NATO's framework offering Finnish competence in certain areas, such as national security and operating in the Arctic to the whole alliance. Therefore, self-reliance continues to be an important part of the strategic culture of Finland, but instead of being the only means of defence, it was enhanced by membership in NATO. Finland's security remains to be a priority but the way to achieve it has changed as it is not individual anymore but collective.

In the report, it is stated that NATO and the EU are Finland's security communities with roles that complement and strengthen each other.¹⁰³ This statement shows that international organizations continue to be viewed as security guarantees in Finland and that their role is not lesser because of membership in military alliance. The EU is called a foreign, security, and defence actor whose role was strengthened by the Russian war in Ukraine. However, the EU's function is understood as a platform to defend Western values, implement sanctions, promote trade (economy), and support Ukraine. Hence, in the report, Finland encourages the EU to increase and support the existing defence capabilities of member states, as well as develop the ability to prevent conflicts, enhance preparedness, and strengthen crisis resilience in cooperation with NATO.¹⁰⁴ This statement illustrates the importance of international cooperation on the organizational level and its role in ensuring Finland's security. It also shows that prioritizing international organizations as a security measure, a feature developed during the neutrality period continues to shape Finnish strategic culture after the new era began.

A large part of the report was devoted to defining the role of Russia as a security threat in Finland's neighbouring areas. The invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was called a continuation of Russian aggression in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014.¹⁰⁵ It is stated that bilateral relations between Finland and Russia were fundamentally affected while the bilateral cooperation has been frozen. It is a positive sign that the Finnish government acknowledged the role Russia played in destabilizing Europe and posing a threat to international law. However, the report says that certain levels of communications through diplomatic channels were left open in fields that are essential for Finland, like border security, crime prevention transport, and security supply.¹⁰⁶ It is important to note, that Finland supports international sanctions on Russia and Belarus, and encourages trans-Atlantic

¹⁰² Government of Finland, *Finland's Defence Strategy and Military Preparedness for 2024* (Helsinki: Government of Finland, 2024), 22, https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/165723/VN_2024_35.pdf?sequence=1.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 12.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 32-38.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 10-12.

¹⁰⁶ Government of Finland, *Finland's Defence Strategy and Military Preparedness for 2024* (Helsinki: Government of Finland, 2024), 12, https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/165723/VN_2024_35.pdf?sequence=1.

cooperation in the field while imposing sanctions on the national level as well. Thus, Finland defines Russia as a threat to national and regional security responsible for aggression in Ukraine and Georgia. For this reason, Finland imposed sanctions on a national level and supported the EU and the US's role in imposing international ones.

To conclude, the Government report on Finnish foreign and security policy published in 2024 contains a comprehensive analysis of Finland's foreign and security policy. It is stated that the non-alignment period of Finland's history is over and that the state is a full-fledged member of NATO. It signals a change in strategic culture which shifted from self-reliance to collective defence. However, the importance of the international organizations to security was not reduced. On the contrary, Finland encourages EU-NATO cooperation to increase regional security and preparedness. Overall, the report illustrates how membership in NATO became an integral part of Finland's foreign and security policy after decades of neutrality and self reliance.

4.3 Interview results

A part of the research was an interview with a Lithuanian diplomat working with Finland file on the topic of Finland's strategic culture change after the war in Ukraine began. Mr. Rimas Kungys, a counsellor at the Directorate for European Bilateral and Regional Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania was interviewed. In total, 9 questions in relation to the topic of the thesis were asked. This subchapter aims to analyze the results of the interview and understand whether the answers confirm the results of the research.

The first question focused on the decision to apply for membership in NATO and its effect on the country's strategic culture. Mr. Kungys mentioned a profound shift in strategic and defence policies that ended the military non-alignment policy known as Finlandization.¹⁰⁷ The diplomat emphasized that the neutrality policy was meant to preserve Finland's independence while balancing relations with the West and Russia. Therefore, this argument confirms the fact that Finland's strategic culture changed significantly due to the decision to become a NATO member state. Mr. Kungys spoke about a transformative process that resulted in increased military and civil readiness, an active alliance-building process, and a mental shift from a national defence to a collective defence approach. He mentioned that the societal support for being a NATO member state reached 89 % at the end of 2024.¹⁰⁸ Hence, the people played an important role and contributed to a changing strategic culture of Finland. It is an example of the bottom-up approach which is noticeable in democratic states.

The claim that it was the Russian war in Ukraine that began in 2022 that encouraged Finland to reconstruct its security policy is supported by the answer of Mr. Kungys. He claimed that until the

¹⁰⁷ Annex 1, 59.

¹⁰⁸ Annex 1, 59.

Crimean occupation in 2014, the possibility of joining NATO was out of the question. It was even agreed not to touch this subject in debates during the election period. Kremlin 's aggression in 2014 began talks about possible membership at the same time acknowledging the growing threat from Russia.¹⁰⁹ However, it was in 2022 when Finland together with Sweden finally decided to join NATO driven by heightened security concerns. It proves that the war in Ukraine was a significant factor that encouraged Finns to apply for the membership in the alliance.

In the previous chapter, it was claimed that Finland views international organizations, especially the EU as a security guarantee. According to Mr. Kungys that did not change after joining NATO as it provides formal military guarantees.¹¹⁰ The role of the EU continued to be perceived as a security guarantee addressing economic, political, and hybrid security challenges. The diplomat also quoted Finland's security report of 2024 where the increased role of the EU was mentioned. Therefore, despite joining military alliance Finland continues to prioritise membership in the EU and other international organizations to address certain security concerns.

When asked about energy security situation in Finland regarding its previous dependence on Russian natural gas, Mr. Kungys confirmed that Finland took a number of measures to address the issue. The diplomat mentioned that dependency on Russia was ended by resource diversification, enhanced domestic production, and acceleration of the green transition.¹¹¹ It confirmed the claim made in the previous chapter stating that Finland sought diversification of suppliers and regional cooperation in the energy field. However, the issue on continued imports from Russia after the beginning of war was not addressed.

Mr. Kungys mentioned the increased importance of Nordic-Baltic (NB8) states cooperation and deepening dialogue with Germany and Finland to address the situation in the Baltic Sea.¹¹² NB8 format countries are viewed as like-minded and while expanded cooperation within the UN organizations proves that Finland maintains its views on the importance of international organizations. However, close proximity to Russia and the evolving dynamics of global security are posing challenges. Russian threat was mentioned in the interview while addressing membership in NATO question stating that a reason not to join the alliance before was Russia.¹¹³ Therefore, it appears that the perception of Russia, in terms of security, has not changed significantly but the actions to deal with it has changed (NATO membership instead of self-reliance).

To conclude, an interview with Mr. Kungys confirmed most of the statements in the previous chapter stating that Finland's strategic culture changed significantly which is proven by its

¹⁰⁹ Annex 1, 59.

¹¹⁰ Annex 1, 60.

¹¹¹ Annex 1, 60.

¹¹² Annex 1, 59.

¹¹³ Annex 1, 60.

membership in NATO. Historically driven non-alignment policy also known as Finlandisation ended shifting from national defence approach to collective defence practiced by NATO. It also shows a mental transformation of the Finnish society which prior to 2022 viewed membership in military alliance rather negatively but Russian aggression encouraged to support it in high numbers.

CONCLUSIONS

In the beginning, the goal to analyse the strategic culture change of Germany and Finland following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was made. 3 generations of strategic culture theory were used to analyse foreign and security policies of the states' at different periods. The results indicate strong influence of historical experiences on strategic culture, however strategic behaviour and recent events also have major impact.

The findings of the case study indicate that Germany's strategic culture has been profoundly shaped by the experiences of World War II, resulting in a pacifist stance towards armed conflicts, low military expenditures, and a preference for diplomatic solutions over the use of force. According to the findings, the historically influenced fear of the resurgence of fascism was considered a legitimate justification for the use of military force in armed conflicts. Energy security was significantly impacted due to the development of dependence on Russian resources, as the government believed that economic ties would prevent future conflicts. This dependence on Russian energy has been a critical aspect of Germany's strategic culture, influencing its foreign policy decisions and economic strategies.

The *Zeitenwende* speech, delivered by Chancellor Olaf Scholz three days after the invasion began marked a turning point in the foreign and security policy of Germany. To address the importance of the speech discourse analysis was made in order to understand the new direction of German strategic culture. Document analysis was applied to examine the National Security Strategy and Defence Policy Guidelines 2023 to understand whether the changes were profound or superficial. Additionally, an interview with a Lithuanian diplomat working on the German file was conducted to determine whether the diplomat's opinion would confirm the research findings and provide further insights into the case.

Findings reveal that major changes appeared in two sectors: military and energy security. In the speech, Scholz declared plans to strengthen the Bundeswehr and enhance its military presence in Europe under NATO initiatives. Also, a goal to allocate 2% of GDP for defence needs and an announcement of the establishment of a special fund (100 billion Euros) to modernize the Bundeswehr were made. These plans were reflected in the National Security Strategy and Defence Policy Guidelines published in 2023, where the Bundeswehr is described as the core of security policy that needs to be robust and resilient. In an interview, the diplomat expressed doubts about whether the intended financing would be sufficient, indicating that around 300 billion Euros are needed to implement the necessary improvements. This issue was not addressed in either document, indicating deeper economic problems.

In the *Zeitenwende* speech, the energy sector was discussed through the lens of dependence and the necessity for resource diversification. The speech highlighted those two major projects that were subsequently incorporated into the National Security Strategy under the 'Resilience' chapter. Germany has already diversified its natural gas suppliers and invested in LNG terminals, but the overall direction appears to be shifting towards green energy and renewable energy project development. Confirming these findings, the diplomat also mentioned new contracts with Norway and Gulf countries for natural gas, replacing those with Russia. Independent energy infrastructure has become a priority for Germany, reflecting a profound change in its strategic culture.

According to the case study results, Finland's historic experience influenced neutrality and military non-alignment policy which became known as Finlandization. It featured self-reliance and focus and a strong national defence policy, strengthened by membership in international organizations that provided additional security. The EU membership appeared to be one of the most important factors in ensuring economic and political security. In terms of energy security, Finland was also dependent on Russian resources; however, the construction of the Balticconnector two-way pipeline in 2020 provided an opportunity to diversify its supply.

To determine the changes in Finnish strategic culture, a discourse analysis of President Sauli Niinistö's speech at the NATO acceptance ceremony was conducted. This speech was chosen as it was the first instance where the decision to join the alliance was explained in detail. Additionally, the document analysis method was applied to examine the Finnish government's report on foreign and security policy published in 2024. This analysis aimed to understand the extent of changes in security policy following Finland's accession to NATO. Furthermore, an interview with a Lithuanian diplomat working on the Finland file was conducted to determine whether the diplomat's perspective would validate the research findings and offer additional insights into the case.

Discourse analysis indicates that the decision to join NATO was fundamental for Finnish security policy as it ended the era of neutrality and military non-alignment. It is confirmed in the report that Finland's security is supported by three key elements: a robust national defence capability integrated into NATO's deterrence and defence framework; memberships in both the European Union and NATO; and increasingly strong bilateral cooperation on foreign and security policy and defence with key allies and partners. The diplomat described this process as transformative and highlighted the high societal support for the decision. Therefore, the government report on Finnish foreign and security policy 2024 shows that NATO variable became fully integrated in Finland's strategic planning, but did not change the importance of national defence or the EU. International organizations continue to be perceived as security guarantees.

Strategic culture theory, particularly the first generation, emphasizes the significance of historical context in shaping states' strategic choices. It highlights the profound impact of Germany's historical experiences during World War II on its foreign and security policies, and explains Finland's decision to maintain a policy of non-alignment following the end of its political neutrality. The third generation of strategic culture theory emphasizes the importance of recent events and the reactions of state elites, incorporating a societal dimension. This perspective helps to explain the transformative shift in Germany's policy, known as the *Zeitenwende*, in response to the war in Ukraine and the government's subsequent actions. Similarly, it clarifies Finland's decision to terminate its era of military non-alignment and pursue NATO membership, driven by perceived security threats arising from the conflict in Ukraine.

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SUMMARY

The title of the master's thesis - The Change of Strategic Cultures After the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Cases of Germany and Finland.

After the Russian invasion to Ukraine, significant changes to German and Finnish strategic cultures were made that influenced their foreign and security policies. The need to analyse the changes and how it was reflected in states' policymaking became apparent.

Research problem: European states, including Germany and Finland, formulated their foreign and security policies based on their historical experiences where World War II had major influence. It resulted in cautious German policy, especially on the military topic which includes defence expenditures. In the case of Finland, the state continued its neutrality policy based on the Cold War period agreement. On the 24th of February, 2022 when Russia attacked Ukraine states began to change their views on security policy which featured increased defence expenditures and new energy security policy for Germany, and membership in NATO for Finland.

Research question: what were the main changes of strategic cultures of Germany and Finland, and whether they were profound or superficial?

To answer the question these tasks were formulated:

1. To provide theoretical background for the research of this thesis using the strategic culture theory and explain how it applies to the research topic.
2. To conduct a comprehensive case study of Germany's strategic culture prior to 2022 and compare it with the policy after the *Zeitenwende* speech by doing discourse analysis and documents analysis.
3. To conduct a case study on Finland's strategic culture before the Russian invasion of 2022, and afterwards by performing discourse analysis and document analysis. The turning point is chosen to be a decision to apply for membership in NATO.
4. To determine if the changes in the strategic culture of Germany and Finland were formal or practical and had real effects on the security policies of the mentioned states.

In order to analyse the change and the reasons behind it, strategic culture theory was used. Relying on the theory, historical context has been determined and its influence on strategic culture. The contribution of individual government representatives and recent events to the formation of strategic culture was further investigated. The work used 3 generations of strategic culture theory, analysing different stages.

Comprehensive case studies of German and Finnish strategic cultures prior 2022 indicate that historical experiences made major impact on foreign and security policies. In the case of Germany,

it was expressed in a refusal to contribute to allied missions in armed conflicts (unless the case raised a theme of fascism), low military expenditures and energy dependence. In the case of Finland, historical experience formulated neutrality policy, which did not allow membership in military alliances like NATO. After the invasion in 2022 German chancellor Olaf Scholz announced the *Zeitenwende*, the turn of security policy, which features increased defence financing, strengthening of the Bundeswehr, its participation in NATO initiatives, and energy independence. Finland announced its decision to join NATO this way ending neutrality and non-alignment policy period. These changes are reflected in foreign and security policy documents that were analysed in the thesis.

Comprehensive case studies, discourse and document analyses, and interview results confirm the defended statement that Russian invasion to Ukraine in 2022 prompted strategic culture changes in Germany and Finland.

SANTRAUKA

Magistro darbo pavadinimas – Strateginės kultūros pokytis po Rusijos invazijos į Ukrainą 2022 m. Vokietijos ir Suomijos atvejais.

Po 2022 m. Rusijos invazijos į Ukrainą keitėsi Vokietijos ir Suomijos strateginės kultūros, kurios darė įtaką formuojant užsienio ir saugumo politiką. Išryškėjo poreikis išanalizuoti, kokie pasikeitimai įvyko bei kaip tai buvo atspindėta valstybių politikos formavime.

Tyrimo problema: Europos valstybės, tarp kurių yra ir Vokietija bei Suomija, užsienio ir saugumo politiką formavo pagal savo istorinę patirtį, kuriai didelę įtaką padarė antrasis pasaulinis karas. Tai lėmė atsargią Vokietijos politiką kariuomenę liečiančiose temose, tarp kurių yra ir gynybos finansavimas. Suomijos atveju valstybė laikėsi Šaltojo karo laikų susitarimo, užtikrinusio neutralumo politiką. 2022 m. vasario 24 d. Rusijai užpuolus Ukrainą valstybės pakeitė požiūrį į saugumo politiką, kuris reiškėsi didesniu finansavimu gynybai bei nauja energetikos saugumo politika Vokietijos atveju, bei Suomijos naryste NATO.

Tyrimo klausimas: kokie buvo Vokietijos ir Suomijos strateginių kultūrų pokyčiai? Ar jie buvo paviršutiniški, ar nuodugnūs?

Siekiant atsakyti į klausimus, buvo suformuluotas **ginamasis teiginys:** Rusijos invazija į Ukrainą paskatino Vokietijos ir Suomijos strateginių kultūrų pokytį užsienio ir saugumo politikoje.

Siekiant išanalizuoti pokyčių esmę, buvo suformuluoti šie darbo **uždaviniai:**

1. Išanalizuoti ir apžvelgti strateginės kultūros teoriją bei ryšį su darbo tema.
2. Atlikti nuodugnią Vokietijos strateginės kultūros prieš 2022 m. atvejo analizę ir palyginti strateginės kultūros pokytį po kanclerio O. Scholz „Zeitenwende“ kalbos, atliekant kalbos diskurso analizę ir dokumentų analizę.
3. Atlikti nuodugnią Suomijos strateginės kultūros prieš 2022 m. atvejo analizę ir palyginti pokyčius po invazijos į Ukrainą atliekant diskurso analizę ir dokumentų analizę. Kaip lūžio taškas pasirinktas sprendimas stoti į NATO.
4. Nustatyti, ar Vokietijos ir Suomijos strateginių kultūrų pokyčiai buvo formalūs, ar praktiniai ir darė realia įtaką formuojant užsienio ir saugumo politiką.

Siekiant išanalizuoti pokyčius ir jų priežastis buvo panaudota strateginės kultūros teorija, kuria remiantis buvo nustatytas istorinis kontekstas ir istorinių patirčių įtaka strateginės kultūros formavimui. Toliau tirtas individualių vyriausybės atstovų bei neseniai vykusių įvykių indėlis formuojant strateginę kultūrą. Darbe buvo panaudotos 3 strateginės kultūros teorijos kartos, analizuojant skirtingus etapus.

Išsami atvejų analizė, skirta Vokietijos ir Suomijos strateginių kultūrų iki invazijos į Ukrainą 2022 m. tyrimui atskleidė, kad istorinės patirtys padarė žymią įtaką užsienio ir saugumo politikos

formavimui. Vokietijos atveju tai reiškesi per atsisakymą remti sąjungininkus ginkluotų konfliktų metu (nebent konfliktas žadino fašizmo temą), žemas gynybos išlaidas bei energetinę priklausomybę. Suomijos atveju istorinė patirtis formavo neutralumo politiką, pagal kurią nebuvo galima narystė kariniuose aljansuose, pavyzdžiui NATO. Prasidėjus Rusijos invazijai 2022 m. Vokietijos kancleris pranešė apie saugumo politikos posūkį, kuriuo bus didinamos išlaidos gynybai, stiprinama kariuomenė, jos dalyvavimas NATO iniciatyvose bei skatinamas energetinis saugumas ir nepriklausomybė. Suomija paskelbė apie sprendimą prisijungti prie NATO aljanso tokiu būdu nutraukdama puoselėtą neutralumo politiką. Šie pokyčiai atspindi užsienio ir saugumo politiką formuojančiuose dokumentuose, kurie analizuoti darbe.

Išsami atvejų analizė, diskurso ir dokumentų analizė bei interviu su diplomatais patvirtino ginamąjį teiginį, kad Rusijos invaziją į Ukrainą 2022 m. paskatino Vokietijos ir Suomijos strateginių kultūrų pokyčius.

ANNEX 1

Interview with Mr. Rimas Kungys, Councillor at the Directorate of European Bilateral and regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. The interview was conducted on January 3rd, 2025, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

1. Finland's decision to apply for NATO membership signifies a major shift in the state's strategic culture regarding security policy. In your opinion, how has Finland's decision to apply for NATO membership impacted its strategic culture and defence policies?

Finland's decision to apply for NATO membership marked a huge shift in its strategic culture and defence policies. For years, especially during the Cold War and after the Soviet Union collapsed, Finland stuck to a policy of neutrality and military non-alignment. This approach, often referred to as 'Finlandization,' was all about balancing its ties with both the West and Russia, while still protecting its independence.

2. What are the key changes in Finland's security strategy in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine?

It has been a transformative process - shifting from neutrality to active alliance-building and significantly enhancing its military and civilian defence readiness. Also, it has required mental shift from relying solely on national defence to transitioning to collective defence.

3. How has Finland's historical policy of military neutrality evolved since the conflict began?

Until occupation of Crimea in 2014, the discussions of Finnish membership in NATO were out of question. Even during the Parliamentary election debates the candidates used to agree not to discuss about membership in NATO. After Parliamentary elections in 2015, Foreign Minister Timo Soini initiated the study on the effects of Finland's possible NATO membership. At that time, Timo Soini used to say that Finland has the same reason to be in NATO and not to be in NATO and it's Russia. Since then, recognizing Russia's growing threat, Finland stated on keeping its military non-alliance, but keeping the doors open for membership in NATO. As the Russian militarization was increasing at its Western and Ukrainian border in Autumn of 2021, Finnish President Sauli Niinistö stated in his New Year's speech that Finland's ability to act freely and make their own choices includes the option of military alignment and even applying for NATO membership, if that's the path they decide to take. Eventually, on May 18, 2022, Finland and Sweden submitted their formal applications to NATO - this decision was driven by heightened security concerns and a reassessment of their strategic positions in response to the war in Ukraine.

4. How has public opinion in Finland shifted regarding national security and defence policies since the war started?

Finnish public opinion has on national security and defence has shifted dramatically. Before the Russian invasion to Ukraine, a majority of Finns opposed joining NATO. As the war broke, the support to Finnish membership in NATO grew and reached around 89 percent support at the end of 2024.

5. According to some scholars Finland viewed membership in the EU as a security guarantee. In what ways has Finland's relationship with the European Union been affected by the conflict in Ukraine?

The conflict in Ukraine has deepened Finland's ties with the EU, enhancing the EU's role in Finland's security strategy. While NATO now offers Finland a formal military security guarantee, the EU remains crucial in tackling economic, political, and hybrid security challenges. This dual reliance on NATO and the EU reflects Finland's comprehensive approach to maintaining its sovereignty and contributing to regional stability. As it was written in the Government report on Finnish foreign and security policy, 2024, the war has reinforced the EU's position as an important player in foreign, security, and defence policy. When it comes to supporting European security, NATO and the EU have roles that complement and strengthen each other.

6. How has Finland addressed its energy security concerns, particularly in relation to its dependence on Russian energy?

Finland took a number of measures - ending dependence on Russian energy, increasing domestic energy production, enhancing energy infrastructure, diversifying energy sources and suppliers, increasing regional cooperation, energy efficiency and conservation, accelerating the green transition.

7. How has Finland's cooperation with other Nordic and Baltic countries evolved in response to the new security landscape?

Finland joining NATO alongside Sweden really boosts the stability and security of the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe as a whole. It's a big step forward for cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries, making our collective defence even stronger. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are still key partners for Finland, both within the EU, NATO, and on a bilateral level. With Finland and Sweden now in NATO, there's even more room for deeper security cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic nations. The NB8 format, and the closer ties with Germany and Poland, are among priorities to Finland's foreign policy. With the security situation in the Baltic Sea changing, working together with like-minded countries has never been more important.

8. What are Finland's long-term strategic goals in light of the changing geopolitical environment in Europe?

In response to the evolving geopolitical landscape in Europe, Finland's long-term strategy is all about boosting regional stability, strengthening its defence, and deepening international cooperation. Joining NATO alongside Sweden is a key step that enhances the security framework of the Baltic Sea and Northern Europe. Finland remains fully committed to the NB8 format, which is crucial for dialogue and collaboration on security policy. This framework, along with active participation in EU and UN initiatives, emphasizes the importance of working with like-minded nations to address common challenges and promote peace and stability.

9. What are the main diplomatic challenges Finland faces in balancing its historical policies with the new realities post-Ukraine invasion?

There could be several challenges addressed stemming from Finland's transition from neutrality and military non-alignment to NATO membership, like its proximity to Russia, and the evolving dynamics of European and global security.

Interview with Mr. Saulius Kalvelis, Senior Councillor at the Directorate of European Bilateral and regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. The interview was conducted on January 4th, 2025, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

1. The Zeitenwende speech marked the beginning of the changing German strategic culture. What are the most significant changes in Germany's defence policy since the invasion of Ukraine?

Berlin has made great progress in shifting its foreign and security policies to address the growing threat from Russia. In early 2022, they announced a €100 billion 'special fund' that they plan to invest in Germany's military. Germany also launched new projects with NATO allies, including permanently stationing a German brigade in Lithuania. Despite some challenges, Germany has become Ukraine's biggest supporter in Europe. For the first time since the early 1990s, Germany allocated 2% of its GDP to defence in 2024. However, key figures in security sector like Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, Eva Högl, and Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, argue that €300 billion is needed just to address existing gaps in the Bundeswehr, let alone achieve more ambitious goals like becoming a 'guarantor of European security'. So, 2 % of GDP appears to not be enough given the current security situation.

2. How has Germany's approach to energy security and independence evolved in response to its previous reliance on Russian gas?

Before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Germany was the biggest importer of Russian gas in Europe. But after announcing plans to refuse Russian gas import and with Russia cutting off supplies abruptly, Germany had to quickly find alternatives. They secured contracts with other suppliers and started building terminals to receive liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments by sea. Within a few months, Germany stopped directly importing Russian gas. So, the war in Ukraine pushed Germany to diversify its gas sources. The war in Ukraine forced Germany to diversify its energy sources. In addition to boosting gas imports from Norway, the German government began the development of LNG import infrastructure. It includes temporary floating terminals, which require minimal new infrastructure. Currently, Germany has three active temporary LNG terminals. A fourth and fifth LNG terminal are under construction. Additionally, Germany has formed new energy partnerships with Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar.

3. How has Germany's relationship with NATO and its commitment to collective defence changed since the conflict began?

In 2024, Germany allocated 2% of its GDP to defence for the first time since the early 1990s, finally meeting the NATO recommendation. However, the 2023 National Security Strategy softened this goal, indicating that Germany would aim to meet the 2% target on average over several years rather than annually. Alongside this, Germany has significantly increased its presence in Eastern NATO countries. This includes deploying a brigade to Lithuania, contributing to Baltic Air Policing, and committing 12,000 troops to Steadfast Defender, if I remember correctly, which is the largest NATO exercise since the Cold War.

4. In what ways has the war in Ukraine affected Germany's role within the European Union and its push for greater European integration?

In 2023, during a speech, Chancellor Olaf Scholz emphasized the need for the EU to actively shape its future in the face of a multipolar world. He advocated for the creation of a so-called "geopolitical European Union," highlighting the necessity of enlargement, and reforms, alongside the urgent need

to finalize trade agreements quickly. Scholz also highlighted how Russia's war had brought the EU closer together, suggesting that this solidarity could serve as the foundation for a more geopolitical Europe. To achieve this, he mentioned key priorities, like closer cooperation in defence sector, the development of a unified European defence economy, and further EU expansion.

5. How has public opinion in Germany shifted regarding defence spending and military engagement since the war started?

Public opinion polls in Germany have shown strong support for increased defence spending. In a survey from late 2024, showed that about 70% of respondents said that defence spending should be increased, even if it means cutting funds in other areas of the federal budget. This shift in opinion is influenced by perceptions of Russia as a threat and negative views on the Bundeswehr's equipment.

6. What long-term strategic goals has Germany set in response to the new security landscape in Europe?

Berlin must strengthen its defence and increase spending. New initiatives, like the brigade in Lithuania and the upcoming defence industrial strategy, are valuable. However, without a long-term shift in Berlin's defence mindset, even Germany's most promising defence projects won't reach their full potential. Because of its non-nuclear status, Germany is not well-suited to be the 'guarantor of European security,' as its deterrence capabilities are weaker than those of nuclear powers.

7. What are the main diplomatic challenges Germany faces in balancing its historical policies with the new realities post-Ukraine invasion?

Despite being Europe's largest, richest, and most populous country Germany is still somewhat hesitant to take on a leading role in Europe, especially in security matters. This hesitation grows from the country's strategic culture, which is shaped by the collective memory of the Holocaust and the lessons learned from it. The 'Holocaust Nation' concept has limited and delayed efforts to make Germany more active in foreign and security policy.

8. How has the war impacted Germany's economic policies, particularly in terms of trade and sanctions against Russia?

In 2023, Germany's exports to Russia were valued at around 9 billion. This represents about a 39% decrease, following a 45% drop the previous year. The sharp decline was caused by the sanctions imposed on Russia by the EU and many other countries after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Germany's close cooperation with Russia, once a key part of its strategic culture, ended in 2022 when Germany agreed to impose heavy sanctions on Russia. This fundamentally changed German-Russian relations. Germany quickly cut its structural energy dependencies on Russia and severed most of its economic ties with the Russian market. This was a very costly decision, as Germany had previously received nearly 60% of its gas from Russia, which was crucial for its energy policy.

9. What do you foresee as the future trajectory of German strategic culture in the coming years?

Before the war in Ukraine, Germany had a policy of never sending weapons to conflict zones, which was a key part of its strategic culture. However, this policy was changed, and now German authorities are proud to be the largest European weapons supplier to Ukraine. As I mentioned before, to achieve full operational readiness, Germany's military needs over €300 billion in investment. Given this sum, defence must become a priority for Germany now and in the future.