Nordic Review of International Studies

Peer-reviewed articles

Discussion articles

1/2023

FISA Finnish International Studies Association

Publisher

The Nordic Review of International Studies (NRIS) publishes peer-reviewed scholarly contributions within the field of International Relations (IR), focusing specifically on Nordic perspectives. The NRIS is committed to publishing articles that examine the international sphere empirically, theoretically, or institutionally from a Nordic angle. The aim of the NRIS is to foster scholarly debates on international politics within and concerning the wider Nordic region. The NRIS embraces interdisciplinary approaches and appreciates a wide range of theoretical and methodological choices.

The journal is published by the Finnish International Studies Association (FISA) and committed to the principles of Open Access publishing.

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ISSN 2954-2553

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This first issue of *The Nordic Review of International Studies* (NRIS) focuses on NATO and the Nordics. The idea for launching a new journal has been brewing for a long time at the board of the Finnish International Studies Association (FISA). We have recognised the need for an arena that would bring together scholarly debates on international politics within and concerning the wider Nordic region. Such an outlet would not merely serve as a forum for discussion, but also foster a sense of academic community.

Most International Relations (IR) discussions on the Nordics are dispersed across different journals and arenas, which hinders communication between scholars who have common research interests. We believe that the NRIS can narrow this gap in the research field, providing a fruitful arena for scientific debates and scholarly exchanges. The NRIS embraces interdisciplinary approaches and appreciates a wide range of theoretical and methodological choices.

When we planned the practicalities of the journal, one of the tricky questions was the publication language. We value scientific publishing in Nordic languages and believe that it is important to develop theoretical vocabulary in our native languages. Nevertheless, we decided that the main publishing language of the NRIS would be English to enable the widest possible reach of audiences, readers, and authors. We therefore publish primarily in English, but submissions in Finnish or Swedish can be considered for publication.

Another important aspect that we discussed in the early phase was the value of open access publishing. We believe that the era of paywalls and restricted access on knowledge should be over and therefore decided to offer all NRIS content free of any access charges or barriers. The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies offers a quality platform for open access publishing, which enables us to achieve our aim of advancing knowledge without any access barriers.

The NRIS is committed to publishing articles that examine the international sphere empirically, theoretically, or institutionally from a Nordic angle. This means that the contribution can include, for example, an empirical focus on one or several Nordic countries, a theoretical study that advances IR theory with a Nordic connection such as the Copenhagen School, or IR research that is produced in research institutions within the Nordic as well as Baltic countries.

The first issue of the NRIS is published in times of serious foreign and security policy ruptures. Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine has altered the security environment in the Nordic/Baltic region and the Arctic, resulting in Finland and Sweden applying for NATO membership. NATO is now high on the foreign policy agenda, which is why we decided to focus on the alliance in our first issue. The issue examines NATO and the Nordics from various perspective. Albert Weckman studies Finnish public opinion and NATO, showing how shifting views of NATO membership are related to changes in the security environment. Hanna Ojanen re-examines Finnish–Swedish relations and Nordic cooperation from the perspective of NATO. Emma Hakala focuses on NATO and climate, arguing that for Finland and Sweden climate security can prove to be a relevant topic through which to contribute to the agenda of the alliance, given that both countries prioritise climate issues in their foreign policies.

Tuomas Forsberg reviews the NATO debate in Finland over several decades, providing an analysis of four different "debate rounds". In her article, Rachel Tausendfreund provides a transatlantic perspective by studying how progressives in the United States view the Swedish and Finnish bids for NATO membership. Finally, Tiina Mac Intosh analyses NATO and the Nordics from the perspective of a practitioner who has been closely following the evolution of NATO policies. The issue also includes two book reviews and a report from the triannual FISA Conference, which took place in May 2022 in Tampere.

It is our sincere hope that NRIS will become a vibrant forum for debates on and in the Nordics, engaging scholars from IR, political science, international law, and other adjacent fields of study.

Johanna Vuorelma, Ville Sinkkonen, Sanna Salo

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Peer-Reviewed Article

Public opinion and NATO: How different security environments influence the support for NATO in Finland

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Abstract

While foreign and security policy attitudes have been studied for decades, there is a research gap from a Nordic and small-state point of view. In addition, the formation of security policy attitudes has become an even more salient issue in times of a deteriorated security environment. This article provides insight into what explains public opinion on issues regarding military co-operation and alliances, especially in a geographically isolated country such as Finland. The main aim of this article is to study whether, and to what extent, support for NATO membership in Finland has increased in the aftermath of a changing and deteriorating security environment. By using multinomial logistic regression, this article shows that the Finnish public reacted heavily to a security crisis, more specifically Russian aggression in the vicinity, by becoming more likely to favour NATO membership. At the same time, as the proportion of NATO supporters increased, many Finns became more uncertain about their opinion. While confirming the results, it must be noted that the strength of the coefficients differs between years. The cross-sectional data used in the analysis originates from the Advisory Board for Defense Information (ABDI).

Keywords

NATO, security, public opinion, Finland, security crises

Introduction

It is important to understand how different individuals position themselves on military alliances when formulating general explanations for attitudes on foreign and security policies. This becomes an even more salient issue in times of a deteriorating security environment, which directly or indirectly affects the populous. Foreign and security policy attitudes have been studied for decades, but the literature in the field is dominated by studies conducted in an American context (Bjereld and Ekengren, 1999; Szeles, 2021). This can be seen as problematic because foreign and security policy attitudes depend on contextual influences, and one important contextual variable is the prevailing security environment. Previous research shows that public opinion on foreign and security policies overall is stable and robust, meaning that large shifts are seldom experienced.

Public attitudes do, however, react rapidly to larger world events and security changes in the ambient environment. The same patterns have been identified in both Europe and overseas (Zaller, 1990; Page and Shapiro, 1992; Parker, 1995; Holsti, 1996; Isernia et al., 2002; Eichenberg, 2007; Chubb and McAllister, 2021). Still, public attitudes are dynamic. This means that, at first, people desire more of the things that are lacking and deemed to be important. Later, when policy makers deliver more of what was lacking, people want less than originally asked for (Wlezien, 1995). An individual's worldview is, in many ways, shaped by their country's political climate, political history and political culture (Eichenberg, 1989; Kostadinova, 2000; Anderson and Reichert, 1996) in combination with many other factors, such as the individual's experiences, upbringing, interests and more (Zaller, 1992). In other words, a lot is affected by the contextual factors imprinted by both the national climate as well as other individual factors.

In the Nordic countries, research has been conducted on NATO opinions (Ydén et al., 2019). However, relatively few of these studies feature statistical explanatory models. Such an approach, for instance, is more common in studies in an Eastern European context (Kostadinova, 2000; Caplanova, 2004; White et al., 2006). Therefore, there is a research gap from a Nordic and small-state point of view, bearing in mind the contextual differences that characterise attitudes in these surroundings. The main purpose of this article is to study whether support for NATO in Finland increases in the aftermath of a changing and deteriorating security environment. Sociodemographic differences on an individual level are also controlled for. This article provides insight into how the contextual security environment influences support for NATO membership. It contributes to the field of public opinion research by testing earlier theories empirically with statistical analysis. It seeks to better understand specific mechanisms behind security policy attitudes, especially the effects of a more neglected variable in earlier research in smaller countries such as Finland.

This article argues that public opinion on security policy attitudes is contextual. When it comes to attitudes towards NATO membership, context might play an important role. Focusing on Finnish public opinion is, in many ways, an interesting and important undertaking as it deepens our understanding of attitude formation on security issues, especially in smaller states. Firstly, there is a long tradition of surveying the public on questions regarding national security.[1] Secondly, Finland is a relevant case due to its geographical location and geopolitical situation. Finland has, for a long time, adopted a liquid neutrality (Roitto and Holmila, 2021), balancing between the West and the East. In addition, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and rising tensions between the West and Russia, both Finland and Sweden swiftly applied for NATO membership. A majority of Finns now support Finnish membership in NATO, which is a historical jump in opinion. The geopolitical factors surrounding Finland, and the fact that the question of NATO membership has been a recurrent one, makes the country's citizens and their attitudes both an interesting and a relevant case to study. A country's defence forces depend on public

1. For instance, The Advisory Board for Defence Information and Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA)

support (Chubb and McAllister, 2021), which further underlines the importance of studying foreign and security policy attitudes in more detail. In the next section, previous research on public opinion of foreign and security policies is introduced. The focus is mainly on research directly related to the purpose of this article, i.e., in what way do public attitudes respond to changes in the security environment.

Public opinion of foreign and security policies

One of the schools within public opinion research on foreign and security policies argues that citizens' attitudes on security policy issues derive from the elites, called the "top-down effect". For instance, Zaller (1992) claims that the elites heavily influence the public's formulation of foreign policy attitudes. Later research has challenged this school of thought with a bottom-up theory, criticising the statement that citizens largely formulate their foreign and security policy views based on elite indications. In fact, the effect has been shown to be the other way around. The bottom-up model regarding preferences on foreign and security policies suggests that individual preferences are formed more strongly by the information environment they live in, rather than by taking their ideas from political elites (Kerzer and Zeitkopf, 2017). Saeki (2013) found that the tendency of political elites is to shift their political standpoint in line with the voter's opinion, rather than the other way around. Results from Tomz et al. (2019) suggest that the political elite, or parliamentarians, are indeed influenced by where the public stands on issues regarding military force, for instance.

Early research on foreign policy attitudes has shown that public opinion on foreign and defence policy issues are incoherent, inconsistent, ill-informed, and easily changeable. Because of this, public opinion may be an obstacle to effective foreign policy making (Morgenthau, 1950). An irrational public opinion that is highly changeable and unstable means that an opinion on one foreign policy issue does not necessarily lead to similar views on other foreign policy issues. These factors have led to the belief that one could not find a credible relationship between these attitudes and world events (Eichenberg, 2016). This theoretical thinking is also called the Almond-Lippmann consensus (Holsti, 1992) and has been criticised by scholars (Graham, 1988; Isernia et al., 2002). Caspary (1970) concluded, contrary to Almond, that public opinion is steady and robust. However, studies have shown that people's attitudes are affected by, for example, economic and human casualties (Mueller, 1973).

The view of an ill-informed and irrational public opinion changed when Page and Shapiro (1992) conducted one of the largest studies on foreign policy attitudes. Their results indicated that public opinion is actually quite stable. Eichenberg (1989) found a similar pattern in his research of Western European attitudes on issues regarding, for instance, military balance, nuclear weapons, and defence spending. When public opinion fluctuates, it often does so due to external events in a rational manner, meaning reacting in a logical way due to, for example, a foreign actor, friends or foes (Page and Shapiro, 1992; Ziegler, 1998). Other researchers have confirmed this theoretical argument in both an American and a European context (Parker, 1995; Isernia et al., 2002; Kerzer, 2013). We can thus find certain generalisations within the field that researchers have been able to confirm. One is that the public reacts to changes in the security environment. Eichenberg (2007) confirmed this in his study of surveys on NATO from different European countries. He concluded that European citizens clearly react to security changes in the ambient environment. In Australia, there has been similar findings. Public attitudes are quite reactive and clearly respond to different types of security crises. The same is true for external security threats, which the public tend to react to in terms of a heightened awareness of and willingness for defence preparations and international co-operation (Chubb and McAllister, 2021). As previously stated, the similarities between the results from these different studies show that these theories are applicable to other geographical contexts.

As Eichenberg (2016) writes, some changes are instrumental, meaning that the public reacts to positive or negative outcomes of policies implemented by the government. Examples of this can be found when looking at attitudes towards,

for example, European integration (Eichenberg and Dalton, 2007). In addition to instrumental explanations, the public may react when it wants more "moderate" policies (Ninčić, 1988). This means that when the public thinks the government drives policies beyond their acceptance, they react with shifts in attitudes. The thermostat model by Wlezien (1996) implies that when, for instance, foreign policies shift outside of the level desired by the public, a shift in attitudes occurs in order to push the policies towards a desirable level. This theoretical argument has gained a lot of ground among public opinion researchers, both in the United States and in Europe. Wlezien (1996) develops this phenomenon through his thermostat visualisation. When defence spending, for instance, reaches levels not acceptable to the public, attitudes will shift towards the opposite direction, meaning higher defence spending in the following years. This phenomenon, according to Wlezien, can be found in both the United States and Europe. Research shows that governments adapt their budgets according to what the public prefers, a phenomenon again found in both the United States and European countries (Eichenberg, 2016).

Apart from supporting or opposing attitudes, there is the question of so-called non-attitudes, a term coined by Converse (1970). The discussion of non-attitudes, or the absence of an attitude, is a contested one and lacks a precise definition in the literature. A non-attitude on an issue can be caused by many factors. The respondent perhaps does not understand the question or lacks sufficient knowledge about the topic to present a clear opinion. It is also possible that the respondent does not want to present their opinion or feels conflicted. External stimuli, such as political events, may also cause disruption and confusion in the way individuals view an issue. Looking at which demographic variables might affect the formation of non-attitudes, researchers seem to agree on the notion that an individual's level of education has the largest impact on the tendency of having a non-attitude (Schuman and Presser, 1978; Bishop et al., 1980).

When a country's military is taking part in a conflict or operation, the public tends to increase their support for the military's activities. Mueller (1970) coined the phrase 'rally around the flag effect', which refers to the public supporting the government in their particular security policies when the nation is threatened. This support, however, is often short lived and dependant on many factors. International security crises often result in similar behaviour. For instance, survey research conducted after the 9/11 attacks in New York showed that people became more fearful of such attacks (Huddy et al., 2005). Citizens do not normally pay much attention to foreign policy issues because their everyday lives are rarely directly affected. However, attention resurfaces when war or other security threats are present. After the crisis has passed, public opinion tends to return to an earlier position (Holsti, 1996).

Kostadinova (2000) conducted a European study on the issue of NATO membership. She studied public attitudes on NATO in an Eastern European context and confirmed the "threat hypothesis", meaning that fluctuation in opinions on NATO is influenced by changes in the security environment. A similar situation can be observed in Finland. These states were invaded by Russia during the 20th century and have ever since been forced to take the threat of Russian aggression into consideration. Finland managed to retain its independence during the Cold War, while many Eastern Europeans states were so-called satellite states for a long time. In Eastern Europe, due to historical events, there is widespread suspicion among citizens towards Russia, which also affects public attitudes (Kostadinova, 2000). In Finland's neighbouring country of Sweden, the SOM-Institute has regularly measured public attitudes on Swedish NATO membership since 1994. During the first eight years of surveys, opinions were quite steady with most respondents opposing membership. This changed, however, in connection to Russian aggression and the annexation of Crimea in 2014, which resulted in a clear increase in the desire for Sweden to join NATO. These events, and other military disturbances from Russia, have resulted in growing support for Swedish membership (Ydén et al., 2019).

Data, variables and method

The individual level data used in the analysis has

been taken from The Advisory Board for Defence Information, or ABDI, which operates under the Ministry of Defence. The ABDI has regularly commissioned surveys on what Finnish citizens think about Finnish foreign security and defence issues. This makes the data exemplary for this type of analysis. The ABDI has conducted similar opinion polls since 1976 (Ministry of Defence, 2022). Each survey sample consists of around 1000 respondents. Taloustutkimus, a private company specialised in survey research, has collected the data. These surveys focus on national defence and security and foreign policy. Aside from questions about NATO membership, they include questions on various threats, national preparedness, the European Union, crisis management, etc. The respondents are Finnish citizens between the ages of 15 and 79 (excluding the Åland Islands). The sample data for each survey was created by quota sampling (age, gender, region and municipality).[2] The survey answers were mostly collected via face-to-face interviews. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 and 2022, answers were collected through computer-assisted face-to-face interviews and web-based self-administered questionnaires.

The units of interest in the analysis are Finnish citizens. In the main analysis, it is examined whether, and to what extent, support for NATO increases in the aftermath of a changing and deteriorating security environment. Several control variables are included in the analysis. Additional regressions are also run outside of the main analyses, including only individual level variables. This is to check whether similar patterns at the individual level hold over time, even though the security environment experiences major changes (see appendix Table A1). In the case of Finland's population, security crises mean Russian military interventions in the vicinity (the war in Georgia in 2008, the crisis in Ukraine in 2014, and the Russia invasion of Ukraine in 2022). These contextual factors are highly relevant for this type of study and are of particular interest in the case of Finland when considering the country's history with Russia.

The dependent variable of interest in this article is based on the survey question: "In your opinion, should Finland seek membership in NATO" with the response alternatives "yes", "no", and "can't say", a standardised survey question in the ABDI surveys since 2005. A standardised formulation is key for the analysis when comparing results between data sets (Converse, 1964; Zaller, 1990; Zaller and Feldman, 1992). For this analysis, particular interest is paid to the support for NATO. The first survey data to be analysed is from 2007, before the start of the Russo-Georgian conflict. The second data set used is from 2008, a survey conducted some months after the conflict started. The third is from 2013 and the fourth from 2014, before and after Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, respectively. The last two datasets analysed are from 2021 and 2022, the year before Russia invaded Ukraine and the year Russia began its invasion. In addition, several individual level background variables are included as control variables in the regressions. When using survey data, there is always a degree of skewness in the samples. It is therefore a strength to control for different background variables. As such, it is possible to make comparisons over time given that, in this case, there is control for gender, age, party choice, education, and area of residence. These variables are chosen based on previous research on which micro-level variables influence pro-participation attitudes towards large organisations (Anderson and Reichert, 1996; Berglund et al., 1998; Kostadinova, 2000).

Starting with age, there is not much evidence of age having an impact on support for defence cooperation. Early research shows that there are significant generational differences in how individuals respond to different events. Different generations have different experiences, which affect their views. External events and changes during a person's lifetime may therefore influence a person's attitudes (Mayer, 1992). This is also referred to as the generation gap (Holsti, 1996). There is nevertheless not much evidence for differences in attitude between age groups regarding support for military alliances (Kostadinova, 2000; Miller, 2021). For the analysis, the age variable is already on a ratio scale

2. In some cases, the sample has been weighted to represent the Finnish population more accurately at the time of the data collection. However, not all datasets include a weight variable. Therefore, weights will not be used in the analysis.

and does not require further recoding.

There is a wide consensus that there are clear gender differences in attitudes on defence and foreign policy issues. As an individual level factor, gender has turned out to be an important explanatory factor for foreign and security policy attitudes. Both in an American and European context, studies show that women are more responsive to casualties in war (Conover and Shapiro, 1993; Eichenberg, 2003). Men have also been shown to have a higher probability of supporting participation in military alliances (Zaller, 1992; Page and Shapiro, 1992). Eichenberg and Stoll (2012) found that even though women do not support defence spending to the same degree as men, the opinions among men and women fluctuate in the same way over time. This means that when public opinion reacts, there is a similar pattern among both women and men.

In Eastern European countries, there is clearly a higher probability of men supporting NATO than women (Kostadinova, 2000). In the United Kingdom, there are attitudinal differences between men and women on security policy issues, with men more likely to favour, for instance, support for the transatlantic relationship and nuclear deterrents (Clements and Thompson, 2021). Additionally, concerning trade, women have shown a lesser likelihood of supporting a liberalised trade in relation to men (Mansfield et al., 2015). In the analysis, the gender variable is coded as a dichotomous dummy variable (female = 1, male = 0).

Different education groups are coded into three education levels for the analyses, tertiary level, secondary level, and primary level. In the analysis, primary level education acts as a reference category. Education is an explanatory variable that is quite frequently highlighted in previous research (Zaller, 1992; Zaller and Feldman, 1992). A higher education means that a person has better information handling skills and thus is more reasonable about the future. More highly educated individuals have the capacity to form more comprehensive opinions about international issues and world events. This results in different attitudinal outcomes when compared to less educated people (Zaller, 1992). A higher level of education makes it thus more probable for a person to support different forms of international co-operation (Holsti, 1996; Schoen, 2007). There is a wide consensus among researchers that an individual's cognitive competence and ability to form more complex opinions increases when education level rises (Listaug, 1995).

Party choice and area of residence are also included as control variables. Previous studies show that partisanship is heavily correlated with a person's foreign policy attitudes. Scholars have highlighted clear polarisation between the left and the right on security issues when studying mass attitudes in different countries (Eichenberg, 1989; Everts, 1995; Isernia et al., 2002; Eichenberg and Stoll, 2015). Results from FPLP surveys[3] have shown great differences between members of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party (Holsti, 1996). Historically, leftist parties have preferred other types of investments than in defence. Those on the left are also less eager about the use of force in terms of conflict solution (Eichenberg, 1989). Left-leaning individuals also tend to be more inclined to oppose the use of military force and are overall more critical towards armed forces (Holsti, 1996; Juhász, 2001). In Sweden, support for NATO follows the traditional left-right scale (Berndtsson et al., 2016). Supporters of more right-leaning parties tend to be more prone to supporting NATO membership. Much lower support can be found among the left-leaning parties and their voters. Looking at Kostadinova (2000), attitudes in Eastern European follow the same pattern.

In Finland, most political parties have not been in favour of NATO membership, except for the National Coalition Party and The Swedish People's Party of Finland (Grönlund and Westinen, 2012; Roitto and Holmila, 2021). The party variable is coded into nine dummy variables. The parties are: the Left Alliance, Social Democratic Party of Finland, National Coalition Party, Centre Party in Finland, Swedish People's Party in Finland, Finns Party, Christian Democrats, and Green League. The last category includes all other answers ("Can't say", "Don't want

3. The Foreign Policy Leadership Project.

to answer", "Wouldn't vote", "Don't have the right to vote", "Other"). In the analysis, the Left Alliance is placed as a reference category. Regarding the party variable, it is interesting to explore whether there are differences between left- and right-leaning individuals. Unfortunately, the data sets do not include direct questions on where the respondents would place themselves on a left–right scale. Party predisposition as a control variable is therefore analysed through this proxy variable.

"Area of Residence" is coded into one (1) and zero (0), with one meaning more sparsely populated areas and zero urban areas (cities, towns). One (1) acts as a reference category in the analysis. Previous research indicates that there are differences in opinions on foreign and security issues between individuals living in rural areas and urban areas. In rural areas, for instance, individuals tend to fear terrorist attacks the most. Such fears, incidentally, are found in people who are least likely to become victims of such an attack (Ferraro, 1995). This coincides with Sunstein's statement that such a reaction is an emotional one rather than rational (Sunstein, 2003). Individuals in urban areas tend to be more in tune, or informed, about what is happening in the outside world.

In the analysis, the first aim is to investigate whether, and to what extent, support for NATO increases following a security crisis. In addition, a control is made to determine whether there are any associations on the individual level and if these associations hold over time. The method used in the analysis is multinomial regression analysis to test for the probability of an individual answering "yes" to Finnish NATO membership. The dependent variable has three unordered categories. An analysis is conducted regarding the effect on "yes" and "can't say", by placing "no" as a reference category.

The analysis has three major steps. Firstly, a brief presentation is made of the time series for NATO support in Finland. In the second step, three pair-wise models are run, meaning that an analysis is made of 2007-2008, 2013-2014, and 2021-2022, in three different regressions. The analysis contains pre- and post-logic, meaning that there is data both before and after a security crisis takes place. All models include control variables. The last part of the main analysis includes a pooled model. A regression is run with the year 2007 (non-crisis year) as a reference category and the remaining five years as dummy variables for each year. Using a pooled model with dummy variables for each year is to also control for individual level variables. The following section begins with a short overview of how NATO attitudes have developed in Finland over time followed by the regression models and a comprehensive analysis of the results.

Fluctuating NATO attitudes in Finland

Before the spring of 2022, overall scepticism of Finnish NATO membership was dominant among citizens. The proportion of pro-NATO attitudes had never been a majority before 2022. There have, of course, been many advocates for membership among Finnish politicians throughout the years. However, these politicians have most likely been overlooked due to weak support from the public. How Finnish citizens position themselves on foreign policy issues has had a big influence on the foreign policy orientations of Finnish decision makers, and this influence has clearly increased since the Cold War (Pesu, 2019). Relatively small changes in support have been documented over time with a couple of exceptions. Figure 1 presents the NATO opinion in Finland since 2005. As can be seen, there was a slight increase in support after the war in Georgia in 2008 and in the wake of the Crimean crisis in 2014. In 2022, the support increased dramatically when Russia invaded Ukraine.

The most likely, direct military threat since the Second World War has been perceived as possible aggression from Russia. This is why Finland's military neutrality and possible military alliances have been central topics in surveys on national security. In Figure 1, the wording of the survey question "In your opinion, should Finland seek membership in NATO?" in the ABDI surveys on foreign and security policies has not changed since 2005. First, the results from the first statistical analysis are presented in which multinomial logistic regression is used to measure whether the likelihood for supporting NATO increases in pair-wise models. In the first

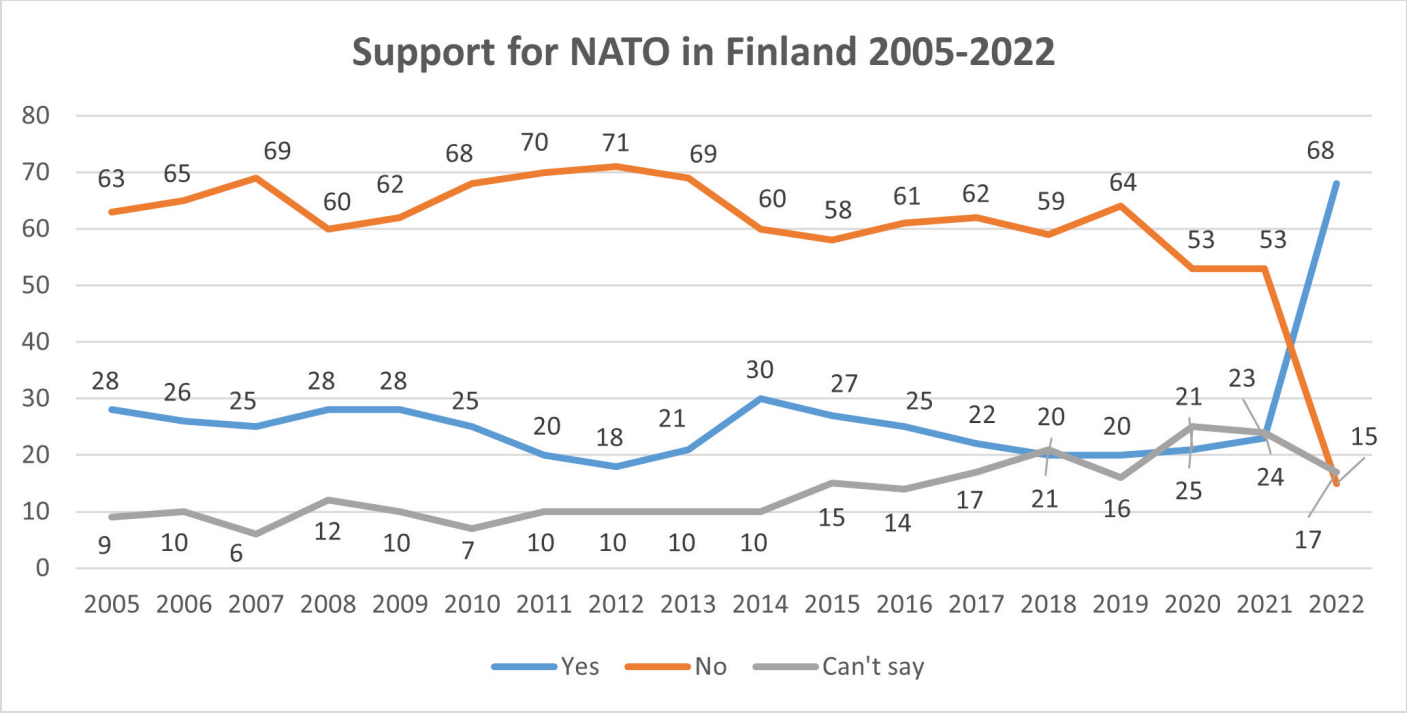

Figure 1. Support for NATO membership in Finland 2005–2022. The respondents answered the question: "In your opinion, should Finland seek membership in NATO?" Note: All entries are percentages. Unweighted data. Source: Advisory Board of Defence Information, ABDI.

model, in Table 1, 2008 is analysed with 2007 as a reference category. The other two models follow the same logic. Table 2 presents an additional, pooled model. In addition to the main analyses, six separate statistical models are run with only sociodemographic variables and the outcome variable (see appendix table A1). For consolidated viewing, those models are not presented in the text. In respective multinomial logistic regressions, the response alternative "no" acts as a reference category for the dependent variable.

Several significant associations can be identified in the regression results in Table 1. The first regression model includes data from 2007 (pre-Georgia crisis) and 2008 (post-Georgia crisis). The former year acts as a reference category. The two additional pairs of years represent models 2 and 3, following the same reference logic (pre- and post-Crimea crisis and pre- and post the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine). The control variables are not

Table 1. Multinomial logistic regression, Security crisis impact on support for NATO

	Model 1 2008 vs. 2007		**Model 2 2014 vs. 2013**		**Model 3 2022 vs. 2021**	
	Yes	Can't say	Yes	Can't say	Yes	Can't say
Post crisis	0.213	**0.907****	**0.556****	0.101	**2.557****	**0.923****
	(0.113)	(0.175)	(0.111	(0.148)	(0.130)	(0.139)
Intercept	-3.946	-3.002	-2.769	-2.758	-3.086	-1.064
	(0.561)	(0.539)	(0.381)	(0.553)	(0.363)	(0.350)
Pseudo R-Square (Nagelkerke)	0.165		0.123		0.354	
N	1968		2061		2003	

Note: **p<0.01; *p<0.05

presented in the first table. The results show that there is strong support for the hypothesis, meaning that the likelihood of a person supporting NATO increases in the wake of a security crisis, even though the associations vary between models. In all three models, the positive coefficients for the post crisis variable point toward this pattern. In 2008, it is possible to observe an increase in "yes", but the coefficient does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance ($p = 0.058$). The coefficient here is similar to the corresponding coefficient in the pooled regression analysis (see Table 2). An interesting outcome of model 1 is the increase in "can't say" among the respondents. This could be explained by the impact the war in Georgia had on Finns. This crisis might not have resulted in any large shifts towards a positive view of NATO membership. Instead, the crisis seems to have triggered a greater uncertainty among respondents. In 2008, 12 percent of respondents reported uncertain opinions on NATO membership. From that perspective, the results are robust.

Moving on to the second model in Table 1, there is a significant increase in support for NATO during the post crisis year. The difference between the coefficients in 2008 and 2014 is probably due to the nature of the crisis. The crisis in Ukraine, and with it the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, was probably perceived as far more severe from a Finnish perspective. The war in Georgia was a more distant world event, which would explain why there was not a significant increase in NATO support. However, the coefficient for "can't say" in model 1 indicates that citizens became more unsure in their opinions.

The strongest coefficient for support for NATO is found in model 3, where it is considerably higher than in the previous models. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in the spring of 2022 was followed by active political discussion in Finland concerning NATO. A significantly greater portion of Finnish citizens supported membership in the alliance compared to the year before. Simultaneously, as individuals became more positive towards membership, many became more uncertain. In Table 2 (pooled regression analysis), similar associations can be found to Table 1. The difference between 2007 and 2008 is quite small, and the support for NATO decreased in 2013 relative to 2007, after which it again increased in 2014. In 2021, the support among Finns again normalized, and then a large jump in support took place in 2022. The increase in "can't say" is of course a result of the peak in support, but also because many who were previously against membership became unsure.

When controlling for sociodemographic differences, men are more inclined, relatively speaking, to support NATO membership in relation to women and are more certain in their opinion. People living in urban areas are more likely to be supportive than people living in more rural areas. Party wise, right-leaning persons, in relation to those more left leaning, are more inclined to support NATO membership. In addition, highly educated people are more likely to be supportive in relation to those less educated.

Lastly, there is a brief examination of the regression in the appendix, which only includes the sociodemographic control variables. Here, some noteworthy patterns over time can be seen. All else equal, the tendency of men to respond "can't say" has decreased relative to women. In terms of gender differences, women have become more unsure of their views and at the same time, less negative towards NATO in the later models. There is a weaker non-significant association during 2022 for gender because the differences between the sexes have been levelled out due to the sharp increase in support for NATO. Nevertheless, the distribution of attitudes also shows that a large proportion of women became more unsure of their opinion in relation to previous years. There is a difference between parties in the middle and more right-leaning parties. These differences also increase over time, especially in 2022.

A notable observation is that the difference between the Swedish People's Party and the Left Alliance has decreased over time. Looking at the National Coalition Party, the difference has decreased in relation to the previous years. This is because supporters of the Left Alliance have become more positive towards NATO over time. The difference between the two opposites has

Table 2. Multinomial logistic regression, Security crisis impact on support for NATO

Variables	Model	
	Yes	Can't say
2008 (ref. 2007)	0.20	**0.85****
	(0.11)	(0.17)
2013 (ref. 2007)	**-0.30***	**0.65****
	(0.115)	(0.173)
2014 (ref. 2007)	**0.27***	**0.76****
	(0.11)	(0.17)
2021 (ref. 2007)	0.09	**1.79****
	(0.12)	(0.16)
2022 (ref. 2007)	**2.62****	**2.73****
	(0.13)	(0.18)
Gender (ref. female)	**0.21***	**-0.59****
	(0.07)	(0.09)
Area of residence (ref. rural)	**0.25****	**0.28***
	(0.08)	(0.10)
Education Secondary (Secondary ref.)	0.15	-0.077
	(0.09)	(0.11)
Education Tertiary (Primary ref.)	**0.36****	0.06
	(0.10)	(0.13)
PARTY (ref. Left Alliance)		
Social Democratic Party	**1.21****	**0.57***
	(0.18)	(0.20)
Green League	**1.22****	**0.67***
	(0.19)	(0.21)
True Finns	**1.29****	0.07
	(0.18)	(0.23)
Christian Democrats	**0.85****	**0.57***
	(0.26)	(0.29)
Centre party	**1.35****	**0.68****
	(0.18)	(0.21)
Swedish People's Party	**1.98****	**1.16***
	(0.32)	(0.39)
National Coalition Party	**2.74****	**1.14****
	(0.18)	(0.21)
Other party	**1.22****	**1.09****
	(0.17)	(0.18)
Intercept	-3.00	-2.85
	(0.22)	(0.26)
Pseudo R-Square (Nagelkerke)	0.29	
N	6032	

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

nevertheless remained at a high level. Generally, those voting for the National Coalition Party are the most supportive of NATO. It is worth noting that the attitudinal gap between the Green League and the Left Alliance increased when comparing the models. Higher educated people are more likely to support membership relative to less educated, and this difference increased in the wake of the war in Ukraine. No differences between urban and rural residency are found. This is probably due to the same reasons as the gender variable. Looking at age, there is a tendency for those who experienced the cold war to be more inclined to support NATO membership during later years. They have become more supportive than younger individuals but the change is limited and thus, no strong argument can be made.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this article was to study whether, and to what extent, support for NATO in Finland increases in the aftermath of a changing and deteriorating security environment. It was shown that the Finnish public does indeed react to such developments, becoming more likely to increase its support in the wake of a security crisis. It must be, however, noted that the strength of the coefficients differs between years. It should also be pointed out that attitude formation is a complex issue. This means that there is a vast number of variables that influence fluctuations in public opinion, many of which are not taken into account in the analysis.

The question then arises whether the increase in support for NATO membership is mainly a consequence of a deteriorating security environment or if it is a result of the increased saliency of national security issues. The analyses presented in this article are not sufficient to answer these questions. What the results clearly show, however, is that after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the likelihood of Finns supporting NATO clearly increased. The same phenomenon can be seen in 2014 but to a lesser extent. The increase may also be a result of an increased political awareness of these issues, making the question of national security and NATO a more prominent one. Even though the security environment experienced a major change in 2014, the support for NATO membership declined shortly thereafter. This decline was probably due to a decreased salience, or awareness, of the drawn-out conflict in Ukraine.

Simultaneously, as the proportion of NATO-supporters increased, Finns became more unsure in their opinions. This can be interpreted as people moving one step closer to supporting a NATO membership. It may also be a sign of resistance

or ambiguity towards this specific security policy issue. This is, however, less likely based on the overall distribution of opinions. The formation of non-attitudes might take place if the individual lacks sufficient knowledge about the issue at hand. Another aspect could be that the issue is not considered relevant or important at that point in the person's life. Individuals might also feel more conflicted than before, making them unable to form a specific opinion.

The results from the regression analyses are compelling, corresponding to findings in previous studies conducted in other parts of the world, both in Europe and overseas (Page and Shapiro, 1992; Holsti, 1996; Kostadinova, 2000; Eichenberg, 2007; Chubb and McAllister, 2021). For the Finnish population, Russian aggressions toward other countries changed the security landscape, and many Finns repositioned themselves on national security issues after these events. Furthermore, the results provide evidence of sociodemographic differences and support for NATO. As it turns out, men are prone to be more supportive of membership than women, and have, over time, been more certain in their views. During recent years, however, these differences have levelled out due to the surge in support across the whole population. Highly educated individuals differ from the less educated in their views, also confirming the findings of previous scholars (Holsti, 1996; Schoen, 2007; Kostadinova, 2000).

It needs to be pointed out, however, that the attitudinal differences between education groups only seem to really occur in connection to the war in Ukraine in 2022. In the aftermath thereof, many political parties that previously opposed NATO membership now supported it. Whether this shift was a result of a change in public opinion or not is beyond the scope of this analysis. Why people living in urban areas are more willing to join NATO than those living in rural areas is probably that, as Sunstein (2003) points out, rural citizens are less in tune with the outside world. Another explanation could be that the feeling of safety varies between those living in the countryside and those in cities. Perhaps living in a city makes one feel more exposed to the threat of military actions.

This article provided an insight into what explains public opinion on issues regarding military co-operation and alliances, especially in a geographically isolated country such as Finland – a country that, at the same time, shares one of the longest borders with Russia. Military actions by Finland's neighbour clearly results in a stronger will among Finns to further integrate with the West by joining NATO. Even though the question of NATO membership has been a recurrent one for many years, a completely new security situation is now being experienced with a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Will this rapid change in public support hold over time or will it revert to previous levels after the crisis? This could be the case, especially when and if the perceived threat from Russia decreases and the security situation changes. If this occurs, Finns will probably desire a more moderate NATO policy, resulting again in a larger opposition towards Finland's membership than experienced now.

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Table A1. Multinomial logistic regression predicting NATO support

	2007		2008		2013		2014		2021		2022	
	Yes	Can't say	Yes	Can't say	Yes	Can't say	Yes	Can't say	Yes	Can't say	Yes	Can't say
Gender (ref. female)	0.13	-1.18**	0.05	-0.52*	0.14	-0.48*	0.2	-0.54*	0.57**	-0.47**	0.21	-0.61**
	-0.16	-0.33	-0.16	-0.21	-0.17	-0.22	-0.15	-0.22	-0.18	-0.17	-0.19	-0.23
Age	0.01	-0.01	0	0	0	-0.01*	-0.01	-0.01*	0	-0.01*	0.01**	0
	0	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Secondary education (ref. primary)	0.12	0.28	0.21	-0.49	0.14	-0.26	0.12	0.2	-0.17	0.04	0.54*	0.37
	-0.19	-0.33	-0.2	-0.24	-0.23	-0.26	-0.2	-0.28	-0.27	-0.25	-0.27	-0.32
Tertiary education (ref. primary)	0.24	-0.11	0.22	-0.56	0.49	-0.17	0.19	0.57	0.16	0.46	0.66*	0.14
	-0.25	-0.47	-0.25	-0.32	-0.26	-0.31	-0.24	-0.34	-0.28	-0.26	-0.19	-0.35
Area of residence (ref. rural)	0.47*	0.39	0.23	0.55*	0.46*	0.72*	0.21	-0.02	0.117	0.09	0.04	0.06
	-0.2	-0.35	-0.18	-0.25	-0.21	-0.28	-0.19	-0.26	-0.21	-0.2	-0.24	-0.29
Social Democratic Party (ref. Left alliance)	2.09**	17.83	2.12**	0.51	0.66	0.4	1.11*	2.01	0.44	0.19	1.62**	0.79
	-0.74	0	-0.75	-0.5	-0.51	-0.64	-0.45	-1.08	-0.44	-0.33	-0.37	-0.45
Green League (ref. Left alliance)	1.78*	17.60**	1.96*	-0.02	0.66	1.19*	1.13**	1.64	0.87	0.57	2.12**	1.65**
	-0.79	-0.59	-0.77	-0.58	-0.54	-0.61	-0.46	-1.12	-0.49	-0.37	-0.53	-0.59
True Finns (ref. Left alliance)	1.87*	0.12	2.01**	-0.61	0.74	-0.39	1.26**	2.19*	1.16**	-0.03	1.21**	-0.17
	-0.82	-4628	-0.78	-0.74	-0.49	-0.7	-0.43	-1.07	-0.41	-0.37	-0.36	-0.5
Christian Democrats (ref. Left alliance)	2.11*	0.104	1.93*	-0.041	0.54	19.43	0.08	2.163	1.02	0.754	0.15	0.545
	-0.86	-5899	-0.81	-0.7	-0.77	0	-0.85	-1.27	-0.6	-0.5	-0.52	-0.58
Centre party (ref. Left alliance)	2.66**	17.81**	1.84*	0.09	0.83	0.8	1.14**	2.24*	0.91	0.65	1.69**	0.78
	-0.75	-0.54	-0.76	-0.54	-0.49	-0.59	-0.43	-1.05	-0.49	-0.39	-0.49	-0.59
Swedish People's Party (ref. Left Alliance)	2.21*	0.08	3.40**	0.71	2.69***	1.89	1.11	2.42	1.42	0.67	1.35	1.04
	-1.08	0	-0.98	-1.22	-0.76	-1.02	-0.92	-1.51	-0.75	-0.7	-0.82	-0.92
National Coalition Party (ref. Left Alliance)	3.82**	18.95**	3.76**	0.99	1.83**	1.01	2.59**	2.34*	2.59**	0.87*	2.59**	1.08
	-0.75	-0.49	-0.75	-0.56	-0.48	-0.61	-0.43	-1.09	-0.42	-0.39	-1.62	-0.56
Other (ref. Left Alliance)	2.32*	18.65**	2.02**	0.62	0.77	1.17*	1.11**	2.97**	0.85*	0.82**	0.87**	0.59
	-0.74	-0.4	-0.74	-0.47	-0.47	-0.55	-0.4	-1.02	-0.4	-0.29	-0.3	-0.35
Intercept	-4.32	-20.09	-3.38	-2.3	-2.8	-2.3	-2.19	-3.62	-2.39	-0.86	-1.05	-0.6
	-0.79	-0.7	-0.79	-0.63	-0.57	-0.67	-0.5	-1.08	-0.55	-0.44	-0.49	-0.57
Pseudo R-Square (Nagelkerke)	0.2		0.15		0.12		0.13		0.16		0.16	
N	986		974		1036		1013		990		996	

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

Table A2. The distribution of attitudes towards NATO membership by party choice (%) 2007–2022

Political party 2007	Other	Green League	Christian Democrats	True Finns	Swedish People's Party	Centre Party	National Coalition Party	Social Democratic Party	Left Alliance
Yes	21.1	15.6	20.7	17.4	20	28.5	56.2	20.7	3.2
No	68.8	78.9	79.3	82.6	80	67.2	36.2	74.7	96.8
Can't say	10.2	5.6	0	0	0	4.4	7.7	4.6	0
Political party 2008									
Yes	21.6	23.7	22.7	25	54.5	20	60.7	24.4	3.8
No	62.7	67	68.2	70	36.4	70.8	29.6	61.6	84.4
Can't say	15.7	9.3	9.1	5	9.1	9.2	9.6	14	11.5
Political party 2013									
Yes	16.4	16	17.6	17.6	57.1	17.8	39.7	16.7	10.2
No	67.5	65.3	82.4	79.1	28.6	72.2	50.4	75.4	83.1
Can't say	16.1	18.7	0	3.4	14.3	10.1	9.9	7.9	6.8
Political party 2014									
Yes	23.3	30.1	11.1	28.8	25	25.3	60.3	26.9	12.3
No	58.6	63	77.8	63.2	62.5	65.7	33.6	65.4	86.2
Can't say	18.1	6.8	11.1	8	12.5	9	6	7.7	1.5
Political party 2021									
Yes	16.7	16.4	19.4	27	26.7	18.2	54.9	13.5	9.4
No	51	53.5	51.6	59.5	46.7	55.8	28.3	65.5	68.8
Can't say	32.3	30.1	29	13.5	26.7	26	16.8	20.9	21.9
Political party 2022									
Yes	57.1	70.3	45.2	71.3	62.5	77	87.7	74.5	44.2
No	19.4	6.8	25.8	19.4	12.5	9.5	4.3	10.2	33.7
Can't say	23.5	23	29	9.3	25	13.5	8	15.3	22.1

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Table A3. The distribution of attitudes towards NATO membership by gender (%) 2007–2022

Gender 2007	Male	Female
Yes	25.7	23.9
No	71.6	67.1
Can't say	2.7	9
Gender 2008		
Yes	29.4	25
No	61.3	60.7
Can't say	9.3	14.3
Gender 2013		
Yes	21.7	18.3
No	70	68.2
Can't say	8.2	13.5
Gender 2014		
Yes	31.3	25.8
No	60.7	60.5
Can't say	8	13.7
Gender 2021		
Yes	29.7	14.4
No	53	55
Can't say	17.3	30.6
Gender 2022		
Yes	73	61.4
No	15.2	15.1
Can't say	11.8	23.5

Table A4. The distribution of attitudes towards NATO membership by education level (%) 2007–2022

Education, 2007	Primary	Seconday	Tertiary
Yes	21.6	24.8	31.5
No	73.4	68.5	63.6
Can't say	5	6.7	4.9
Education 2008			
Yes	20.1	27.7	34.6
No	62.9	62.2	56
Can't say	17	10	9.4
Education 2013			
Yes	14.9	18.7	26.8
No	71.6	71.5	61.6
Can't say	13.5	9.9	11.6
Education 2014			
Yes	24.6	28	33.1
No	65	61.4	54.5
Can't say	10.3	10.6	12.4
Education 2021			
Yes	20.8	20.4	23.8
No	55.4	57.9	47.6
Can't say	23.8	21.7	28.7
Education 2022			
Yes	55.3	66.9	72.7
No	23.6	14.7	13
Can't say	21.1	18.4	14.4

Table A5. The distribution of attitudes towards NATO membership by area of residence (%) 2007–2022

Residence, 2007	Urban	Other
Yes	26.7	19.3
No	67	76
Can't say	6.3	4.7
Residence 2008		
Yes	28.1	25
No	58.9	65.9
Can't say	13	9.1
Residence 2013		
Yes	21.8	14.3
No	65.9	79
Can't say	12.3	6.7
Residence 2014		
Yes	29.4	25.1
No	59.8	63.7
Can't say	10.9	11.2
Residence 2021		
Yes	22	20.8
No	53	57.2
Can't say	25	22
Residence 2022		
Yes	66.9	69
No	15.5	14
Can't say	17.6	17

Table A6. The distribution of attitudes towards NATO membership by age group (%) 2007–2022

Age groups, 2007	**15-29**	**30-44**	**45-59**	**60-79**
Yes	22.3	24.3	23.9	28.2
No	69.3	68.1	72.3	68
Can't say	8.4	7.6	3.8	3.8
Age groups, 2008				
Yes	30.3	21	31.6	24.2
No	57.6	68.9	55.8	63.2
Can't say	12.1	10	12.6	12.6
Age groups, 2013				
Yes	19.5	20.2	19.4	20.5
No	65.6	66.8	72.8	71
Can't say	14.9	13	7.8	8.6
Age groups, 2014				
Yes	30.3	27.6	25.1	29.6
No	57.4	60	62.1	62.9
Can't say	12.3	12.4	12.8	7.5
Age groups, 2021				
Yes	16.8	20.4	22.2	24.2
No	48.5	52.6	57	55.2
Can't say	34.7	27	20.7	20.7
Age groups, 2022				
Yes	55.5	63.7	72.6	71.3
No	22	14.9	16.3	12
Can't say	22.6	21.4	11.2	16.7

Discussion Article

Rethinking Finnish–Swedish relations, Nordic cooperation, and NATO

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Abstract

Two of the long-lasting consequences of the dramatic year 2022 are Finland and Sweden's decisions to apply for NATO membership, taken on 15 and 16 May respectively. The decisions resulted from the Russian large-scale aggression against Ukraine at the end of February. With and around these decisions, we can see a myriad of adjustments, policy changes, shifts of public opinion, and turnarounds in discourse on security and defence. This article takes up some of these issues and reflects on where they might be leading, not only for Finland and Sweden, but also for Nordic cooperation and NATO in the near future.

Keywords

Finland, Sweden, NATO membership, bilateral defence cooperation, Nordic defence cooperation

Introduction

There are three questions that deserve a closer look and some problematisation. The first question is the bilateral security and defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden. It has deepened in the recent years to a degree that made it imperative for the two to advance together on the NATO membership issue. What is its meaning and role once the two countries are in NATO? The second question is the importance and meaning of Nordic cooperation. How will the overall security dynamics, but also the institutional balances, change once all five Nordic countries are in NATO? The third and final question is the question of emerging leadership. It seems something of a novelty to see Finland take the lead in a process of fundamental policy change, here leading Sweden to NATO. Will that be a start of a more lasting tendency, or will leadership be split and shifting in the North?

Alongside these questions, this article will reflect on the customary ways of speaking about our security and defence political conventions, on the quick changes in discourses, and on the need for finding a common one, a commonly accepted consensual description of what is happening and arguments for why the decisions that have been taken have been the good and right ones. Notably, we see quick changes in speaking about NATO. Are we about to find a new way of thinking about NATO, or rather discovering the plurality of views around its role?[1]

New circumstances for bilateral defence cooperation

Starting with the bilateral security and defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden, we have observed a continuous development since 2014 towards something much more intense and deeper than the forms and levels of cooperation they have with other countries. The framework, the Memorandum of Understanding from 2018, extends cooperation beyond peacetime to cover times of crisis, conflicts, and war. The Finnish-Swedish defence cooperation covers operational planning in all situations, and includes situational awareness, joint use of logistics and infrastructure, host nation support arrangements, surveillance and safeguarding of territorial integrity, and cooperation in the field of defence materiel and industry. As the Finnish Ministry of Defence puts it: "Finland's objective is to create permanent conditions for military cooperation and joint operations between Finland and Sweden, which will apply all circumstances. No restrictions are set in advance for intensified bilateral cooperation" (Ministry of Defence).

The two now organize brigade-size common training exercises, developing concepts for joint deployments. They deploy a joint Amphibious Task Unit, and plan to fully operationalize a joint Naval Task Group by 2023. They also use each other's naval and air bases and organize joint anti-submarine exercises. The two have not, however, formed a formal defence alliance or signed a treaty of mutual defence. Here, it is worthwhile to think for a moment about the background of this cooperation and about the conditions that have made it possible. While an important part of the reasons for the cooperation to grow can be practical and even economic in character, there are factors at play that facilitate this cooperation, notably trust and resemblance—two features that are interrelated.

What is a cause and what is a consequence is rarely obvious, and this applies to trust and resemblance in Finnish-Swedish relations, too. Are the two trustful because of the many similarities between the two countries? Similarity can be thought of as a good basis for cooperation to grow. But cooperation also leads to more similarity, through the spreading and adoption of good practices and solutions. At the same time, similarity may also decrease the attraction and value of cooperation: more of the same is not necessarily as good as something new that stands out as a clear improvement or benefit. Trust may be a decisive factor that enables specialisation and leaning on another country when

1. Among the recent writings on the subject, I would like to highlight Herolf, Gunilla (2022) 'Svensk säkerhetspolitik i ett Natoperspektiv' and Tiilikainen, Teija (2022) 'Finlands väg till Nato', both in 'Proceedings and Journal', The Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, NR 3/2022. I would also like to thank Gunilla Herolf for her invaluable comments on an earlier draft of this commentary.

Ojanen, Hanna (2023) Rethinking Finnish–Swedish relations, Nordic cooperation, and NATO. *Nordic Review of International Studies* 1, 25–32.

it comes to some special capabilities.

For being two rather small geographically neighbouring countries, Sweden and Finland have taken rather dissimilar decisions on their defence since the end of the Cold War. In the early 2000s, Sweden reoriented its security policy to emphasise crisis management. The change of focus implied sizing down its defence forces and reducing the number of conscript soldiers, and abolition of peacetime conscript service in 2010. Finland continued on the path of territorial defence and conscription. Russia's annexation of Crimea meant for Sweden a start of a return to emphasising territorial defence: to increasing military spending and partially reactivating mandatory military service, as well as seeking broader and deeper defence cooperation with other states (the so-called Hultqvist doctrine).

Further differences between the two countries can be found in the size of their defence industries, where Sweden is among the larger European actors, and Finland a small one, something that impacts their views of defence industrial cooperation in the EU. And clear differences can be seen in the ways the two have been speaking about neutrality, non-alignment, and about NATO. It is here that we can see signs of increasing similarity, too. In the past, neutrality may have had different connotations in Sweden and in Finland and one can discuss the extent to which neutrality has been a question of identity. Yet, the two countries came together in late 1990s to underline the instrumental character of non-alignment—for instance, as the foreign ministers of the two countries jointly did in 1997 as they were expressing their support for deepening relations with NATO in the new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. On NATO, Finland used for a long time the notion of 'NATO option' to characterise its policy of staying outside but underlining the possibility to decide to apply for membership at any point in time. Sweden did not, but the notion of 'option' made its way even to Stockholm in 2021.

In practice, the deep bilateral cooperation meant that the two countries needed to move together on the NATO membership issue. It might not be possible to continue their close cooperation if one of them is in NATO and the other is not: information exchange, planning and exercises, and perhaps even the overall focus could become complicated. At the same time, NATO membership would in all likelihood not be able to compensate for the loss of that bilateral relationship. It would still be more important for the two to work together. Even if NATO allies have fundamentally important new ways of supporting them, the closest help at hand and the shared security environment would count the most in a crisis.

The way the two were coordinating their steps and decisions in Spring 2022 was very swift. The change of public opinion in Finland was very quick, but so was the policy change in Sweden, given that the Swedish government was still saying that the country would stay out of NATO in February. Now, the two aim at entering the alliance together before long despite the intervention of Turkey in the enlargement process. Turkey seems to aim at maximising the concessions it can get before it ratifies the accession protocols. Signalling that it sees big differences between the two countries, it hints at possibly keeping Sweden out of NATO for a longer time than Finland.

What is particularly interesting in this tandem membership application is the way the two communicate about their intention to stay and move together, even when faced with such potential hindrances. This is not typical at all of NATO enlargements. NATO enlargements are processes where states enter one by one, following their own trajectories and Membership Action Plans. They are evaluated on their own merits, as are countries applying for any international organisation. Here, we can speak about a pair of countries that could join separately but that prefer to join together. We speak about a value added that comes from the two being able to continue to work together on defence without interruption.

Bilateral relations are important for other NATO countries, too, and particularly the USA cultivates bilateral relations even inside the Alliance. Both Finland and Sweden now negotiate on deepened cooperation with the USA, including on terms of hosting US troops (Finnish Government, 2022;

Reuters, 2023). Meanwhile, Finland and Sweden seem not to have been very vocal in spelling out how their bilateral cooperation could benefit NATO. It would seem, however, that they have a case in that their combined military strength is notable and they are on their way of being able to combine their forces, too. The Finnish-Swedish example of deepened cooperation and the understanding of how resemblance and trust play a role in it could be quite interesting and useful for NATO at large.

In any case, the two have tried their best to show their value as future NATO members. What comes to mind is the EU entrance of Sweden and Finland where the two needed to show particular loyalty to the new Common Foreign and Security Policy. They were met with suspicion because of the long tradition of neutrality, and they needed to, together with the third neutral applicant, Austria, sign a declaration about fully accepting the contents of this policy. And, once they were members, Sweden and Finland did profile themselves—acting together—as particularly active and constructive participants in the development of the EU's new policies, notably crisis management.

What is the weight of Nordic cooperation?

What the Finnish and Swedish policy of entering NATO together also recalls is the decision to enlarge the Schengen area to cover non-EU members Iceland and Norway at the time when Sweden and Finland entered the EU. This was a remarkable recognition of the fundamental importance, even priority, of Nordic cooperation vis-à-vis the EU. In fact, during the negotiation process, the importance of the Nordic passport union was highlighted, and Denmark, as the one Nordic country already in the EU, declared that it will not accept any EU norm implying an encroachment of the Nordic passport freedom. The entrance of Finland and Sweden into the EU would not be allowed to create a Schengen border between these countries and Norway. As Norway and Iceland became Schengen-associated, the Nordic order prevailed.

What will the contribution and significance of Nordic cooperation now be in NATO? It is a remarkable change in the current order that all five Nordic countries will be members of NATO. The Nordic countries have cooperated in security policy for a longer time than what is often thought. Their institutional cooperation was, mainly to make it politically possible for Finland to take part, presented and understood as not being about foreign or security policy. Yet, these issues were never formally ruled out—as a matter of fact, they were explicitly allowed for. The Nordic ministers for foreign affairs started their regular meetings already in the 1930s, and the defence ministers' meetings started in a regular form in the 1960s, first concentrating on UN peacekeeping. At the same time, these meetings were also a platform to informally approach other defence-related issues.

In the 1990s, the defence ministers' agenda was broadened to cover, for instance, armament questions. Meanwhile in the EU, the first informal meeting of EU defence ministers was organised only in 1998. Nordic Defence Cooperation NORDEFCO started in 2009 based on these pre-existing forms of cooperation and it has been evolving since, now with the Vision 2025 on improving defence capability and cooperation, including in crisis and conflict, setting the goals of, among others, minimal restrictions on military mobility and more cooperation in military security of supply.

Because of this cooperation and considering that Nordic cooperation is even more advanced in other related policy fields, we might in practical terms be expecting a common Nordic voice concerning many issues in NATO—even more so as NATO looks more than previously at the civilian or societal side of security. Resilience has come up as one of the issues where the Nordics could work together in NATO. The Nordic Prime Ministers met in Oslo in August 2022, and they adopted a Joint statement on Nordic cooperation in security and defence that mentions the aim to contribute actively to the development and strengthening of NATO as a military and political alliance (Prime Minister's Office). Resilience, security of supply, and hybrid threats were taken up as issues where they can cooperate further and work for in NATO.

At the same time, the Nordics have been underlining

time and again that there will be no Nordic bloc in NATO. The question one might pose here is why there is such a need for denying such intentions, and why this would be bad for NATO. The enlargement to Sweden and Finland may lead to the observation that a remarkable share of the whole membership is geographically in the North, and that they might be able to influence the future of NATO in ways that would not be welcome for all just by bringing more Northern issues on NATO's agenda. Again, speaking about blocs is something that brings one back to the time of Finland and Sweden entering the EU. Then, the question that was worrying many old member states was the possibility that the new member states might build an influential group together with Germany, a potential counterweight to France or the UK. And again, it was repeatedly said that there would be no bloc.

And again, we need to note that the Nordics do not necessarily share similar points of view on all issues. When it comes to their own surroundings, the High North or Arctic issues, for instance, the five view the area from very different standpoints. It is also important to note that there is a larger shift going on when it comes to the institutions of cooperation in the Nordic-Baltic-Arctic broader area. The institutions that were set up in the 1990s with the specific intention to facilitate new forms of cooperation with Russia, the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, are now frozen or in a phase of deep reconsideration. At the same time, the need for cooperation increases: this is noted above all when it comes to matters of climate change, environment, and energy. New constellations for cooperation might still emerge.

What is notable is how the ways of speaking change. One used to say that one of the strengths of Nordic cooperation was that the differences in their institutional affiliations did not matter: the Nordic countries were able to cooperate to such an extent even if they were not all members of NATO nor all members of the EU. Now, something different is being said: in fact, same institutional affiliations are helpful. It will become easier to cooperate—the Prime Ministers in Oslo even mentioned that their defence cooperation will become more binding with the NATO accession of Finland and Sweden. Added to this, Denmark joining the EU's security and defence policy as a result of the referendum in 2022, which lifts Denmark's opt-out policy that has been in place since the Maastricht Treaty, will allow for a new take for the Nordics even in the EU.

New ways of speaking, new thinking?

Speaking in a new way about Nordic cooperation is only one of the many examples of the new ways of describing, framing, and arguing, and one of the new discourses that are now taking shape. One example is the need to find suitable ways of expressing the role of NATO in national defence in a way that is pointing at its clear usefulness but without being too abrupt a change, or without endangering too much of the traditional reliance on national defence, particularly in Finland. Speaking about NATO in a way that highlights its role in deterrence seems to become central. Similarly, ways of expressing the role of Sweden and Finland within NATO will be found.

Speaking and thinking about nuclear weapons changes, too. It seemed first as if the Norwegian and Danish models of national reservations on nuclear weapons (and NATO troops) being permanently based on their territories would become a model for Sweden and Finland as well. One might remember that these very issues were already long ago taken up as examples of small countries being able to influence NATO in questions that are important for them. First, thus, the five Nordics seemed to be in unison on the issue. The Swedish Prime Minister specifically underlined this intention, but in Finland, the government chose to emphasise that it was not making any reservations at all.

This 'Nordic model' was not adopted, and in the end, Sweden seemed to follow Finland—at least somewhat, the new minister for foreign affairs having said again that Sweden makes that reservation (Expressen, 2022). The reasons for avoiding reservations beforehand might have to do primarily with the process of accession and the need to ensure that there are no sticking points or positions that might lead to doubts among the old

member states. Already the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons of 2017 showed the attention paid to what NATO partners, notably the USA, had to say on the matter; Finland and Sweden never signed that treaty.

What also constitutes a change to prevailing thinking is that Finland now joins NATO at a time of unprecedented crisis and war—what used to be said was quite the contrary, namely that it would be best for Finland to join at a moment when the overall security situation was calm and that it would be too late to try to join once a crisis had hit. The policymakers apparently needed to find a coherent reasoning and storyline. Now, some earlier ways of speaking are being liberated from what was a political need to mask them. In 2014, Finnish participation in an exercise around Iceland could not be about air surveillance, only about training in cooperation with unarmed fighters; now, air surveillance is approached as one of the tasks that NATO membership can entail.

Some elements of the storyline seem to stay. In Finland, a central, and cherished, notion has been the freedom of manoeuvre or freedom of movement. We used to think that the 'NATO option' signalled this freedom. The Russian views and wishes expressed in late 2021 about agreeing on not enlarging NATO were seen in Finland as a direct threat to this freedom. No wonder NATO accession and membership have then been described as a way of guaranteeing that freedom of movement again. It is in the interest of policymakers to underline their independence and power to make their own choices, be it about neutrality, non-alignment, or alignment and alliance. We certainly see a new, confident, and upbeat discourse around NATO geared to dispel any doubts and to quickly build the necessary consensus on the accession, not only in the applying states but also in the old NATO member states. It seems to be one where Finnish and Swedish NATO membership strengthens nearly everything in the end: the security of these countries, the security of NATO, and Nordic cooperation.

Where will we go from here? Once everyone is strengthened, what will happen? The big question in the background is what direction NATO will take. In NATO, the year of war in Ukraine has brought consensus and resolve. Before it, there were many question marks, not least about the role of the United States or whether NATO should be concentrating more on China. One could reasonably expect a variety of voices to rise again when it comes to NATO's tasks and role in the future as the questions that were on the table before the Russian war on Ukraine come back.

One such issue is the relationship between the EU and NATO. It is fundamentally a question about two very different ways of organising defence cooperation in Europe, ways that could be complementary and which are both needed. It is also a divisive issue in the sense that the membership of the two organisations is not and cannot be fully identical, and the fears of the EU somehow weakening NATO are widely shared. At the same time, the growing competences of the EU are for many a source of concern. Yet, one might argue that a real deepening of NATO defence cooperation needs the help of the EU, notably in legislation on issues such as military mobility, on defence procurement and defence industry, and on public spending when it comes to, for instance, infrastructure.

What might Finland and Sweden have to say on this issue? And how will the relationship between Finland and Sweden be shaped in the future? A common theme here is leadership: leadership within NATO, and leadership within this Nordic duo. In the bilateral relationship, we have seen in an interesting way how Finland has taken a leading role. Here, a final comparison to the EU enlargement times could be made. It was a disappointment for many in Finland that at the time, the tandem did not seem to work and the Nordic agreements and joint understandings were not followed as Sweden communicated its decision to apply for EC membership rather abruptly and left Finland little chance but to speed up and change course as well as discourse. Perhaps Finland was simply not alert enough to hear and see what was happening, while Sweden was fast to react to the changes in Europe.

Now, the Finnish relative slowness has paid off: not having changed that much in its defence political and strategic thinking, it finds itself very well

positioned in the current circumstances. It can also use its instrumental thinking about security policy, shifting quicker than Sweden, which is more identity-based. Short term, thus, Finland leads: it has the right mindset, the right position, and the readiness to move. Long term, the situation may be different again. Who will be leading once the countries are in NATO? This might be a question of knowledge and skills and being able to take an active role early in the preparation of policies.

The two countries have not always been on the same page in their EU policies. In NATO, they could in the end have somewhat differing profiles again, Sweden being more transatlantic and Finland perhaps more Euro-Atlantic. But NATO is a totally new platform for their relations and may have a galvanising impact on their roles, particularly in hybrid threats and societal security. What about leadership in normative questions, in issues about NATO's future tasks? It could well be that Sweden takes that role again, testing both the Finnish capacity to follow and the degree of Nordic unity.

In the end, we might be seeing a quick change in how the pieces of the puzzle connect and a new unexpected picture emerging. Perhaps we still need to identify some missing pieces along the way. We might also need more critical voices and a more varied debate on the big issues that NATO faces, as well as on the roles and policies of Finland and Sweden. What the discussion on NATO membership has done already is that it has increased the interest of outsiders towards Finnish and Swedish policy choices. This interest may be just what is needed for an improved self-understanding.

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Discussion Article

NATO and climate security: Potential for a leading role for Finland and Sweden?

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Abstract

In recent years, NATO has put significant effort into advancing its work on the linkages between security and climate change. In the NATO summit in Madrid in 2022, the alliance declared its climate neutrality target, and it has previously announced it aims to become a leading organisation on climate security. For the potential new NATO members Finland and Sweden, climate security can also prove to be a relevant topic through which to contribute to the agenda of the alliance, as both countries prioritise climate issues in their foreign policies. In order to provide a meaningful input to climate security within NATO, however, the countries need to shape their message beyond presumed climate security know-how. This is not to be taken as a given especially as it may be in the interest of the countries to focus on traditional military security issues rather than climate change in the NATO context. Yet by neglecting climate security altogether, Finland and Sweden risk missing an opportunity to contribute to the strategic planning of the alliance in a field of emerging importance.

Keywords

climate security, NATO, Finland, Sweden, comprehensive security

Introduction

Speaking at the summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Madrid in June 2022, General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg described climate change as a 'defining challenge of our time' and argued that the alliance would 'set the gold standard' on addressing its security implications. He also announced NATO's aim to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, aided by a new methodology it has developed for measuring its greenhouse gas emissions. While seemingly unexpected for a military alliance, the strong statements on climate change did not come out of the blue. The emissions reduction goal is just one move in a process that has been ongoing for some years.

In 2021 the alliance adopted a Climate Change and Security Action Plan, in which it stated an aim to take a leading role globally in promoting the understanding of and adaptation to the security impacts of climate change and to significantly reduce emissions from military-related activities. The plan was followed up with a Climate Security Impact Assessment, also published at the Madrid summit, evaluating expected changes in NATO's strategic environment, its operations, and on resilience and civil preparedness. According to the assessment, NATO needs to 'transform' its approach to security and defence in order to adapt to climate hazards and retain the effectiveness of its operations.

Coincidentally, NATO's climate commitment is taking shape concurrently with the Finnish and Swedish membership processes. The Madrid summit, where NATO's climate neutrality target was announced, also marked a step forward on the membership path for Finland and Sweden. In both countries, media attention on the results of the summit focused on an agreement that seemed to provide the means to end Turkey's stalling on the acceptance of the prospective new members. The climate security discussion was largely ignored, and it has played little role in the membership processes of either country. Yet as NATO appears to be committed to continuing its engagement on climate change, Finland and Sweden may well end up being looked upon for insights based on their previous experience in wider security and climate security.

In this article, I argue that climate security can provide a relevant and meaningful avenue for Finland and Sweden to contribute to the agenda of the alliance, but only if they are willing to put deliberate effort into shaping their message beyond presupposed claims of climate security know-how. At present, however, both countries look set to focus their NATO agenda on more traditional military security issues, where the membership opens new possibilities. Yet by neglecting climate security in the NATO context, Finland and Sweden may end up missing an opportunity to contribute to forward-looking strategic planning in a field of emerging importance within the alliance.

NATO and climate change

Climate security is not a term invented by NATO, but rather an established concept in international politics as well as academic research. It refers to the risks which climate change poses to the security of states, societies, and individuals. This entails, for instance, the direct threat of extreme weather, such as floods and storms, on human life and health, but also indirect dynamics through which climate impacts may contribute to the onset of forced migration or societal instability. In addition to climate change itself, the sustainability transition needed to mitigate it will generate risks, such as new resource dependencies and geopolitical tensions.

NATO's interest in environmental issues dates back at least to 1969, when it established the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS), which also included environmental challenges. Since then, NATO has engaged in environmental issues through scientific research activities and, since 1999, the NATO Environmental Protection Working Group. Climate change was first mentioned in the Strategic Concept in 2010, and in 2014, NATO adopted a Green Defence Framework with the aim of transforming its use of energy and environmental resources while improving sustainability.

Even against this backdrop, NATO can be seen as a latecomer to climate security. Several other international actors have indeed been more forward-looking in this field. Within the United Nations (UN),

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climate change was linked to security in Security Council debates already in 2007, and a UN Climate Security Mechanism was set up as a coordinating body in 2018. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has worked on climate change since 2007, for example, through regional climate security risk assessments that have been produced since 2013. Even the EU, which has also been described as a slow climate security actor, has integrated climate change into all aspects of its foreign and security policy since the publication of its Global Strategy in 2016.

However, NATO's engagement with climate change has evolved progressively in a short time, leading up to the Madrid summit in 2022. The Climate Change and Security Action Plan (CCSAP) from 2021 focused on outlining tasks and responsibilities that NATO has yet to take on or fulfil regarding climate change. It lists four dimensions of work: allied awareness, adaptation, mitigation, and outreach. These entail, for instance, annual Climate Change and Security Impact Assessments to increase the awareness of allied countries, and, for mitigation, the development of a methodology for measuring greenhouse gas emissions from military activities and installations. Although CCSAP gives few numeric indicators, it clearly commits the alliance to further work on the topic.

The first Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment and the methodology for measuring NATO's greenhouse gas emissions thus are follow-up to the CCSAP. In addition, NATO has come up with measures to facilitate the ability of its member states to advance climate actions, such as a Compendium of Best Practices for awareness, adaptation, mitigation, and outreach, as well as accrediting a Centre of Excellence on Climate and Security (CASCOE) to provide a platform for developing and exchanging expertise.

NATO's climate security work has also faced criticism. In particular, the relevance of the climate neutrality target as well as the verifiability of emissions cuts have been questioned, as NATO has not pledged to make the methodology for calculating emissions open to the public. According to critics, the lack of transparency does a disservice to the global efforts to cut security sector emissions and could therefore weaken NATO's claim for climate security leadership. Questions have also been raised about the alliance's seemingly late arrival to the climate security discussion, which could be taken to demonstrate a lack of genuine commitment.

So far, however, NATO appears to mainly have benefited from building upon the climate security work others have done before. Rather than developing its own approach from scratch, it has been able to draw on the practices of its member states and other international organisations. It may also have been able to operate on a more responsive ground than some of the pioneering actors on climate security, as the linkage has at least partially been introduced and mainstreamed to key arenas for international security and politics.

Moreover, climate security looks set to be a long-term commitment for NATO. Its statements demonstrate a strong recognition of the relevance of a better understanding of the impacts of climate change and the systemic transition to mitigate it for the strategic planning and foresight of the alliance. Rather than a fleeting curiosity, climate security is inextricably linked to NATO's core activities. This commitment is also reflected in the way climate change has not been forced off NATO's agenda even after the Russian attack on Ukraine. Despite the return of armed conflict in Europe, climate change remains important enough to be discussed, for example, at the Madrid Summit alongside Finnish and Swedish membership in the alliance.

Therefore, climate security is an area for the new member countries to contribute to in the long term. Yet Finland and Sweden should be able to offer something new to the extensive work that is ongoing. The two countries have so far had different perspectives to climate security, both of which have relevant aspects for NATO, as will be discussed next.

Swedish and Finnish approaches to climate security

On the international arena, Sweden has been a climate security leader for several years, particularly since its membership in the UN Security Council

(UNSC) in 2017–18. One of the key elements Sweden pledged to promote during its term was the integration of climate change on the UNSC agenda, and it has since continued to contribute to the development of the climate security agenda within the UN architecture. Although UNSC has failed to pass a resolution on climate security due to the opposition of several permanent Council members, primarily Russia and China, the topic has remained on the Council agenda through a number of debates, one of which was initiated by Sweden in July 2018. Sweden also proposed the establishment of a Climate Security Mechanism, located in the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) with the support of the UN Development Programme and UN Environment Programme, to find concrete solutions to the security risks of climate change.

The Swedish engagement has been aided by active cooperation between Swedish research institutes and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that has produced analysis and practical solutions on the pathways through which climate change impacts security around the world. In 2018, Sweden formed the inter-disciplinary Stockholm Climate Security Hub, consisting of Swedish research institutes from different sectors, to produce research and analysis on climate security. Sweden has thus actively contributed to building the global evidence base on climate security risks and responses as well as mainstreaming these into practice in the work of international organisations. While the focus has been on UN agencies, Sweden has also worked, for example, within the EU to turn its climate security approach from the Strategic Compass into action.

Finland has taken a far less visible international role on climate security. Although it has supported relevant initiatives within the UN and is a member of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security, for example, it has not been a major driver for climate security within international organisations. This is at least in part due to a lack of resources, which has driven Finland to focus on a small number of specific issues where its strengths lie, such as the role of women and youth in peace and security. Finland may also have remained slightly on the outside with regard to emerging topics within the UN as the Finnish campaign for membership in the UNSC for the 2013–14 term was not successful.

Meanwhile, in its overall approach to security and preparedness, Finland emphasises a model of cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination that has been conceptualised as comprehensive security. Based on a wide understanding of security, the model aims to safeguard the vital functions of society through the cooperative efforts of authorities, the private sector, organisations, and citizens. Comprehensive security heavily relies on foresight and preparedness, seen as crucial for ensuring the continuity of critical societal functions in times of crisis as well as in times of normalcy. As such, comprehensive security bears a close resemblance to NATO's work on resilience and civil preparedness. In this context it is important to note that Sweden also implements the concept of total defence which, similarly to comprehensive security, entails civil defence as a broader concept of societal resilience. During considerable reductions in the defence budget in the early 2000s, however, resources for civil defence were cut and the civil preparedness system was decentralised. Efforts to reform and strengthen the system in recent years have so far proven insufficient.

Although the Finnish model of comprehensive security has so far not had a major focus on climate change, it has a strong potential for integrating preparedness for climate-related risk. As a cross-sectoral, participatory model, it enables the identification of society-wide impacts and responses that climate security calls for. In addition, climate-related security risks require the kind of anticipatory perspective that is emphasised through the foresight and preparedness aspects of comprehensive security. Recent developments, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the energy crisis, and a growing recognition of several different crises unfolding simultaneously seem to have triggered some of the Finnish preparedness actors to call for a better integration of climate aspects into the practices of comprehensive security, although further work is still needed to achieve this in concrete terms.

The differences in Swedish and Finnish climate security approaches suggest that the two countries do not have a clear-cut shared agenda to promote

within NATO. This could lead them to promote competing approaches, to combine aspects of their respective perspectives, or to one or both countries ignoring climate security altogether in the NATO context. The potential for these different strategies merits further discussion.

Climate security strategies within NATO: Competing or cooperative Nordic perspectives?

As demonstrated by its Climate Security Action Plan and measures such as the annual Climate Impact Assessments and the methodology for emissions reductions, NATO has already outlined the basic principles of its approach to the linkages between climate and security. It therefore has little to gain from member states' perspectives that contradict its existing plans or are too tentative to bring added value. Both Finland and Sweden have something to contribute to this, but they need to look beyond the most obvious catchphrases.

Sweden's strength lies in its pioneering role on climate security policymaking at the highest international levels. In the scope of its work with the UNSC and other international organisations, it has contributed to a more detailed understanding of the intersections behind climate security risks and to the development of practices and responses to counter them. Swedish activities have also given rise to research cooperation that produces analysis to inform policymaking on the topic of climate security. Swedish actors, such as the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), also have the kinds of global networks and partnerships needed to further facilitate discussion on climate security.

On the other hand, Sweden's focus has been on the most fragile countries and the human security implications of climate change. Its work has tended to focus on a development cooperation context, emphasising questions of global peace and insecurity. Such an emphasis makes sense in the context of Swedish foreign policy priorities and its work with the UN as well as most other international organisations.

NATO's climate security interest, however, has centred on impacts on the military, defence capabilities, and societal resilience. Although the scope of these impacts is understood in broad terms, the perspective generally is that of a military or defence actor. The ways in which climate impacts interact in fragile state contexts and may generate wider security risks have been recognised in the first impact assessment, but efforts to address those interactions at the local level is not necessarily a NATO priority. In this sense, NATO has kept to its role as a military alliance, leaving actions that fall under broader development cooperation to other organisations. This may also mean a tendency to prioritise resilience and civil preparedness, considered from the point of view of the alliance itself and its members.

Meanwhile, the Finnish model of comprehensive security can provide insights for climate security work within NATO precisely because it emphasises societal resilience. Climate change can relatively easily be integrated into the existing structures and principles of the model and applied to NATO's resilience and preparedness activities. The comprehensive security model can thus be used to feed into NATO's Compendium of Best Practices on climate security, to be shared with other allies.

However, the problem with the Finnish comprehensive security approach to climate change is that it does not yet exist in practice. As pointed out above, climate change remains a relatively marginal part of the comprehensive security model, and Finland has little to offer in terms of concrete practices or policies on climate security. On the other hand, NATO membership would provide an opportunity for Finnish comprehensive security actors to develop climate security in practice in cooperation with NATO and other allies. Yet this would require a deliberate decision to include climate security at least to some small degree as a part of Finnish NATO policy and, crucially, a constructive approach with the aim of sharing knowledge, learning from others and jointly yielding new insights. As there clearly are major deficiencies in the Finnish approach to climate security, Finland stands to gain little from a presumption that merely due to its reputation as a leader in sustainability, it will be the one lecturing others.

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Moreover, the shortcomings in the practical approaches to climate security pointed out above reveal that Swedish climate security expertise will remain a vitally important resource for Finland, as well as for NATO. A vast amount of the knowledge base on the dynamics between climate impacts and security as well as potential responses to counteract them will be relevant for various regional or societal contexts. Swedish policymakers also have vast experience in turning the analysis into action on international arenas.

Meanwhile, regardless of whether there is an emphasis on a military and defence perspective, NATO will not be able to gather full situational awareness unless it has a grasp of the human security impacts of climate change in fragile contexts. Emerging risks at the local level all over the world will have implications on the security of NATO allies and their military and defence capacities. Therefore, it may not make sense to place human security implications of climate change at the core of NATO's activities, but it will need this analysis produced by UN, Sweden, and other actors in order to complement its own assessments.

In other words, NATO's climate security agenda could benefit from the participation of both Finland and Sweden in its further development, especially if the countries were to combine their respective strengths on the topic. Yet this does not inevitably mean that Finland or Sweden will consider it relevant to include climate change in their NATO membership agenda or that it will be in their interest to do so. Their potential strategies will be considered next.

New NATO members and climate security

Climate change will not be a top priority on the NATO agenda for either Finland or Sweden. For both countries, the applications for membership are tied to the changing security situation in Europe and the need to strengthen their defence through alliances. Especially in the short run, the focus of NATO policymaking will be on implementing the core responsibilities and opportunities that the membership will bring.

However, NATO membership will mark a wider change in foreign and security policy in both countries and have ramifications beyond military and defence capabilities and posture. It is also likely that NATO and the other alliance members will have some expectations as to what the new members can contribute to broader planning and policymaking within the alliance. Considering the importance it has placed on climate security as an emerging topic, NATO is likely to welcome the input of two new member countries that have been known to prioritise climate issues in their foreign policies.

Yet it is possible that Finnish and Swedish policymakers will consider climate security an issue of minor importance in the NATO context. This may seem contradictory in light of their foreign policy priorities, but it is also important to note that those priorities have to some degree been shaped by their position outside the alliance. NATO membership will therefore yield opportunities and arenas for engagement. As climate security is an issue that both countries are able to advance in other contexts, it may make sense strategically to use the NATO platform for themes that are more at the core of military security and defence.

Although Sweden can be argued to have something of a comparative advantage on climate security in the international arena, it may in particular have an interest in focusing on the more traditional aspects of security in the NATO context. As the previously mentioned budget cuts and reductions in capability suggest, traditional security and defence have been de-prioritised for some time. Compared to Finland, Sweden will have to put more effort and resources into ensuring that it adequately meets all NATO requirements as a potential member. Moreover, the security policy community is also increasingly shifting towards questions of military security and defence capabilities.

The Finnish position differs from Sweden to some extent. Finland has maintained a high level of defence capability and is not expected to encounter major difficulties meeting NATO targets. Although NATO membership is likely to bring about significant changes in Finnish security policy debate, there has been very little tendency to question the importance

of military defence capability in the recent past. At the same time, Finland has recognised the role of societal resilience from the point of view of defence as well as civil preparedness, and has aimed to maintain it through the comprehensive security concept. It might therefore be in the Finnish interest, especially in the long run, to be able to contribute to climate security as one of the more innovative and emerging discussions within NATO. If considered from the point of view of comprehensive security, this could also feed into NATO's work on resilience and civil preparedness, where Finland can also be expected to have a visible role.

Finally, the NATO membership process may be a good opportunity to consider the division between so-called 'hard' and 'soft' security questions, where the first are related to military and armed defence and the latter concern issues like climate, peace, and health. Particularly when it comes to climate change, these two categories seem to be increasingly intertwined. Even if climate impacts are not seen to present direct causes of conflict, second-order risks like supply chain disruptions and inadequate renewable energy access are inevitably linked to questions of defence capability planning and geopolitical tensions.

This is not to say that climate change should in any way undermine questions of military and defence on the security policy agenda. On the contrary, as the Russian attack on Ukraine underlines, traditional defence capability remains as necessary to maintain as ever. However, adequate situational awareness as well as functional capability at present, and especially in the future, will require better understanding of and preparedness for climate impacts. The idea that climate security can be treated as a trivial issue draining resources from efforts to tackle real security threats is bound to backfire as it will weaken preparedness in the long run.

Discussion Article

Four rounds of the Finnish NATO debate

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Abstract

Finland became a full member of NATO in April 2023. In this article, I will review four rounds of the Finnish NATO debate from the 1990s to the 2020s leading to the membership application in May 2022. There were some elements that distinguished the debates in each decade, but the arguments both in favour as well as against the membership remained basically the same. Russia's invasion of Ukraine did not change the key reasons in favour of membership in NATO, namely added deterrence and protection to strengthen Finland's security, but they became more compelling in the eyes of the public. Applying for membership in NATO was seen as too uncertain and the former Warsaw Pact members as a wrong reference group in the 1990s, the risk of being dragged into faraway wars was deemed as too great in the 2000s, and the policy of military non-alignment with a close NATO partnership was still seen as the best strategy to keep Russia at bay in the 2010s.

Keywords

Finland, NATO, military non-alignment, public debate, security

Introduction

Finland's decision to apply for membership in NATO after Russia had started its invasion of Ukraine came as surprise to those who got used to the stability of both the political parties' as well as the public's view of NATO and Finland's membership in it (Arter, 2022). Only two parties represented in the parliament, the centre-right National Coalition Party and the centre-liberal Swedish People's Party of Finland, had been in favour of Finland's membership in NATO before 2022. There was never majority of the public supporting the membership, but typically only about a quarter or a fifth of the population. The change in spring 2022, however, was swift and comprehensive. A clear majority of the public up to 80 per cent supported the membership in May 2022 when the decision was made with a stunning majority of 188 for and 8 against in the vote on Finland's NATO membership application.

The key reason for this change was Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but why was there no major change in the attitudes towards Finland's NATO membership before? Finland, after all, had not excluded the possibility that Russia could use military force towards its neighbours but had been prepared for such an eventuality on the basis of its military non-alignment and formed a close partnership with NATO. Hence, how can the change be understood in light of the arguments presented in the public debate since the end of the Cold War? There was practically no new argument presented in the public debate in 2022. The opinion change cannot be explained on the basis of the arguments themselves but rather the geostrategic situation changed the felt persuasiveness of the arguments. Finland could be a perfect case of David Welch's (2006) theory of foreign policy change, according to which highly bureaucratized and democratic regimes are likely to change their foreign policy only when the policy at hand is seen as badly failing.

In this article, I will review four rounds of the Finnish NATO debate from the 1990s to the 2020s. Separating distinct rounds on the basis of decades is, of course, somewhat artificial. However, the four phases, although not coinciding exactly with the decades, can be separated in terms of NATO's evolving role and Russia's relationship with the West that framed the domestic debate on NATO membership in Finland (see, e.g., Penttilä and Karvinen, 2022). However, perhaps the surprising aspect is how little the debate as such changed over the decades. The key arguments remained basically the same from the 1990s to the spring of 2022, but the reasons in favour of membership became more compelling because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while those against lost their impact.

1990s: Wrong timing and reference group

The Finnish debate on joining NATO started in the mid-1990s when NATO announced the policy of open doors and Finland decided to join the EU. There was some discussion already right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Finland had decided to apply for membership in the European Union, that the geopolitical change in Europe and Finland's new orientation might also lead to a membership in NATO. However, much of that debate was speculative because it was not clear whether or when the Alliance was going to accept new members in the first place.

When NATO's open-door policy was announced in the mid-1990s, the domestic NATO debate in Finland became more concrete (Arter, 1996). At the same time, worries about Russia's future development grew when President Boris Yeltsin's position as the leader of Russia weakened, the process of democratization stalled, and Russian nationalists who questioned the legitimacy of Russia's borders, such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky, gained in popularity. Finland joined NATO's partnership for peace programme and started to intensify its cooperation with the alliance.

Yet, any existence of a security deficit was vehemently denied. The Government Report on Security Policy delivered to the Parliament in 1995 stated that "Finland will not seek new defence solutions", but "if the international environment changes essentially, Finland will reconsider its security choices in the light of this development" (Finnish Government, 1995). This was the first time when the Government

formulated the so called "option policy" towards NATO: Finland is not considering membership at the moment but does not exclude it as a future option either.

At the same time, only a few public figures and hardly any politicians openly suggested that Finland should consider NATO membership. More often the argument was about the need to explore the membership issue in greater detail or conduct a debate than a clear position in favour of it. Max Jakobson (1996), a former diplomat and a grey eminence of Finnish foreign policy, presented perhaps the most prominent intervention on behalf of Finland's membership in NATO. In March 1996, he argued in a widely publicised talk that Finland should apply for membership in NATO because of the failure of democratization in Russia. He also predicted that sooner or later Finland, together with Sweden and Austria, would become NATO members.

The politicians, however, mainly eschewed the question of NATO membership because they did not want to provoke Russia and EU integration had been given the priority. After Finland had joined the EU, the public debate focused on participation in the common currency. Moreover, the applicants to NATO were the wrong reference group for Finland because they were former Soviet allies. For example, Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen stated in 1995 that the NATO membership question was not topical because "Finland is not an eastern European country" (Keskinen, 1995).

In the 1990s, there was still quite a lot of scepticism of what kind of alliance NATO actually was. The Cold War image according to which all military alliances are harmful was rather strong. The enlargement of NATO and its intervention in Kosovo were widely criticized for being destabilizing actions. Finland's NATO membership was also resisted for reasons that it might erode the country's own territorial defence and will to defend by putting emphasis on the professional units and expeditionary force instead of conscription-based national defence.

2000s: Ever closer cooperation but no need for membership

The early 2000s were marked by the global war on terrorism as well as by Russia's improved relations with NATO during Vladimir Putin's first term as President of Russia (2000–04). In Finland, the NATO debate intensified because of the second post-Cold War enlargement round of NATO that also included the Baltic States. Some pundits, such as the former advisor to the president, Alpo Rusi (2000, 307), did not think that Finland should have joined NATO in the first enlargement round but that it would be the correct time to do so after that. At least, the argument that Finland's membership in NATO would destabilize the Baltic Sea area and cause problems to the Baltic States if they were not members of NATO was off the table.

In the 2000s, the debate on Finland's membership in NATO normalized. The Atlantic Council of Finland was established in 1999 with the aim of fostering discussion on NATO and the transatlantic relations. The foreign policy elite consisting of civil servants, soldiers, and security policy experts had become largely in favour of Finland's membership in NATO. Although NATO membership was supported only by less than 30 per cent of the population, in the media, for example, in the op-ed pages, the share of the proponents and opponents was more even. Many media representatives or whole newspapers also seemed pro-NATO in their attitudes (Rahkonen, 2007). For example, the leading daily newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat* (2004), adopted a positive view of Finland's membership in NATO in 2004, arguing that military non-alignment was "an orphan and unnecessary phrase" that belonged in history.

Soon thereafter also the centre-right National Coalition Party took a positive stance towards the NATO membership in its party congress in 2006. The party's candidate in the presidential elections 2006, Sauli Niinistö, did not directly advocate Finland's membership in NATO but said that he was in favour of a "more European NATO" where the US was still a partner but the role of the European states had become more significant (Astikainen, 2006). Although Niinistö did not win the elections in 2006, but may have in fact lost because of his positive view of NATO, this election debate constituted a clear but momentary peak in the public discussion on Finland's NATO membership, at least according

to the largest Finnish online discussion platform *Suomi24* (see Nortio et al, 2022). When Ilkka Kanerva of the National Coalition Party became foreign minister in 2007, he asked Finland's ambassador to NATO, Antti Sierla (2007), to compile a report on Finland's membership in NATO that would soften the prevailing prejudices.

While the security concerns seemed to be paramount still in the 1990s, arguments emphasizing NATO as a channel of influence and the need to belong to the same club as the majority of the EU members gained in ascendancy in the late 1990s and early 2000s (see Forsberg, 2002; Rahkonen, 2007). Security concerns had not disappeared, but NATO membership was seen more as an insurance for some distant future than as a response to an acute threat (see Nortio et al, 2022). Even if the Russian menace had been the underlying reason, it did not seem to be the burning issue and provide a winning argument in the debate. Rather, Russia's rapprochement with NATO and the West in general could be seen as an added reason that stressed NATO's role as a hub of European and perhaps global security cooperation. If Finland did not want to become marginalized, NATO was the place to be. For many, the war of Kosovo had shown that the EU could not replace NATO any time soon with its defence dimension.

At the same time, when the reasons for Finland's membership became more clearly articulated, the negative effects of a potential NATO membership also became more visible. Political parties and the politicians in general were rather reluctant to openly advocate for Finland's membership in NATO. They supported the idea of cooperating with NATO and keeping the option of joining it, should the circumstances change, but they did not see any reason to alter the policy. The number of outright sceptics or critics among the politicians did not grow but no other party than the National Coalition Party was willing to support the idea of Finland's membership in NATO in the 2000s (see Särkkä, 2019).

President Martti Ahtisaari had had a rather positive view of NATO and acted, in his own words, more as a "couch player" on behalf of the international community that NATO represented than as a impartial mediator in the conflict. While Ahtisaari represented liberalist thinking, Finland's former president Mauno Koivisto was an arch-realist. He did not regard the NATO membership at all as a good idea. "What would we do there? What would we get from there?" he asked sceptically after the Kosovo war (Akkanen, 1999). Koivisto's scepticism resonated with the public since NATO's military intervention in Kosovo, and the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, all seemed to decrease the popularity of the membership in the early 2000s. The fear that Finns would need to fight in faraway wars of not their own choosing was one of the main reasons to oppose NATO membership. As Russia did not seem to pose a threat, Finland's membership bid would only unnecessarily alienate it.

When Tarja Halonen became President of Finland in 2000, she regarded it as her mission to prevent Finland's membership in NATO (Lehtilä, 2012). In an interview, she contended that she had not seen any convincing argument as to why Finland should join NATO (Vesikansa, 2007). Nevertheless, she did not reject the political mainstream position of keeping the option of joining NATO in the future should the circumstances change. In practice this meant that Finland cherished its partnership with NATO and was willing to contribute to NATO's operation in Afghanistan. The debate over Finland's membership therefore partly shifted to the question of how close to membership Finland could get without becoming a member or whether such practical cooperation would lead to membership without major political debate.

2010s: The ambiguity of the Russian threat

The next phase in Finland's domestic NATO debate started with Putin's speech at the Munich security conference and the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 and then continued to the Ukraine crises and Russia's annexation of Crimea. At the same time, NATO took steps back towards being a defence alliance whose aim is to protect the territory of its member states.

The Russo-Georgian war triggered some renewed discussion in NATO membership in Finland but it did not cause any major shift in the attitudes. The government had accepted that Finland keeps the

option of applying for membership in NATO but the Russo-Georgian war was seen as being far away and having only indirect repercussions for Finland (Hänninen and Rantanen, 2008). Although Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb (2008) of the National Coalition Party regarded the date "080808" as a turning point, even he did not think that the decision time with regard to Finland's NATO membership was at hand. In his view, membership was worth considering, but instead of making hasty decisions, the frequency of evaluating Finland's security choices should be tightened. Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen of the Center Party however responded that the Russo–Georgian war could also lead to the opposite conclusion, namely that NATO could not defend small states against Russia (YLE, 2008).

In hindsight, the Russo-Georgian was an episode that was quickly forgotten. Vanhanen, as many other European leaders, did not want to punish Russia, but preferred to develop cooperation with Russia instead. Although the image of the US clearly improved after Barack Obama was elected as the US president, the pulling factors were not sufficient to change Finland's policy. Like Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq before the Libyan operation in 2011 in which Finland did not contribute, seemed to decrease the popularity of NATO. The idea of keeping the option instead of joining seemed to offer the best of two worlds. In August 2013 President Niinistö argued that sitting on the fence was actually a good place to be:

> *Dissatisfaction with our current NATO policy – consisting of close cooperation with NATO and the potential of applying for membership at some point – often appears in two different ways. Viewing this as sitting on a fence, one way is to think we should be quick about jumping over the fence, while the other is to think we should not have climbed it in the first place – or at least there was no point to it. I happen to think that being on top of the fence is quite a good place to be. Our present position serves our interests well at this point in time, taken overall. We have freedom to take action, we have choices available, and we have room to observe and to operate. We are not pulled one way or the other.*

This attitude did not change after Russia's annexation of Crimea either. Prime Minister Katainen argued in a TV interview that Finland in his opinion should join NATO because it would make Finland more secure (YLE, 2014a). But he deplored that he and the National Coalition Party were in the minority on the NATO issue. Indeed, soon after the interview Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja of the Social Democratic Party contended that NATO membership did not bring any added value (YLE, 2014b). The combination of EU membership and NATO partnership were enough as the crisis in Ukraine had not changed Finland's geostrategic position at all. Katainen had also stressed that the Ukraine crisis did not constitute any acute security threat and, in line with Tuomioja, regarded it as important not to isolate Russia. However, he was concerned whether Russia would reserve a right to defend its citizens abroad militarily.

The debate on Finland's NATO membership was not a major issue in the parliamentary elections of 2015 but public debate continued until the 2016 defence review of the government (see Nortio et al, 2022). The review itself did not suggest any major changes to Finland's policy but contended that "Finland retains the option of joining a military alliance and applying for NATO membership" (Finnish Government, 2016, p. 31). It however added that "the decisions are always considered in real time, taking account of the changes in the international security environment".

All the key arguments that were later used to justify Finland's membership bid were basically already there and somewhat more pointedly in the foreign security policy review four years later (Finnish Government, 2020, p. 21): "the increased operations and presence of NATO and the US in the Baltic countries and Poland" were seen as having "enhanced stability in the Baltic Sea region", while "Russia has weakened the security of our neighbouring areas and Europe by illegally annexing Crimea and by keeping up the conflict it started in Eastern Ukraine". But even then, the conclusion with regard to Finland's membership in NATO was the same as before: Finland "retains the option of joining a military alliance and applying for NATO membership" (ibid, p. 30).

In the late 2010s, there were some worries,

pronounced in the debate over Finland's membership in NATO, but also between the lines in the government report, whether the US "commits itself to the principles of and the cooperation central to the rules-based international system" (Finnish Government, 2020, p. 32). But the real reason why the leading politicians and the majority of the political parties did not want to support Finland's membership in NATO was public opinion. The share of those favouring Finland's membership in NATO was slightly growing after the Georgian war in 2008 and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, but the opponents remained in clear majority. As long as the majority of the public was against NATO membership, politicians tended to stick to the existing policy line of military non-alignment and retaining just "an option" to apply for membership in the future. A self-enforcing loop between public opinion and party positions resisted any major changes in policy: the public did not support the membership because the leading politicians did not do so and vice versa. Besides, changing a policy that has not fundamentally failed is always difficult: the slogan "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" guided Finland's policy towards NATO membership in the post–Cold War era. Given that the public opinion seemed relatively stable, the political leaders did not want to launch an uncertain process.

Particularly in the late 2010s, there was some speculation what Finland should do if Sweden decided to launch an application process. In Sweden, the public opinion seemed have become more supportive of the country's membership in NATO at the same time as the parties of the centre-right coalition in the opposition advocated for the membership and challenged the ruling Social Democrats. For the Finnish foreign policy elite, Sweden was still an identity anchor and therefore Finland should follow Sweden despite the public remaining sceptic, as Finland had done with regard to EU membership in the early 1990s. The expert review commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended that if Finland were to join NATO, it should do so together with Sweden (Bergqvist et al, 2016). However, worsening relations with Russia and its possible counterreactions were seen as a major problem if Finland decided to apply for membership in NATO.

Russia's behaviour in the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 and immediately thereafter did not lead to changes in Finland's willingness to join NATO because the amount of provocation to Russia caused by NATO enlargement in times of crisis was thought to grow concurrently with the increased level of deterrence and protection that would be achieved through membership. However, during the 2010s, there was a growing understanding that the NATO option can also be seen as a deterrent. According to this logic, it would not pay off for Russia to put any significant military pressure on Finland or other countries in the Baltic Sea region because it would push them to apply to NATO (Vanhanen, 2016; Hägglund, 2018). It was not clear, however, what Russian actions exactly would indicate that the deterrent had failed and trigger Finland's willingness to join NATO.

2020s: The shift in the debate

The public debate on NATO intensified in January 2022 after Russia had presented draft treaties to the United States and NATO about "security guarantees", demanding that NATO should no longer take new members. The Party leader of the National Coalition Party, Petteri Orpo (2021), who had been in favour of Finland's membership in NATO already since the mid-2000s, urged that politicians should now take a position. However, before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, only a few MPs who had not supported Finland's NATO membership openly before did so. For example, Atte Harjanne of the Greens and Anders Adlercreutz of the Swedish People's Party of Finland now publicly announced that Finland should apply for membership in NATO.

Most leading politicians stayed silent before Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine or demanded prudence from others when engaging in the debate. Prime Minister Sanna Marin said in an interview in January 2022 that NATO membership is "very unlikely" during her current term. In her view, Finland did not plan to join NATO in the near future but was ready to stand with its European allies and United States by imposing tough sanctions on Russia. Moreover, Minister for Finance and the leader of the Center Party, Anneli Saarikko, announced that

her party does not support Finland's membership in NATO, albeit it remained committed to the idea of keeping the option of doing so. Former Foreign Minister, Erkki Tuomioja (2022), who later supported the membership bid, published in February a pamphlet on "Finland and NATO - Why Finland should have the opportunity to apply for NATO membership and why that possibility is not worth using now" arguing for continuity.in Finland's NATO policy.

Still in January 2022, only 28 per cent of respondents supported the idea of Finland's membership in NATO. In February 2022, however, public opinion started to change. In the social media, the public discussion was very intense. The pro-NATO and anti-NATO camps on Twitter, for example, moved closer together, leaving only the societally marginal, but vocal on Twitter, anti-NATO and anti-vaccine "conspiracy theory" camp as a more isolated bubble (Xia et al, 2022). Two public addresses for a citizen initiative, one on holding a referendum on Finland's NATO membership application and the other for a membership application without a referendum application, were collected in a record time.

In February during the week Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, the share of citizens in support of joining NATO had risen to a majority: 53 per cent. The support for NATO membership continued to grow during the spring. It was 62 per cent in March while in May, when the decision to apply for membership was officially made, it was already 76 per cent. At the same time, the share of opponents to NATO membership had sunk to less than 15 per cent. More than ten different nationwide public opinion polls using different sampling techniques and slightly different formulations of the question were carried out in the spring and the results were largely very consistent with this trend.

Still in February, President Sauli Niinistö did not think that any fast decisions with regard to Finland's NATO membership were in sight. When Russia had started the full-scale war against Ukraine, Niinistö (President of the Republic of Finland, 2022) dramatically announced that "the mask has come off. Only the cold face of war is visible", emphasizing, however, that there was no current threat against Finland. In a TV interview a few days later, the President contended that the result of the public opinion poll showing a majority of citizens now in favour of NATO membership was rather expected.

He was however still reserved commenting that "it is easy to get the feeling that in NATO, we are fully protected" (Lakka, 2022). Niinistö's concern had throughout his presidency been and still was possible Russian countermeasures if Finland announced that it was seeking membership in NATO. For years, the President had indicated that he is not able to bring Finland to NATO if the people are against it. Now when the public opinion polls told that the citizens were in favour of applying for the membership, he reclaimed the leadership by launching the process leading to the membership application.

For the President as well as for the Government (Finnish Government, 2022), the stated reason for applying for NATO membership was that it will strengthen Finland's security in the changed operating environment. It may look self-evident that deterrence and military protection were considered to be the most important reasons for joining NATO also by the citizens. They had been the most important reasons before as well, but their importance increased as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Influence and identity were also seen as more important reasons than before, but they were still secondary in the opinion of citizens. Most people regarded that Finland's identity choice was already made when it joined the European Union and therefore membership in NATO was no longer crucial in underlining Finland's Western identity (see Browning, 2002).

By contrast, identity had previously been seen as a factor that decreased the willingness to join the Alliance since NATO enlargement was seen as something that responded to the needs of the former Soviet satellites but not of the neutrals and military non-alignment was associated with positive values and experiences such as peace, bridge-building, and cooperation. The weakening of the ties between Finland and Russia and the risk that citizens would be sent to fight wars far away from their country's borders were traditionally the biggest

reasons for opposing membership in NATO. They were still the primary reasons for those who did not support Finland's membership in NATO, but the relative share of these motivations had decreased dramatically.

Conclusion

This article has provided a review of the debate over the issue of NATO membership from the end of the Cold War and Finland's decision to join the European Union to 2022 when Finland decided to apply for membership in the Alliance. The debate in itself did not lead to the membership application, and there was no clear evolution in the quality of the debate. There were some changes in the argumentation in the 2000s when Russia was seen as becoming a partner with the West and NATO's role seemed to develop in the context of the war against terrorism, but in 2022 the debate had come a full circle and NATO's role as a defence alliance vis-à-vis the Russian threat was the main issue. Yet, it was not a new generation, as Alpo Rusi (2000, 360) once paraphrased Max Planck's famous view of the scientific paradigm changes, who grew up with the new "truth", but it was the same people who earlier had resisted the membership bid but then supported it. The key arguments remained mostly the same: NATO was primarily about strengthening Finland's security through deterrence and military support in an eventuality of a war.

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Discussion Article

US progressives and NATO: Finland and Sweden's membership and burden sharing

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Abstract

In the past two decades, a foreign policy shift has taken place in Washington, and it is not limited to one side of the political spectrum. Voices from the left-wing of the Democratic party, or progressive Democrats, are also challenging traditional foreign policy orthodoxies, and these views are moving closer to the mainstream. The focus of this foreign policy re-examination is around US military spending in service of global dominance and (over)extended military commitments. This has important implications for European allies of the United States. An examination of progressive views reveals that US commitment to NATO in general is supported, as are the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO. Not least due to a commitment to climate change mitigation and multilateralism, for Europeans in the political center and left of center, much of the progressive foreign policy agenda should be welcome. However, there is a broad and firm view that Europeans collectively should rely much less on the United States for their security – which is a prospect that European NATO countries are still far from genuinely pursuing.

Keywords

NATO, US Foreign Policy, US Politics

Introduction

Many European leaders watched the 2022 US Midterm elections with concern, with good reason. In addition to the health of US democratic institutions, transatlantic security cooperation, and in particular the significant US support for Ukraine's defense efforts, seemed to be at stake. Kevin McCarthy, the leader of the GOP minority – who was poised to be the speaker of the House under a Republican majority – had shortly before the election quipped that a GOP-led Congress would not be offering a "blank check" (Brooks, 2022) to support Ukraine, citing the recession and other political issues important to Republicans. But Republicans were not the only source of disquiet. In the same month McCarthy hinted at trouble, the Democratic Progressive Caucus released a letter signed by 30 lawmakers urging a greater push for a diplomatic solution between Ukraine and Russia. The latter was quickly retracted, but a sense that US political support may be wobbly has remained. This sense is justified.

In the past two decades, a foreign policy shift has taken place in Washington, and it is not limited to one side of the political spectrum. On the Republican side, the anti-leadership, anti-multilateral, starkly transactional Trumpist-style evolution has been stark and closely observed in Europe. Republicans in the Reagan era shared a consensus that being "a shining city on a hill" (Frum, 2021) was part of America's destiny, part of its glory and strength in the world. Today's Trumpist Republicans ask instead: what is in it for us? Expensive global leadership should be replaced with profitable transactions; stability can be someone else's problem. Alliances with lesser powers, including NATO, are viewed as binding or sapping US power, rather than amplifying. These isolationist or realpolitik "America-First" Republicans have not taken over the party yet, but their influence is growing.

On the Democratic side, too, there is new energy in the left wing of the party, and rising challenges to orthodoxies. The new Congress taking its seats in January will be much more progressive than in recent decades. The Congressional Progressive Caucus (the group that released and then withdrew the open-letter on the Russia–Ukraine war) will count more than 100, making up 48% of House Democrats (up from 95 in the 117th Congress). Despite being firmly centrist, the Biden administration has been more progressive than the Obama administration.[1] The influence of progressives was already evident in the 2020 Democratic party platform's reforming view on foreign policy: "That's why we cannot simply aspire to restore American leadership. We must reinvent it for a new era." (Democratic Party, 2020)

For Europeans in the political center and left-of-center, much of the progressive agenda should be welcomed. But in foreign policy terms some of it may be a hard pill to swallow. The US commitment to NATO and its views on Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO are a particularly interesting issue to examine because the progressive view is more clear and common than views on other central issues, such as China or Israel.

NATO Expansion

On the Democratic side of the aisle, there was unanimous support for the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO in the August 2022 vote (one Republican Senator voted "present" and one "no", while all others supported the bill). Chris Murphy, a centrist-progressive Democrat and important foreign policy voice has repeatedly talked about this expansion as a plus, mentioning a "revitalized" NATO in this context, and has also said that Finland and Sweden will not be the last new members (Hamilton 2022; Murphy 2022). The Biden Administration's National Security Strategy (released after some delay in October 2022) positively mentioned the expansion multiple times, stating, "Welcoming Finland and Sweden to NATO will further improve our security and capabilities" (The White House, 2022, p. 26). Although, admittedly, Biden's national security team is more centrist than progressive.

1. The massive pandemic relief ($1.9 trillion), infrastructure ($1.2 trillion), and inflation reduction acts ($393 billion) passed so far in the Biden administration include not only an economic shift away from a neo-liberal model, but also the biggest investments to combat climate change in US history.

Tausendfreund, Rachel (2023) US progressives and NATO: Finland and Sweden's membership and burden sharing. *Nordic Review of International Studies* 1, 50–56.

More progressive voices have voiced concern about adding a long border with Russia through Finland's accession and in general extending US commitments. Christopher Chivvis from the Carnegie Endowment warned that "[I]f Sweden and Finland aren't secure enough with their own armies, then bringing them in might create a major new vulnerability for the alliance just as the chances of conflict with Russia are rising" and went on to caution that "[i]t's unrealistic and would be unwise to expect the United States to shoulder any major part of such a new commitment, given America's domestic politics, other global defense priorities, and the fact that European allies should be capable of carrying the lion's share of the burden on their own" (Chivvis, 2022). But even Chivvis concludes that NATO membership for Finland and Sweden "could offer real advantages that increase security in Europe".

Sweden and Finland, with their strong human-rights records and progressive democracies are perhaps the simplest case for American progressives. NATO expansion in less consolidated and liberal democracies will find much less consensus—especially without the background of an obviously belligerent Russia. Around NATO more generally, the war in Ukraine has brought some clarity and broad agreement, but there remain some issues of contention among the progressive crowd.

Progressives and NATO

The progressive agenda has generally focused on domestic policy with military spending – especially military spending in relation to domestic spending – being the most salient foreign policy position. Nonetheless, some aspects of a progressive alternative foreign policy are clear. Progressives are skeptical of a foreign policy doctrine built on US military (hyper) dominance and want to end the overextension of US global military presence and commitments. More military restraint, smaller defense budgets, and ending the "forever wars" in Iraq and Afghanistan (as well as avoiding new ones), as well as more emphasis on combatting climate change, have been central pillars to a progressive alternative[2] (Warren, 2019).

Nonetheless, there is broad support for NATO, also among progressives in Congress. Bernie Sanders, in many ways the father of the current progressive movement, has called NATO "the most successful military alliance in, probably, human history" and committed to stay in NATO in the December 2016 presidential primary campaign (Beckwith, 2016; Sanders, 2020). Elizabeth Warren, the other most prominent progressive in the Senate, has similarly consistently voiced support for NATO and US commitment to NATO (New York Times, 2020). Prominent progressive foreign policy analysts working to define an alternative foreign policy, including Matthew Duss and Stephen Wertheim, similarly support NATO collective defense commitments in general, although the proportion of commitment is at issue.

Support for the North Atlantic alliance is a bit shakier in far-left-wing media (the biweekly *The Nation* and the *Jacobin*, for example)[3] or other progressive groupings. For example, the Democratic Socialists of America, whose most prominent members include House member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) and Bernie Sanders, but also a handful of other House members, released a statement on February 26, 2022, in which it "reaffirmed" its call "for the US to withdraw from NATO" (part of the DSA's 2021 party platform) and "to end the imperialist expansionism that set the stage for this conflict" (Democratic Socialists of America, 2022).

Neither Sanders nor Ocasio-Cortez seem to have shared/endorsed nor renounced the statement. While Sanders' support for NATO is unequivocal (at least in the past decade) and repeated, AOC's

2. In 2019 Senator Warren introduced the Department of Defense Climate Resiliency and Readiness Act, which would require the Department to achieve net-zero emissions from non-combat infrastructure by 2030 and incorporate climate change-related risks into the National Defense Strategy, the National Military Strategy, and operational plans for the Department of Defense.
3. To cite just two examples, *Jacobin* published an article titled "The Orwellian Attacks on Critics of NATO Policy Must Stop" by Branko Marcetic on March 7, 2022, and *The Nation* published an article by Jeet Heer entitled "The Perils of Fortress NATO, Gatekeepers to Europe's Walled Garden" on November 10, 2022.

record on the question is scant. This is, however, not surprising: as a House member on the Oversight and Financial Services Committees, her foreign policy role has been so far rather limited. But there is no reason to assume that she views NATO as an "imperialist" institution or opposes US NATO commitments.

In an interview with The Intercept shortly after the midterm elections in November 2022, AOC was asked about the lack of "progressive voice" on the Russo-Ukrainian war and the retracted progressive caucus letter, to which she was also a signatory. Her response underscored consistency between the progressive letter and the Biden administration and indicated support for Ukraine and the US/NATO support for Ukraine, rather than any critique of NATO or Western approaches (Grim, 2022).

The war in Ukraine has in fact created a greater alignment between progressives and more hawkish democrats on NATO. Whereas before the war many leftist Democrats were sympathetic to Russia's narrative of an "imperialist" NATO encircling it, the invasion has turned the imperialist tables. In 1997 Senator Bernie Sanders still argued against expansion to include the Baltic states on the grounds that it would "provoke" Russia:

> *First of all, Russia clearly perceives that the expansion of NATO into the Baltics would be an aggressive, wholly unjustifiable move by the United States. On May 22, 1997, President Boris Yeltsin's spokesman, Sergei Yastrzhembskii, stated that if NATO expands to include Former Soviet Republics, Russia will review all of its foreign policy priorities and its relations with the West. Since the cold war is over, why are we militarily provoking Russia? (US Congressional Record, 1997)*

While in the subsequent decades and as a presidential candidate, his support for NATO became more outspoken, Sanders remained critical of expansion and an overly muscular NATO. Just two weeks before Russia's full-scale invasion, Sanders wrote in the *Guardian* newspaper:

> *I am extremely concerned when I hear the familiar drumbeats in Washington, the bellicose rhetoric that gets amplified before every war, demanding that we must "show strength", "get tough" and not engage in "appeasement". A simplistic refusal to recognize the complex roots of the tensions in the region undermines the ability of negotiators to reach a peaceful resolution.*
>
> *One of the precipitating factors of this crisis, at least from Russia's perspective, is the prospect of an enhanced security relationship between Ukraine and the United States and western Europe, including what Russia sees as the threat of Ukraine joining the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (Nato), a military alliance originally created in 1949 to confront the Soviet Union.*
>
> …
>
> *Putin may be a liar and a demagogue, but it is hypocritical for the United States to insist that we do not accept the principle of "spheres of influence". For the last 200 years our country has operated under the Monroe Doctrine, embracing the premise that as the dominant power in the western hemisphere, the United States has the right to intervene against any country that might threaten our alleged interests. (Sanders, 2022b)*

On February 24, Senator Sanders' office offered a statement with the following first sentence: "The Russian invasion of Ukraine that the world is witnessing today is a blatant violation of international law and of basic human decency" and argued that "[t]he United States and our allies must impose severe sanctions on Vladimir Putin and his fellow oligarchs" (Sanders, 2022a). Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez tweeted in March: "As Ukraine fights against the Russian invasion, we have a moral obligation to assist any way we can." She also introduced legislation that would provide debt relief to Ukrainians and coordinate debt payments during war (Mondeaux, 2022). Both Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders have faced criticism from their fans over their support for Ukraine and its war effort. Sanders has dismissed the idea that Democrats have become war mongers (Mondeaux, 2022; Weigel, 2022).

The purpose of the defense alliance is now more evident to many progressives, as well as the idea that eastern European states may have indeed genuinely wanted (and needed) a Western

security umbrella against Russian aggression. (The progressive view remains more open to the idea that the NATO-expansion policy of the 1990s was wrong and undermined a vulnerable Russia than the mainstream view. But this view is also becoming more nuanced about the right of newly freed countries to choose their alliances.) Furthermore, a NATO focused on the traditional task of territorial defense is easier for progressives to support than the NATO of a decade ago, which was focused on joint missions across the globe. Nonetheless, there are some progressive qualms around US dominance in the alliance; qualms that will bring major consequences for Washington's European allies as they gain influence.

A More Multilateral NATO

The biggest progressive critique of NATO resembles the Republican complaints: that bugbear issue of burden sharing. Despite the superficial similarity, the two versions of the burden-sharing debate are significantly different for European partners. Republicans think too many European countries are not investing enough in their own defense (falling short of their 2% of GDP-spending commitments). The (usually not so clearly stated) solution to this is easy: Europeans should spend more on US weapon systems, increasing their capacity significantly while maintaining US strategic dominance over the alliance. Progressives have a different answer, but it is not necessarily easier for Europe.

Progressives are generally concerned about the "unwarranted influence" of the "US military-industrial complex" (Sanders Campaign, 2020). For example, Matt Duss had this to say about the support to Ukraine: "I think progressives, including those who strongly support helping Ukraine defend itself, are rightly concerned that the war could be exploited to reinvigorate an outdated hawkish interventionist ideology whose main beneficiaries are defense contractors and lobbyists" (Mackinnon, 2023). As a result, a more progressive vision of better burden sharing would be either antagonistic to or at least agnostic about more capabilities bought from the US defense industry. In contrast, less influence over the alliance in exchange for less military commitments and less spending is a trade progressives would support.

A progressive foreign policy would certainly decrease US military spending and footprint significantly, and Europe/NATO would be an obvious place to start. Sanders is in step with most progressives (in fact most Americans) in believing that Europeans should play a larger role in funding the defense budget of a primarily European coalition (US Congressional Record, 1997). This will also be the case in a future where the accession of Ukraine and Moldova are decided. We can expect that discussion to closely mirror Sanders' congressional argument against the costs of NATO's Baltic expansion:

> *…[H]ow much more are we going to ask United States taxpayers to ante up to defend Europe in an expanded NATO with a still undefined mission? The total price tag is estimated at anywhere from $27 billion to $150 billion over the next 10 to 12 years. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the cost of NATO expansion will be between $60.6–$124.7 billion over 15 years. Don't forget that we have already paid $60 million through the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act in order to assist Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia in bringing their Armed Forces up to NATO standards… (Congressional Record, 1997)*

European allies should understand that the view, as expressed by Chivvis on the Nordic accession question, that "European allies should be capable of carrying the lion's share of the burden [of defending against Russia] on their own" (Chivvis, 2022), is a firm and broadly shared progressive opinion – and is gaining ground toward the center of the Democratic party. The vital difference between this and the Trump version is that progressives take the alliance commitment seriously.[4] A progressive vision for NATO would be an alliance that focuses narrowly on its territorial defense mission (with a human security

4. When asked by the New York Times if NATO allies who do not fulfill their funding commitments should still receive assurances from the US, Elizabeth Warren answered, "Yes. NATO is not a protection racket; it is an alliance" (New York Times, 2020).

view that includes issues such as climate change), and is genuinely multilateral. In this NATO, the largest share for European defense is provided by Europeans (the details of how remain undeveloped) – with a strong, but not dominating US commitment. Europeans often talk of wanting partnership at eye level with Washington – progressives want that too – but it will come at a hefty price for European NATO members and require a level of collective action not yet identifiable.

Tausendfreund, Rachel (2023) US progressives and NATO: Finland and Sweden's membership and burden sharing. *Nordic Review of International Studies* 1, 50–56.

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Discussion Article

NATO's strategic thinking in the changing security environment

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Abstract

Some argue that the Russian invasion of Ukraine caused NATO to change course and put more emphasis on Collective Defence, which as we know, was the initial intent of the 1949 Washington Treaty. I contest that argument by explaining that the NATO has never lost sight of this initial intent. In its Strategic Concepts NATO has always maintained Collective Defence as one of its core tasks. In response to the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea in 2014, it had just stepped up its efforts to be prepared to defend the Euro-Atlantic area - witness the expressions of political will at subsequent NATO Summits and the increased defense budgets of its member states.

Keywords

NATO, collective defence, strategic thinking, Russia

Introduction

To say that NATO found its purpose again with the 2022 Russian war against Ukraine is a misleading perception. The war sharpened the focus of the alliance, for sure, but it is worth emphasising that the strengthening of NATO's deterrence and defence already started years ago. Therefore, the war was not a total eye-opener to NATO. The long-term development of an alliance is the result of natural evolution of strategic environments and geopolitical phases. International relations are cyclical, oscillating between calmer and more turbulent times. Alliances are children of the times they live in, and they tend to adapt to new paradigms over time.

The end of the Cold War, the rise of international terrorism, out-of-area crisis management operations, and a more cooperative Russia led to the situation where territorial defence of the Euro-Atlantic area was not the most burning question that NATO had to address. During 1990s and early 2000s NATO, however, adapted to those new realities without bigger fuss and transformed itself first into a crisis management machine and later more into a wider political-military forum, emphasizing new military and non-military threats and challenges. Yet questions of its unavoidable death started to spread.

Past years, however, show that NATO has been on the right path at the right time. It has never abandoned its original purpose and the core task it has always held dear. Since its inception, deterrence and defence have always remained as main tasks of the Alliance, sometimes more, sometimes less, but still there. The Washington Treaty in general and the Article 5 in particular have never been in jeopardy, even though the Allies' domestic political waves have shaken its foundation every now and then.

Understanding NATO

NATO has survived surprisingly well, but this has not created a wider scholarly interest to better understand the Alliance. Hyde-Price (2016, p. 22) notes that there has been less research on NATO than the European Union, and studies have been more policy-oriented and empirical. Policy-focus is understandable but theories in International Relations could help to explain why NATO has endured. They offer interesting insights into explaining the resilience of the Alliance in better and worse times.

The fate of the Alliance has been analysed, for example, through institutionalist or neorealist lenses. Debates on whether institutions can survive the loss of common (military) threats have been one way to interpret the situation. Institutionalism offers one point of view to analyse the role of the alliance, showing that also other factors than a common threat can favour the survival of an alliance—such as common interests, norms, and other institution-supporting factors (Schimmelfennig, 2016, pp. 93–115). This contradicts with the common belief that NATO "needs" a strong adversary or a military threat to be a legitimate actor. NATO survived when military threats were weaker, proving neorealist theories incorrect.

A neorealist explanation for institution survival is that states form and join alliances when confronting a threat, and that institutions dissolve when that threat disappears (Schimmelfennig, 2016, p. 99). Wallander (2000, pp. 705–735), however, has noted that NATO's role has always been wider than pure defence against the Soviet threat, which in reality was proved right during times of the peace dividend and so called new (non-military) threats. But neorealists have not been totally wrong. If not threats, at least some kind of challenges have always been there uniting the alliance. Schimmelfennig (2016, pp. 103–104) rightly underlines that the Soviet threat provided such a strong focus to the allies that cooperation overruled possible differences—just like happened after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, and has lately happened in the Russian War on Ukraine.

Collectively, NATO has to this day remained united—excluding perhaps the timing of the ratification process concerning new Alliance members. It can be argued that a common adversary helps the strengthening of the alliance in both political and practical matters, but alliances can and will survive also during normal times when threat is not that persistent. Even without visible threats NATO remained necessary and, most importantly, kept the core tasks intact.

Peaceful times did not pass by without war wounds though. During the "interbellum", the evolution of the Alliance combined with weaker military threat perceptions from 1990s until 2014. This era had very concrete and real consequences. Many NATO members decided to cash-in "the peace dividend", leaving only a few members to meet NATO's target of minimum 2 % of their Gross Domestic Product on defence spending up till the 2020s. Building defence capabilities takes decades, and the current need to strengthen the capabilities to deter and defend—and in the worst case to fight a large-scale war—differ drastically from those required for crisis management operations.

Military mobility, stocks, logistics, and equipment have to be reconstituted, while new requirements are born from the current strategic environment, such as the need for more heavy or high-end capabilities, high technology, innovations, use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, cyber and space capabilities, precision systems, new concepts, and ways of warfare. Meanwhile, Eastern European and Baltic countries' warnings about Russia fell long on deaf ears in most NATO capitals. On the contrary, Russia became a friend and a NATO partner.

Russian Roulette

In 1994, Russia was recognised as the first Partnership for Peace country, starting a decades long cooperation with NATO. Neither Russia's 2008 war in Georgia nor the annexation of Crimea in 2014 or the use of chemical agents on British soil in 2018 were strong enough wake-up calls. The West was still on appropriate speaking terms with Moscow and these events were seen more like unpleasant disturbances in an otherwise working relationship. But in February 2022 the Russian Federation decided to start the unjustified aggression against Ukraine and "masks came off" as Finnish President Sauli Niinistö described the grim situation.

Was this a total eye-opener to NATO? Does it need to recreate itself all over again? Did this cause NATO to collect itself and rebuild its identity? Did this "save" NATO? The response is a blunt "no" if one takes past years' developments into account. The focus on preparations for large scale operations for collective defence was a little bit lost during the past decades, but wiping off the dust of defence plans happened relatively quickly. If we look at the speed of NATO's decision-making since the 2014 Wales Summit, the pace has actually been pretty impressive. Critics might of course argue that concrete results remained moderate and rebuilding of defence capabilities will take years as defence spending has been and to some extent remains insufficient. Nevertheless, without these efforts and consistent political guidance, 2022 would have been an even crueller eye-opener for NATO.

Even five or six years ago times looked different. Conventional war on European soil was seen as belonging way back to history, as an outdated and unrealistic scenario. Looking back to 2017, Shirreff's chilling book *War with Russia* was casually reviewed in the old NATO Headquarters' canteen with amused curiosity but also with slightly irritated criticism. The scenario presented in the book is not yet reality, but we are witnessing a war in Europe for the first time in decades. It has also proven right that war, destruction, and power politics cannot be eliminated. What are the implications for NATO?

Back into shape: deterrence and defence matters

> *"The Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area." (NATO Strategic Concept 2022)*

Strategic cultures change slowly. Strategic consistency has been a working choice for NATO. The direction does not change overnight and NATO's character as a consensus organisation means that all the members have agreed on its political guidance, the level of ambition, and planning. This provides NATO political glue that holds it together. In 2019, France's president Emmanuel Macron called NATO "brain dead" and questioned its commitment to collective defence. This caused a political stir. But it seems that neither the decades long war in Afghanistan nor the lately hyped US "pivot to Asia" caused the Alliance to forget the importance of defending the Euro–Atlantic area.

NATO has been on the right track far longer than since February 2022. The Warsaw summit in 2016 enhanced its deterrence and defence efforts that have been on the agenda since. This agenda has not raised huge media or public interest and rightly so. The alliance has been transparent but not too transparent, using strategic communication selectively to deter adversaries and inform taxpayers but not reveal too much of the work that has been conducted behind the scenes.

Zooming closer into both policies and actions of the alliance, there is still no doubt who has been the main adversary to deter and defend against. The Alliance started to pay more attention to the military strengthening of Russia's Western District, Russia's SSC-8 -violation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), military modernisation, and build-up. NATO members also stood united on Russia's breach of the INF Treaty during times when hybrid influencing was Russia's modus operandi. Russia's President Vladimir Putin begun to more openly talk of "Russkiy mir" (*Russian world*) to strengthen Russia's Great Power aspirations and to construct the Western threat. Roots of this thinking can be traced back to 2007 when Putin addressed the Munich Security Conference. Things were about to change.

After 2014 and especially in 2016, NATO reacted and started to increase its readiness and responsiveness, decision-making, and resilience. In 2019 and 2020 the Alliance adopted a bunch of documents such as the new Military Strategy followed by the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept and a Concept for the Deterrence and Defence of the Euro–Atlantic Area. All these developments tell a story of a united threat perception although there surely have been differences in terms of how severely the threat is perceived and how to address it.

The New Cold War?

Many analysts compare the current security situation to the Cold War. Heavy tanks are rolling on European soil and Russian troops are conducting brutal military campaigns. It would be easy to draw an equal sign between these eras, but the situation is much more nuanced and complex. This has been a war of both conventional equipment and new technologies. The increasing use of drones and space-based capabilities have, if not altered, at least changed the course of war. For NATO, getting back into shape has not been only a physical exercise but also a mental one to achieve a solid political unity and guidance for the most important work-strand of deterrence and defence. Political decisions to strengthen collective defence mean the need for more resources. Rebuilding warfighting capabilities is not a cheap project.

Troops need the right equipment, training and exercising up to brigade or even divisional level, and high-end warfighting capabilities are more and more expensive. Threat-based planning takes into account capabilities that adversaries are developing (whether Russia or the challenge of China in a longer term), meaning that maintaining a technological edge requires more high technology and innovations. In future, both conventional and unconventional, kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities matter as brute force is not enough. More precision, speed, and information are needed. This is not the Cold War that we used to know. Conventional weaponry and numbers do and will count, but the additional layer comes from a more multi-domain environment, adding cyber and space elements into the warfighting concepts.

Many lessons will be drawn from Russia's failures in Ukraine. It has demonstrated the weak condition of both Russian military and strategic thinking, Russian mismatch between its doctrine and reality on the ground, and Russian willingness to sacrifice its troops. It has also demonstrated the capability and will of an underdog to defend itself and even to penetrate into operational depth of the aggressor. Finally, Russia's warfare has demonstrated the importance of information warfare as well as space and cyber capabilities. In brief, Putin's Russia made a big miscalculation that cannot be fixed. Will this be the end of the current administration? President Putin will be eligible for a re-election in 2024, but Russian *siloviki* will most probably remain in power in one way or another.

Conclusion

What conclusions can we draw from this? NATO has been both praised and blamed for not intervening in Ukraine but NATO naturally reacts behind the scenes, following the situation and altering its course with political guidance. The direction is there and most importantly, the political will has lately been there. Of course, the change is slow and painful, revealing possible gaps with capabilities, resources, and skills. But NATO's unity has held despite the alliance facing a tense and difficult situation. This situation was, however, threatened when a missile killed two people in Poland, which raised concerns of a Russian attack on a NATO country, possibly leading to the invocation of the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The world was holding its breath. It was a false alarm this time, luckily.

NATO has been acting in unison with the European Union, which has imposed unprecedented sanctions against Russia while providing comprehensive support to Ukraine. Russia's war also caused close NATO partners Finland and Sweden to submit applications for NATO membership, permanently changing the geostrategic environment in Northern Europe. Even though the step to take is a big one for both the Nordic states, they do not start from scratch as they have had an ever increasing, close cooperation with the Alliance since 2014 (as Enhanced Opportunities Partners).

To say that NATO just figured out its commitment to collective defence is therefore an understatement. The focus is of course strengthened and concretised by the events of the past year, but the development was already ongoing and moving forward. What is the way forward for NATO? Like the past year showed, forecasting the future is not an easy task. Russia's war against Ukraine came as a cold shower for many and its course is difficult to predict. The course of the war has not followed any expected logic. NATO, however, will continue to follow its logic, taking care of its deterrence and defence.

The discussion article is based on my experiences as a Defence Counsellor for Finland during 2017–2022 as well as my PhD studies background material (unpublished) at the National Defence University of Finland. Opinions are my own and not of my employer.

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Book review

The gloomy future of the United States

Maria Lindén, Research Fellow, Finnish Institute of International Affairs

Book title

Gorski, P.S. and Perry, S.L. (2022) The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

When discussing the future of NATO, one cannot discount the threat that is looming in the horizon, namely the possibility of large-scale political destabilization of the United States. In *The Flag and the Cross*, authors Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry paint a vivid picture of the danger American liberal democracy is facing in the 2024 Presidential elections.

Many others have raised the alarm, such as Barbara Walter in her book *How Civil Wars Start*, Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt in their article "How Democracy Could Die in 2024, and How to Save It", and Richard Hasen in his essay "Identifying and Minimizing the Risk of Election Subversion and Stolen Elections in the Contemporary United States". Where Gorski and Perry's book differs from others is their framework of white Christian nationalism and their thoroughly researched explanation of the root causes underlying the precarious situation.

Gorski and Perry define white Christian nationalism in a precise manner using a set of beliefs that "reflect a desire to restore and privilege the myths, values, identity and authority of a particular ethnocultural tribe". They argue that the beliefs in question "add up to a political vision that privileges that tribe" over others. According to the authors, white Christian nationalism expresses a desire for national unity but only for a select subset of the population. They argue that for many white Americans, the words "Christian" and "American" signify "people who look and think like us", and when those people dream of making the United States a truly Christian nation, they wish in fact for a nation ruled by white conservatives.

The main argument of the book is that in the United States, white Christian nationalism poses a serious threat to liberal democracy. In seeking to revive a state ruled by conservative white protestants, white Christian nationalists are increasingly willing to make voting harder for perceived others, to exploit all existing mechanisms to retain power in the hands of their minority, and to attempt to create new mechanisms for doing so.

Gorski and Perry use nationally representative survey data they themselves have collected to examine whether white Christian nationalism predicts a number of political opinions and societal attitudes, such as if Americans see a connection between immigration and pandemics, if they favor free-market capitalism, and if they feel it is too easy to vote. To do so, they give each respondent a rating on their Christian nationalist scale consisting of several indicators, such as agreement with the statements "The success of the United States is part of God's plan" and "The federal government should advocate Christian values". In their statistical model, they hold constant several potentially intertwining factors such as Republican identification, conservative political orientation, and religious tradition and commitment.

The authors show that for white respondents, Christian nationalism is a strong predictor of a large set of political opinions and societal attitudes, even after accounting for religious, political, and sociodemographic characteristics. The higher respondents score on the authors' Christian nationalism scale, the more likely they are, for example, to trust Trump and doubt experts on COVID-19 related issues, to believe whites will face discrimination in the near future whereas blacks will not, to express a desire to halt immigration to protect jobs, to favor free-market ideals, to see socialists as a threat, and to view reactions to the attack on the Capitol as overblown compared to the "2020 race riots".

Based on their survey results, Gorski and Perry argue that for white Christian nationalists, violence becomes acceptable when it is used by their ingroup against a perceived other to protect the ingroup's freedom or to maintain the social order they benefit from. When perpetrated by a perceived other, however, white Christian nationalists see violence as "moral degradation and dystopian chaos". Gorski and Perry conclude that debates over racial injustice, policing, gun violence, economic policy, media polarization, COVID-19, voting rights, and democracy are just manifestations of a deeper, existential debate over American identity.

Gorski and Perry find it unlikely that an American president would be able to turn the United States into an autocracy in the style of Russia, Turkey, or North Korea. Instead, the scenario they fear the most is that of Republican-controlled states

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successfully restricting the exercise of power and suffrage to white conservatives and subjecting subordinate groups and political dissidents to legal discrimination, public humiliation, and vigilante violence. They envision such a regime enduring for decades, accelerating the trend of Americans self-sorting along ideological lines and possibly resulting eventually in civil war or the dissolution of the Union.

The dystopic vision is eye-opening, especially given that it is based on solid research, making the book highly recommended reading for anyone wishing to understand the past, present, and future of the United States and NATO.

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Book review

Conspiracy theories in the Nordic countries

Niko Pyrhönen, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki

Book title

Astapova, A., Bergmann, E., Dyrendal, A., Rabo, A., Rasmussen, K.G., Thórisdóttir, H. and Önnerfors, A. (2021) Conspiracy Theories and the Nordic Countries. New York: Routledge.

The long-standing reputation and self-understanding of the Nordic countries as places for prosperity and equality has rendered them an intriguing context for studying conspiracy theories. The volume, authored by seven researchers, explores and analyzes the extent to which conspiracy stories and conspiratorial imagination manifest along the lines of global trends, and which features might be accentuated in the Nordic context. The collectively authored chapters focus on distinct realms marked by conspiratory articulation: the state and elites, family, gender and sexuality, migration, as well as exogenous conspiracism *about* the Nordic countries. The structure is logical and easy to follow, especially given that the chapters are intimately linked to each other, rather than advancing from one individual author's discrete area of expertise to the next, something that multi-author volumes are commonly haunted by.

The authors make a distinct effort in also opening the analysis for readers with little familiarity with the Nordic countries. The consistent contextualization opens up the political developments and social histories, particularly for Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, thereby rendering the text accessible and readily understandable even in passages that would otherwise require significant background knowledge. The example cases have been diligently selected to illustrate both locally emerging conspiracy theories—ranging from the sinking of *Estonia* to the murder of Swedish prime minister Olof Palme—and the Nordic renditions of globally circulating conspiracy stories, such as the *9/11* and *Eurabia*. Refreshingly, the history of conspiratory imagination revolving around secret societies has been traced back to the late 1700s, showing the range of political interests, particularly in Sweden, for either vilifying or supporting the Masonic order.

In the case of "fully-fledged conspiracy theories", such as the aforementioned ones, questions related to epistemic authority, theodicy, and authentic beliefs might be relevant explanatory avenues, especially concerning the grass-roots level involvement and participation as prosumers or produsers. Analyses of this dimension of conspiracy theorizing are relatively infrequent, as only a smaller part of the volume covers distinct conspiracy theories.

Instead, among the main contributions of the volume is the consistent way in which it sheds light upon the political interests and motivations behind groups of people and associations circulating and participating in the development of *conspiracist imagination* into tools for political mobilization. While this type of political entrepreneurship also draws heavily from concrete conspiracy theories, the authors tend to focus on the penetration of these narratives into the mainstream spaces in a process whereby conspiratory content is operationalized in a very purposeful and opportunistic manner that gradually expands the Overton window for right-wing populist actors.

For instance, anti-immigrant political rhetoric, also in the Nordic countries, often makes use of phantasmal renditions of rampant sexuality allegedly characterizing the immigrant Other as well as sinister interests of the global and domestic elites in media, politics, and culture. Considering that such narratives are crafted so that they feel intuitive for wider audiences forming a potential electorate, actual conspiracy theories have been an important—but ultimately minor—component in the development of the dystopian mindscape in which right-wing populists and the radical right are deeply invested. As such, when these actors invoke the figure of a "liberal feminist" or a "cultural Marxist" as an alleged spearhead in a global conspiracy against "ordinary people", they curate narrative components from tried and tested conspiracy theories in a manner that simultaneously reinvents and dilutes the theories they allude to. Moreover, "globalist" or "Soros-funded" is often just a handy slur in a political argument for a (populist) political entrepreneur who does not have facts on their side.

While the authors illustrate how conspiracy theorizing has had—and continues to have—national and regional specificities, they also explicitly distance themselves from any framework of Nordic exceptionalism. This supports the conclusion that Nordic countries, despite high levels of human development, are not inoculated against misinformation in general, or conspiracy theories in particular. When an increasingly transnational network of radical political and media entrepreneurs generates conspiratory content, the Nordic

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particularities largely pertain to the means through which this content is being helped to find its way to the news cycle and public debates.

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Conference report

The FISA2022 Conference brought together scholars to discuss multilateralism and its ruptures

Summary

The FISA2022 Conference was held 6–7 May 2022 in Tampere, Finland. The conference was organised at the Rosendahl Hotel in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, the Foundation for Foreign Policy Research, and Tampere University. The Finnish International Studies Association (FISA) has worked to advance the field of international studies in Finland since 1993. FISA aims at promoting multidisciplinary research, maintaining a network of active people, and providing a link between academics and practitioners within the field. To achieve these aims, FISA organises a conference every three years. The previous conferences were organised in 2016 at Aulanko, Hämeenlinna, and in 2019 at Majvik, Kirkkonummi. The conference provides a comprehensive, timely, and multidisciplinary overview of the state of International Relations and gathers researchers and policy makers.

The theme of the FISA2022 conference was Multilateralism and its Ruptures. Political developments in the last decade, notably the rise of authoritarian regimes and bilateral agreements and the weakening of international institutions has led to observations that the age of multilateralism in international politics is over.

In the beginning of the 2020s, the future of multilateralism has looked slightly brighter with Joe Biden's presidency, China's turnaround in climate politics, EU's post-Brexit outlook, and the new international networks brought about by pandemic cooperation. Sadly, Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine made the conference theme even more relevant.

The keynote speeches and presentations at FISA2022 analysed the horizon of multilateral global politics from various perspectives. The conference comprised of two keynote speeches and 15 panels with 49 presentations. The panel topics included the theory and history of international relations, foreign and security policy, conflict and crisis management, development cooperation, hybrid threats, international law, Finland's foreign relations, the EU's security policy, East Asian politics, Russian politics as well as the meaning of colors and senses in international politics.

The keynote speakers of the conference were professors Anu Bradford from Columbia University and Ole Waever from the University of Copenhagen. In her speech, titled "Battle for the Soul of the Digital Economy" and delivered remotely from New York, Bradford talked about the global power battle over control of the digital economy. Waever's keynote speech, titled "Global security dynamics before and after Russia's invasion of Ukraine", examined global security dynamics from different theoretical perspectives.

The concluding plenary investigated what could be considered relative blind spots in the field of international studies. Many flash in and out of academic and political discussion, and this periodic exposure makes it difficult to grasp the intricacies of various contexts. The "blindness" can also affect imbalances of power between communities and localities: tensions of coloniser–colonised persist in public imaginaries and sometimes even in the field of IR. These dimensions may not attract the most intensive gaze of IR researchers, forming malleable and moving blind spots, which this plenary tried to look at more intensely.

The plenary discussed global health and social policy, security studies, international organisations, and global climate policy. As a solution, the plenary discussed a deeper understanding of "the human element", multilateralism, and interdisciplinarity. Panelists in the debate, organised by the *Politiikasta* journal, were researchers Anna Kronlund, Mikko Räkköläinen, Tiina Vaittinen, and (with remote connection) Leena Vastapuu. The debate was chaired by Mikko Poutanen.

What was discussed at FISA2022?

The Politics of the Arctic

Monica Tennberg presented a paper on environmental issues and cooperation in the Arctic from a governance perspective. The paper argued that while early Arctic cooperation in the 1990s focused on issues such as advancing knowledge on environmental problems and role of indigenous peoples in the cooperation, today the focus is on intensive exploitation of natural resources on one hand and on sustainable development on the other.

The paper approached the development of the region from a governance perspective, which, it argued, can shed new light on old assumptions regarding political agency and the rationality and effectiveness of cooperation in the Arctic region, considering the different power relationships, resistance, and conflicts that define the region and the actors there.

Liisa Kauppila's paper was an Arctic case study of China's global economic regions and the future of multilateral cooperation. The aim of the paper was to analyse a China-led process of regionalisation from the perspectives of relationality and theories of practice. The paper argued that to understand the spatial dimensions of China's rise, it is necessary to question traditional, Eurocentric understandings of regionalisation as a process that results in clearly defined territorial spaces and institutions that promote multilateralism.

The paper presented a new angle to the study of global regionalisation processes, the so-called global economic regions perspective. From this new perspective, the paper approached China-led regionalisation by defining regions as spaces of flows, which connect China to several different economic clusters across the globe. The main aim of such spaces is to guarantee the continuity of global flows that are critical for China's economic growth and internal stability, as well as to spread China's influence globally.

The case study of the Arctic region emphasises the way the Chinese government takes advantage of both multi- and bilateral practices as part of its regionalisation strategy. Its results question the idea of regionalisation as a process that is in principle multilateral and enhances global and regional stability and helps evaluate the challenge posed to multilateral cooperation by the spatial thinking that guides Chinas (foreign) policy.

In her paper on China's Arctic Politics and Changing Northern Security, Sanna Kopra analysed the changes brought about by China's increasing Arctic presence for the Northern region, essential for Finland's defense and for the global balance of power. The paper observed that China had, in the last decade, become increasingly interested in exploiting the natural resources exposed by climate change in the Arctic region, which has brought local actors and Arctic states new economic opportunities, but also concerns regarding environmental protection, human rights, and crude power.

Even though China's military presence in the region has so far not increased, worries regarding the security implications of its growing presence have increasingly been aired. In addition to analysing the aforementioned questions, the paper aimed at identifying potential regional cooperation channels, which could balance the security implications of China's presence.

Perspectives on Security in Northern Europe

In his paper, titled "Small States and Great-Power Coercion: Lessons from the 1958 Fenno- Soviet 'Nightfrost' Crisis", Matti Pesu analysed the so-called Nightfrost Crisis that erupted between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1958 from the point of view of what the crisis can teach us about coercion and asymmetric state relations in today's world. In the Nightfrost Crisis, the Soviet Union successfully pressured Finland to change a newly elected Finnish government, one which did not please the Soviet leadership.

Pesu claimed that similar processes of coercion from bigger and more powerful towards smaller and weaker states increasingly take place in today's international relations and sought to draw lessons from why the Soviet coercion effort on Finland was successful for how small states can handle such coercion in the future.

Antti Seppo analysed the transformation of German strategic culture, specifically regarding the use of multilateralism in its security and defense policy discourse in the past 30 years, 1990–2020. Seppo observed that while Germany initially emerged as a strong advocate of multilateralism after the Cold War, the commitment has proven more difficult to see through in the areas of security and defense than originally foreseen. The paper thus analysed how the meanings assigned to multilateralism have changed in the German discourse, and thereby drew a detailed picture of the motivational basis of contemporary German defense policy.

Africa in the Contest over Global Normative Order

Against a background of increased geopolitical and geoeconomic competition on the African continent, this working group noted an increase in contestation towards the "liberal normative order" by African actors. To assess this phenomenon, the working group invited contributions that explored these spaces, practices, and discourses of contestation. It invited papers that encompass actors from the grassroots to states and regional organisations.

The five papers that were presented explored 1) Rwandan non-alignment in (anti)LGBTI politics, 2) the mobilisation of soft power through the expansion of cultural institutes by China, Turkey, India, and Russia on the African continent, 3) African stances in global COVID politics, 4) labor digitalisation for

African street vendors, and 5) African positioning towards the UN's efforts to build partnerships with transnational corporations.

The papers were presented by PhD researcher Hinni Aarninsalo (SOAS, University of London), Senior Researcher Liisa Laakso (Nordic Africa Institute), PhD researcher Natalie Ruvimbo Mavhiki (University of Helsinki), Postdoctoral Researcher Ilona Steiler (University of Tampere), and PhD researcher Eva Nilsson (Hanken School of Economics).

The working group had a lively discussion about the presented papers that covered a wide range of actors and countries with diverse political positionings. The increase of external influence especially by Russia over African opinions on different normative orders and the European failure to win over China in a battle over narratives in COVID politics were noted. The group also confirmed earlier findings about the majority of African governments aiming to balance between great power politics, to stay somewhat non-aligned, and to aim to benefit from all sides.

Behind the Veil of Multilateralism

The panel discussed the alleged decay of multilateralism through different theoretical and empirical perspectives. Its shared question was to discuss whether multilateralism actually played such a dominant role at all, or has multilateralism actually worked as a veil, under which various bargaining processes between states and other actors are still the dominant mode of cooperation?

In her paper, Anna Kronlund discussed the concept of legitimacy and its political use in the debates of the United Nations (UN). Special interest was focused on how different conceptualisations of legitimacy effected UN's agency to operate in various contexts. Tyyne Karjalainen and Ville Savoranta focused in their papers on EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and especially on its civilian aspect. Ville Savoranta introduced the concept of multiplicity, from IR theory, and applied it in his analysis of EU's CSDP interventions. In their joint paper Savoranta and Karjalainen discussed the topic of the alleged move in CSDP away from altruistic peace ideals towards security interests of the Member States themselves, revealing a truth which is more complex than often realised and highlighting the bargaining processes that are elemental in the decision-making processes leading to actual CSDP intervention.

Finally, Tanja Tamminen took the audience on the field level of civilian crisis management operations, with an analysis of EU's civilian CSDP mission in Ukraine, how it has projected multilateralism on the ground, with a focus on tackling organised crime that is a theme that can be both altruistic and selfish, from the Member State perspective.

As a conclusion, the panel found that in many cases, instead of using monolithic concepts, such as the EU or UN, it is a more analytic and revealing approach to deconstruct collective subjects and look under the veil of multilateralism to better see and understand the political agency and activity behind multilateral action on the world sphere.

Sensing IR

The Sensing IR panel took upon itself to explore the other senses through which the international, its crises, practices, ruptures, and multiple forms of violence and domination are also felt besides the traditional focus on large-scale organised physical violence. In the panel, Lisa Glybchenko discussed how the definition of peace remains a thorny and difficult problem in research in peace and conflict, despite also being a nodal point in that discipline, and showed how visual interventions developing and using coloring exercises could both cast some light on the inconsistency of theory and open up practical spaces for thinking and doing peace.

Juha Vuori and Rune Saugmann introduced their project on the role and agency of color in IR. Both marginalised and central, material and ephemeral, color and color use is as fundamental to the day-to-day practice and lived experience of international politics as it is marginal to the academic discipline.

Technology Development, Power, and Security

Rapidly accelerating technological development has a significant impact on politics and thus also on international relations. In great power competition,

technological development has been politicised and gained new strategic importance. The control of technologies has become a fundamental resource for soft power and economic dominance. Technology policy has also become an integral part of the policy discussion related to various domains of national security, examples being cyber, 5G telecommunications, and artificial intelligence.

The security implications of technology development were discussed in three presentations from different perspectives: governmental authority, business angle, and academic role. The role of technology as a part of security policy was elaborated by professor Pekka Appelqvist from the Ministry of Defence. CTO Pertti Lukander from Nokia Mobile Networks talked about how to steer and support global technology leadership through regulatory work and cooperation. Professor of Practice Valtteri Vuorisalo from Tampere University discussed the impact of data-centricity to individuals and international politics.

Foresight in International Relations: How and Why?

The operating environment is complex and rapidly changing, which challenges our thinking and actions. We must be prepared for surprises and unlikely events and developments, even if we focus on probabilities and continuity. Foresight means strategic thinking, discussion, and analysis; it is an ability to encounter the future, influence it, and prepare for different futures. The future is characterised by uncertainty; however, it can be tolerated and managed through foresight methods and processes. Combining multiple types of expertise is also emphasised in foresight; without a wide range of networks, foresight is neither of high quality nor relevant.

Foresight and strategic planning are well-established activities, especially in large companies, and they are also strongly evolving in the public sector. Many research institutes and think tanks are doing futures work, and individual researchers and research communities have also increasingly shown interest in foresight; among other things, they have participated in the foresight processes of various actors.

The panel noted, among other things, that the key task of foresight is to increase understanding. At the same time, it increases our preparedness for the future; our ability to receive potential futures with preparedness. Foresight also increases the opportunity to exert influence in advance and thus promote the desired future. The instability of the security environment and drivers of change in the operating environment highlight the critical nature of foresight.

The panel stressed the importance of combining broad-based expertise and developing foresight skills and the foresight mindset as critical factors. The panel also expressed a strong willingness to engage in joint foresight, especially in cooperation between researchers and authorities.

The Role of Expertise and Knowledge in International Politics

In the paper titled "Towards an epistemic community on the global governance of black carbon emissions", Pami Aalto and Anna Claydon from Tampere University explored ways of enhancing global governance of black carbon emissions, a key short-term measure for mitigating climate change. Yet global mitigation efforts suffer from unequally distributed benefits, as economic sectors and social activities implicated by mitigation vary across countries.

The paper analysed the politics of mitigation in this fragmented context, using a database of documents by involved international, regional, and industrial organisations, focusing particularly on the different cognitive frames found in the documents. The paper argued that shared problem definitions, as observed in the frames, would indicate the emergence of an epistemic community of black carbon governance, which could help the mitigation efforts.

Taking a rather different viewpoint to the role of expertise in international politics, Laura Nordström from the University of Helsinki presented a paper analysing the role of experts from the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Central Bank in the Eurozone crisis decision-making. Specifically, the paper focused on the spring 2010 negotiations on the first financial

rescue package to Greece and the European Stability Fund. The analysis was based on a large, original set of interviews with EU and Member State officials, as well as on official documents and statements. It illustrated the role of experts at a pivotal moment in the EU's history.

Finally, Johanna Ketola and Katri Mäkinen-Rostedt from the universities of Turku and Tampere presented a scoping review on the role of scientific knowledge in legitimation narratives in international politics during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their paper argued that the use of science has not yet realised its potential in enabling transparent, neutral multilateral decision-making, but that instead of shared analysis and concerted action, uncoordinated and state-centric responses emerged in the EU during the COVID-19 crisis. The paper also presented a first attempt at analysing what may be the main challenges for EU science diplomacy in multilateral settings.

Connectivity and Superregional Politics in the Indo-Pacific

Connectivity, broadly defined as "all the ways in which states, organizations (commercial or else) and societies are connected to each other and interact across the globe" (Ries, 2019), is key to processes of regional integration. It can result in cooperative, synergetic linkages in terms of infrastructure, capital, knowledge/expertise, and dialogue/capacity-building. However, it is also increasingly becoming an area of great-power competition, in particular in the context of aiming to counterbalance China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The panel on "Connectivity and superregional politics in the Indo-Pacific" explored how different actors in the Indo-Pacific region have sought to engage in connectivity and infrastructure development. The paper by Bart Gaens, Ville Sinkkonen, and Henri Vogt examined connectivity from a theoretical and conceptual perspective, tying it in with the idea of the Indo-Pacific as a "superregion", i.e., a region defined not so much by geographical borders but rather by connections and flows of different kinds.

Focusing on China's economic statecraft, the paper by Mikael Mattlin and Matt Ferchen drew attention to the significant gap between strategies/ambitions and effectiveness/outcomes. In a paper co-authored with Marcin Kaczmarski, Kristiina Silvan looked at Russia's connectivity strategies in Eurasia and emphasised the prevalence of (power) political logic over practical economic rationale.

Tyyne Karjalainen assessed the EU's Global Gateway connectivity strategy in the context of the conventional role of the EU in global affairs as a value-based norms-diffuser. Finally, the paper by Katja Creutz explored how China and Japan's respective influences in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) can be harnessed to address climate change and consequently development in the broader Indo-Pacific region.

The European Union as a Global Actor

This panel tackled the issue of EU external action and autonomy, combining insights from both already published research and ongoing projects. The large questions of EU competencies, the role of the member states in security and defense, and the ways the EU's power and position are seen by different actors in the challenging international setting all came up. Overall, the notion of strategic autonomy – timely because of the EU Strategic Compass – was a theme that came up in the discussions.

Teemu Rantanen tackled the question of how the use of different forms of power is constructed in the EU's foreign policy discourse. Shedding light on operational code analysis, he gave examples of how the parliamentary speeches of three High Representatives of the EU's foreign and security policy can be analysed and how that analysis contributes to the understanding of, for instance, shared beliefs.

Tero Poutala presented an article on geo-economic competition and the challenges of managing dependencies in the EU–China context, and particularly in the cases of 5G suppliers and critical port infrastructure. Ossa's paper took up the importance of studying the US perspectives and perceptions of the EU's strategic autonomy. At the same time, it discussed the method of studying elite

perceptions, and studying the influencers, or those who attempt at influencing elite perceptions.

The Nordics and the Future of Multilateralism

This panel discussed various aspects of Nordic cooperation and "Nordicness" in a transforming international and multilateral landscape. Mariette Hägglund's talk focused on Nordic cooperation in security of supply and crisis preparedness, not least against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Hägglund, the Nordics' whole-of-society approach make them relatively well prepared, but as small countries they would benefit tremendously from increased cooperation.

Hanna Tuominen presented ongoing work on Nordic–Baltic cooperation at the UN Human Rights Council. The argument is that in recent years, Nordic and Baltic cooperation has increased in importance, as EU positions have not always satisfied the ambitious norm entrepreneurship agendas of the Nordics.

Saila Heinikoski presented a paper on Finnish and Swedish positions to discussions of making hate speech an EU crime. While the Nordics very much want to contribute to the fight against hate speech, freedom of speech remains a pillar of Nordic conceptualisations of democracy. Moreover, there is also a danger that following the EU on this point would weaken the Nordic legal family. Hanna Ojanen gave an interesting comparative and theoretical analysis of the special resilience of the Nordic institutions (Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers), in spite of them having been criticised as dull and superfluous at various occasions in history.

In his comments, Johan Strang highlighted historical continuities and recent transformations in Nordic cooperation. There were also many questions from the 10–15 people in the audience, concerning both Finnish policies and the relations between Global, European, and Nordic frameworks for cooperation.

Half a Century of Finnish Peace Studies: Junior Researchers' Perspectives on Bridging Theory and Practice

The panel was comprised of junior researchers affiliated with the Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI), chaired by Robert Imre. The overall objective of the panel was to explore how the Finnish peace research can be practically applicable to the conflicts outside Finland or can introduce fresh perspectives for peacebuilding.

It discussed the EU's necropolitics over the refugees crossing the Mediterranean (Bram De Smet), how the transportation processes affect the heterogenous Nordic Somali diasporas (Cæcilie Svop Jensen), the solidarity of various Iranian women's activisms across differences (Zahra Edalati), imagining national security through the South Korean military refusers (Ihntaek Hwang), and how to employ the constructive potential of images' openness and ambiguity for peace (Rasmus Bellmer).

By introducing this research, the panel showed how the Finnish peace research has been widening and deepening through incorporating the gendered, every day, corporeal, diasporic, and aesthetic perspectives. The panel also suggested how the Finnish peace research can produce creative-yet-realistic and on-the-ground approaches for more sustainable peacebuilding.

Diplomacy, Foreign Policy and Changes in Multilateralism Before and After the End of Cold War

This panel took a roundtable format, with some shorter, informal presentations or inputs and a lively discussion among the panelists and the audience. The overarching theme of the panel was taking a historical perspective on international relations, focusing particularly on the pivotal period around the end of the Cold War and its aftermath in the 1990s. The panel argued that this transformative moment marked also a watershed in many practices of multilateralism.

While interpretations of the period are politically disputed, presently it is also possible to study it with primary archival sources. The panel focused on Finland's position in multilateral communities on one hand, and the communities themselves and

their diplomatic practices, particularly in Europe, on the other.

Tuomas Forsberg both chaired the session and gave input on the topic of the Finns' views on Russia and its development in 1992–1995. Juhana Aunesluoma's talk focused on the interplay and uneasy coexistence of old and new concepts of security in the Baltic Sea Region in the 1990s. Johanna Rainio-Niemi's presentation analysed how "Finlandisation" had been viewed both domestically and abroad in the period surrounding the end of the Cold War. Finally, Juha-Matti Ritvanen's presentation looked at the relations between NATO and Finland in the aftermath of the Cold War, in 1992–1997.

Global Security

In his paper, titled the "United Nations, the Challenge of International Piracy and Intra- organizational Tensions", Teemu Häkkinen analysed multilateral cooperation regarding piracy in the Somalian coast, particularly the role of the UN, in the period of 2007–2012. During this time, piracy in the area became a major problem for international seafaring, but also one that could eventually be solved with international cooperation.

Guaranteeing the security of seafaring and especially trade routes is a relevant theme for multilateral cooperation, as well as for the legitimacy of the UN in solving global disputes. The presentation analysed the different interests and actors at play, representing the local, national, and global levels, as well as the tensions within the UN itself.

Matti Puranen and Juha Kukkola's paper on the "Eurasian Security System: The Relations between China, Russia and the United States in light of Complex Systems Theory" attempted to recast the security dilemma posed by the complex China–Russia–US relations and argued that rather than viewing the relations in light of each state's strategic goals, focus should be put on the inter-state relations and system-level factors.

The paper built a theoretical model of a "security system", based on concepts derived from complex systems theory. A security system was defined as an ever-changing territorial arrangement, defined by history, geography, and other systems, binding together states and other notable actors. The article presented a case study of the Eurasian security system, analysing it from the perspectives of both its internal relations and external interactions. The article aimed at explaining how internal, often territorially limited, conflicts could produce larger ones, which affect the balance and behavior of the entire system.

Nordic Review of International Studies

The Nordic Review of International Studies (NRIS) publishes peer-reviewed scholarly contributions within the field of International Relations (IR), focusing specifically on Nordic perspectives. The NRIS is committed to publishing articles that examine the international sphere empirically, theoretically, or institutionally from a Nordic angle. The aim of the NRIS is to foster scholarly debates on international politics within and concerning the wider Nordic region. The NRIS embraces interdisciplinary approaches and appreciates a wide range of theoretical and methodological choices.

The journal is published by the Finnish International Studies Association (FISA) and committed to the principles of Open Access publishing.

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