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**Changing Public Opinion in Finland on
NATO Membership in the Context of
Ukrainian Crisis**

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Finland is nowadays a prosperous Nordic country, a member of the European Union, supporter of the EU-Russian relations and is one of the most developed economies in the world. Finland still has a unique role in maintaining friendly relations with Russia and therefore we can assume that Finland does not pursue NATO membership, because it would most definitely be perceived as threatening by the Russians. The Ukrainian crisis changed views of many people on Russian foreign relations and made the public, politicians and entire countries question what is Russia capable of and whether it should be perceived as a threat. Because of the Ukrainian Crisis, opinions in Finland are changing and developing and the NATO membership is seen from a brand new perspective and the much treasured policy of nonalignment is being reconsidered as well. That is the issue that I am going to research and examine in this thesis. I will describe changes in public opinion on NATO membership and general safety of Finland, because this public opinion has varied over the last decade and the Ukrainian crisis was the reason for these changes. In order to find answers to these issues, I performed a complex analysis of information coming from several sources, as well as results of research of public opinion and interviews with Finnish military personnel and politicians. The results of the analysis as described in this thesis confirmed my assumptions: the Ukrainian crisis had, as a significant contemporary political phenomenon, distinct influence on political thinking in Finland.

Keywords

Finland, NATO, Ukraine, Ukrainian crisis, membership, European Union, Russia, public opinion

Scope of work: 118 903 signs

Declaration of Authorship

1. I hereby declare that I compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed sources and literature.
2. I hereby declare that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. I agree that this work might be published for study and research purposes.

In Prague 13th May 2016

Bc. Dominika Kratinová

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Thesis Dissertation

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1 Introduction

Finland is nowadays a prosperous country and has one of the most developed economies in the whole world. Unfortunately, Finland was not able to develop on its own for a long time, because it was under foreign rule for extended periods during its history. There were several breakthroughs in Finnish history that led Finland to its current position. In the field of international relations, Finland made concessions to stay away from the Western alliances. On the other hand, in the economic sphere it could not afford such a detached position. Helsinki integration policy was not based entirely on domestic impulses, but rather out of necessity to keep pace with its major competitors and trading partners – Sweden and Norway.

Although Finland was a part of the integration process, it retained a lukewarm approach to wider European integration efforts– it did not initiate closer cooperation and adapted only in cases of necessity. Such process was possible mainly thanks to the implementation of a foreign policy doctrine called Paasikiivi-Kekkonen line throughout the entire society, which was willing to sacrifice part of its potential economic profits in order to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union. In 1989, Finland did away with influence from the Soviet Union, which proved to be a great economic challenge. Another breakthrough came in 1995, when Finland joined the European Union along with Austria and Sweden and within 10 years it became one of the most developed economies in Europe, and already held the presidency in the EU parliament twice. Thanks to the membership, Finland had new possibilities in international politics. However, because of their neutrality Finland never really considered applying for membership in NATO, a tendency which seems to be changing these days and the Ukrainian Crisis played its role in this change of opinion.

Because of the Ukrainian Crisis, opinions in Finland are changing and developing and the NATO membership is seen from a brand new perspective and its policy of political nonalignment is being reconsidered as well. Last year Finland even increased expenditures on security and defense and on the other hand decreased spending on unemployment allowance and children, which is very untypical for Finland. So is there a real threat? Does the Finnish public really feel threatened or does it feel safe enough with its own army and help from European Union? As president Ahtisaari said to president Bill Clinton in 1997: *“The Finnish government does not*

exclude the possibility of applying for NATO in case circumstances change"¹. The main threat to Finnish security is no longer a conflict between the great powers, as it used to be, but rather a geopolitical spillover from the crisis in Russian-Baltic relations. Finnish membership in NATO would be in their national interest since it would enhance the security of the Baltic states without threatening Russia.

That is why I decided to dedicate my diploma thesis "*The Change of Public Opinion in Finland on NATO Membership in the Context of Ukrainian Crisis*" to this actual question and possible problem of the change of circumstances and opinions on NATO membership. I paid particular attention to information coming from several sources. I also sought to examine various points of view, especially those of the Finnish public, former and current presidents and military personnel. These particular examples represent three pivotal elements of the Finnish society and by analyzing their opinions we gain an insight into the country's political climate. All three of the above are directly involved in any eventual political occurrence or crisis, and therefore their opinions are indispensable in exploring the society's moods and consequently, in analyzing and predicting the course of Finnish politics.

1.1 Research question

The aim of this thesis is to collect and analyze opinions of parties, actors and deputies, public and even soldiers and the navy in Finland on NATO membership before and after the Ukrainian Crisis. I will also analyze historical circumstances pertaining to why Finland did not join NATO in the previous years and why it joined the Nordic Council and European Union instead, as well as an in-depth look at the history of its relations with Sweden and subsequently place emphasis on analyzing its ties to Russia as well. I will also incorporate the concept of Finlandization and Paasikivi-Kekkonen line politics during the Cold War.

I presume these research questions: *To which extent did the Ukrainian Crisis influence political elites, public and military services in Finland to change their opinion on NATO membership?* I am also interested to know to what extent was Finland influenced by neighboring states and Russian politics.

¹ Jakobson, Max. *Finland in the New Europe*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998. Pg. 121.

1.2 Review of the literature

Various sources both printed and electronic deal with this problematic. As my primary sources I will use agreements, protocols and declarations, which are freely available in electronic databases and also strategic government documents on foreign policy as mentioned earlier. I also intend to involve a brief analysis of the parties that changed their opinion as a consequence of political circumstances and how their opinion has changed over the years, seeing as they are relevant to my topic. I will also use interviews and articles, which are connected to my topic. In order to answer my question and to show that there has been a shift in public opinion on NATO membership after the Ukrainian crisis, I will use a survey study conducted by the Advisory Board for Defence Information (ABDI), which has investigated Finns' opinions on the foreign, security and defense policy of Finland and which is a crucial source for this thesis. The study comprised 22 questions and a total of 1 005 individuals were interviewed. The target group comprised the entire population aged between 15 and 79, excluding residents of the Aland Islands. Interviews took place in 104 localities, of which 68 were cities and were conducted between 5 November and 23 November 2015. This survey study is fundamental to my thesis, because it deals with the main issue that I intend to research and describe.²

As for other crucial sources, there is for instance an article from a Finnish periodical *Suomen Kuvalehti* from 26th February 2016, which is originally in Finnish. On Sauli Niinisto's opinion I will revise an interview from 1st November 2015, which can be found on defencematters.org. Another very important source used to answer the questions raised in this my thesis is the Strategic Program of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government on foreign, security and defense policy from 29th May 2015. To make a comparison, I will use *Prospects on NATO membership* by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs from 2009 and Tarja's Cronberg article on the NATO divide in Finnish politics.

² "Finns' Opinions on Foreign and Security Policy, Defence and Security Issues." *Ministry of Defence of Finland*. Advisory Board for Defence Information, 21 Jan. 2016. Web. 24 Apr. 2016.

http://www.defmin.fi/en/tasks_and_activities/media_and_communications/the_advisory_board_for_defence_information_abdi/bulletins_and_reports/finns_opinions_on_foreign_and_security_policy_defence_and_security_issues.7640.news

I will also quote a monograph “*Finland in the New Europe*” by Max Jakobson, a long-time employee of the Finnish Foreign Ministry, collaborator of the former Finnish President Kekkonen and a former Finnish ambassador in the United Nations. This publication describes and explains the Finnish foreign policy as well as the position of Finland in the international scene since the Second World War up until the 1990’s. This monograph is not strictly an academic work, because it is interspersed with Jakobson’s personal impressions and there is also a noticeable bias towards certain problems. However, this book is a source of interesting facts and important and unique insights. As another important academic source, I will use Jutikkala’s publication “*Dějiny Finska*”, which gave me useful insights into Finnish history and also helped me to understand Finnish foreign policy.

Electronic sources are equally important and I will use the Archive and Chronology of Finnish Foreign Policy, articles about recent developments and problems in Russian, Finnish and Ukrainian foreign policies and armed forces from BBC, Helsinki Times, a Finnish newspaper, Nations encyclopedia, the Ukraine Crisis timeline, the Amnesty International official web site and the official NATO web site. These sources describe in detail all of the historical events, their development over time and their influence on the politics of contemporary Finland.

1.3 Methodological approach to the issue

I will use results of various primary sources and one of them is of a survey study conducted by the University of Tampere, which collected data between the years 1996 and 2015 and published them in January 2016. Its English version published by the Advisory Board for Defense Information and its outputs will be analyzed and compared with previous outcomes and the actual course of Finnish foreign policy. This survey was comprised of 22 questions on security, defence and allignment policy and a total of 1 005 individuals were interviewed. The target group was composed of the entire population aged between 15 and 79, excluding residents of the Aland Islands. Interviews were conducted in 104 localities, 68 of which were cities, and interviews were conducted between 5th November and 23rd November 2015. I will examine interviews with former and current presidents, strategic programs on foreign, security and defense policies and prospects on NATO membership by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, because the survey mentioned above did not include single

politicians and their opinions on NATO and security. I will analyze books and documents written on the issue of Finland, NATO, Russia and Finnish membership in the European Union combined with all of the above. All of these data will serve me to understand better the changing opinion in the Finnish society.

In my thesis, I will try to explain if and why the public opinion on the issue in question changed in the country and to what degree, and I will demonstrate the role of exogenous political shocks in leading to sudden changes in public opinion. I have chosen the Finnish public opinion and the NATO membership as single issues affecting each other and I will demonstrate how the Ukrainian crisis (the single exogenous shock) has changed the public opinion.

In the second chapter, which deals with a basic characteristic of Finland, I focus on historical factors that played an instrumental role in formation of the public opinion. The history of Finland is the most important aspect in forming Finland and its skepticism when it comes to forming a defensive alliance, not to mention the development of Finnish foreign policy after the end of the Cold War and up to the present day. For that reason, Finnish history needs to be taken into consideration. Afterwards, I will examine the relations between Finland and the European Union, why it joined the EU and its presidency in the Parliament and how it cooperates with NATO. In the fourth chapter, I will research the Ukrainian crisis, its process and Finland's stance on the topic. Then I will move on to review how Finland cooperated and cooperates with NATO and possible hypotheses about future developments. In the sixth chapter, I will analyze the most essential sources for my thesis and describe the change of public opinion in the last decade, as well as the opinions of politicians and military personnel. All of the above are followed by a conclusion.

2 Finland - basic characteristics

Ever since the Middle Ages, Finland has had a particularly close relationship with Sweden and was greatly influenced by it. Moreover, Finns and Estonians are considered to be the same race because of their genetic characteristics. The Finns started to distinguish themselves culturally in the period approximately between 50-400 AD. Despite of Eastern influence, the Karelian culture maintained essential Western characteristics thanks to its Swedish roots in areas such as culture, religion, law and the social system. If we take into consideration the tangible culture of Finns, it was on the same level as the Western culture, but the Finns' social organization was inadequate. This political organization was a result of sparse population.

The history of Finland was marked by Swedish domination at one point and Russian domination at another, and for a short period of time even Danish occupation. However, Finland evolved into a strong and respected nation in the world, one that is considered to be the bridge between Russia and Europe. Its strategic position on the map ensures the Finnish a unique role in the foreign policy and affects many aspects of Finnish life. However, to understand Finland's current political context well, it is necessary to examine its history and development, seeing as it has substantial influence on what is happening nowadays. It helps us to understand why Finland has the stance it has towards neutrality, the Ukrainian crisis and non-alignment.

2.1 Finland as a part of Sweden

One of the first contacts of Sweden with Finland was in the 9th century, when Swedes turned eastward, because they hoped to establish contact with the rich Arabian world. Generally, Swedish expeditions were only short raids for purposes of tax collection and never led to a more permanent conquest. Until the first half of the 12th century, there was no official state in the Finnish territory, therefore neighboring powers were naturally interested in it. Swedes had their colonies in Finland, the biggest one in the Aland Islands. In 1216, Swedes wanted to confirm their claim on Finland, but at the same time the Danish intervened and conquered the south. Another power competing with the Swedish kingdom (Catholic Church) was the Novgorod Principality (Orthodox Church). In the 14th century, when Sweden's political and military power increased, it signed a peace agreement with Novgorod in 1323, resulting in most of the Finnish

territory being claimed by Sweden and Novgorod taking control of only the Eastern part called Karelia³. Finland was a part of Sweden between the years 1200 and 1809. Finns enjoyed great influence under the Swedish rule. Since 1362 they could send their deputies to participate in the elections of the Swedish king and since 16th century they had their deputies in the Swedish national assembly.⁴

As a consequence of enduring Swedish domination for such a long time, the Swedish legal and social systems took root in Finland. During the time of the Swedish domination Turku became the most important city, being a center of practically every imaginable human endeavor in Finland. Moreover, in the second half of the 13th century it became the seat of the Bishop, further increasing its importance as a city. The Reformation was the cause of a great growth in Finnish-language culture, in which Mikael Agricola (1510-1557), the Bishop of Turku, played a crucial role. Agricola translated the New Testament into Finnish in 1548 and created a writing system for the Finnish language, which was a great milestone in Finnish history and culture. However, at the start of 19th century, Sweden lost its position of power and Russia started making claims on Finland. The Russians eventually succeeded and conquered Finland during the war with Sweden between 1808-1809.⁵

2.2 Finland as a part of the Russian empire

The Russian rule lasted for more than a hundred years; from 1809 to 1917 to be exact. The first steps were taken in 1808, when Russia declared war on Sweden on February 10th 1808. This was followed by a declaration from the Russian commander-in-chief Count von Buxhoevden on February 22nd 1808, the days when Russian troops crossed the border, asking Finns to give up resistance. In the end, Russia conquered Finland during the war with Sweden.

³ Zetterberg, Seppo. "Main Outlines of Finnish History." This Is FINLAND. 2013. Accessed April 26, 2016. <http://finland.fi/life-society/main-outlines-of-finnish-history/>.

⁴ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 160.

⁵ Zetterberg, Seppo. "Main Outlines of Finnish History." This Is FINLAND. 2013. Accessed April 26, 2016. <http://finland.fi/life-society/main-outlines-of-finnish-history/>.

After Finland was annexed by Russia, it became an autonomous Grand Duchy, which was vastly different from the times under Swedish domination when Finland was ruled from Stockholm and was not a national entity itself. The Russian Emperor was the Grand Duke of Finland and his representative in Finland was the Governor General. The Finnish state was created in 1809, when the enlightened Russian Emperor Alexander I gave Finland extensive autonomy and in 1812, Helsinki became the capital of Finland and the university of Turku (which was created in 1640) was moved to Helsinki in 1828.⁶

During the Russian domination, Finnish national movement became much stronger and Finnish nationalism was evolving as well. Kalevala, which is the Finnish national epic and the pride of Finnish culture, was published in 1835 by Elias Lönnrot. In 1858, the very first solely Finnish-speaking high school was established⁷. Swedish language retained its important position in Finland well into the 20th century and by 1863, one-seventh of the Finnish population spoke Swedish as its first language. However, in 1863 Finnish became an official administrative language with the issue of the Language Decree by Alexander II.⁸

Another milestone in Finnish history during the Russian period was the Finnish Diet in 1863, when active legislative work in Finland began and the Conscription Act of 1878 gave Finland an army of its own. The very same year, an uprising in Poland broke out, which influenced the development of Russia and its autonomous territories. After this uprising, a new prevailing political opinion emerged in Russia; one that the increasing power and autonomy of border nations would lead to dissolution of the Russian Imperium. That is why Russia tried to suppress minority nationalities, their rights to culture and traditional ways of life. The aim was to achieve centralization. In 1881, general Fedor Logginovich Heiden became governor of Finland and emphasized the need for integration measures and even refused to accept the status of Finland as an autonomous state. On the other hand, tsar Alexander III. was on the Finnish side and

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 183.

⁸ Zetterberg, Seppo. "Main Outlines of Finnish History." This Is FINLAND. 2013. Accessed April 26, 2016. <http://finland.fi/life-society/main-outlines-of-finnish-history/>.

believed that as long as stable policy and cooperation with Finland does not cause any harm to Russia, it is appropriate to continue with it. Two events led to a change in politics towards Finland. In the 1820's unrests broke out in Russia and therefore suspicions of Finnish separatism emerged. The second event was the formation of the Triple Alliance in 1879, when Italy joined forces with Austria-Hungary and the German Empire. Thanks to this affiliation, Finland became a peripheral area and Russia started to concern itself with a possible attack on its territory by the Triple Alliance via Finland. As a result of these events, Russia tried to strengthen its hold on Finnish territory as much as possible with the so-called "Finnish question".⁹

Then the time of "Russification" began, spanning the years 1899-1905 in its first phase and 1909-1917 in its second phase. These events were important mainly for the most radical parliamentary reform in Europe in 1906, when Finland moved in a single step from a four-estate regime to unicameral parliament and universal suffrage. The first significant measure of Russification was the February manifesto from 1899, which enabled the tsarist government to rule in Finland without any consultation with the Finnish senate or assembly. The Finnish status of an autonomous territory was taken away and Finland became one of the provinces of the Russian Empire, which enabled even wider Russification. The tsarist decree caused an enormous negative reaction in Finland. Reactionary petitions, which circulated all over Finland were signed by more than 500 000 people. Unfortunately, the tsar ignored them.¹⁰ In 1900, the Language manifesto was released, which implemented Russian as the official language in all government institutions. The Finnish army was incorporated into the Russian one and was expected to be prepared to fight anywhere, even outside the Finnish territory. A passive resistance was mounted by the Finns. In 1902, only half of the recruits entered service and the same happened in the following years. Finns were identified as unreliable for military purposes and thanks to this, they were exempted from military duties. As compensation, Finland had to pay a special tax. Meanwhile in the first years of 20th century the Russian government implemented repressive measures towards Finns. Purges were carried out against opponents of Russification, censorship was

⁹ Polvinen, Tuomo. *Imperial Borderland: Bobrikov and the Attempted Russification of Finland, 1898-1904*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995. Pg. 19.

¹⁰ "Finland - The Era of Russification." Nations Encyclopedia. December 1988. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-4575.html>.

implemented and in 1903, governor Bobrikov gained dictatorial powers. On the other hand, in the same years the resistance towards Russification grew and the Kagal movement was founded. In 1904, Finnish resistance culminated with Bobrikov's murder in June. His death was a relief for Finland and led to a decrease of pressure from the Russian side.¹¹

The suppression of Russification led to a revolution in Russia in 1905. Uprising spread out even to Finland, where local insurgents gained power. In 1906, at the tsar's behest the outdated Finnish parliament was replaced by a unicameral parliament named Eduskunta. Eduskunta was elected with a general voting right and therefore Finland also became the second country in the world that gave women the right to vote in parliamentary elections and the first country to do so in Europe. The strongest Party was the Social Democratic Party with 80 seats in the Parliament.¹²

Two years later, the Russian government regained its power and in 1910, the Russian Prime Minister Stolypin enforced a law that significantly limited Finnish autonomy. Until the start of the World War I, the Finnish Constitution was significantly weakened and Finland was as a part of the Russian Empire ruled from St. Petersburg. At the beginning of the World War I, even though Finland did not have to provide any soldiers for the conflict, a program of a full Russification of Finland was published. This fact, together with a great number of Russian soldiers present on the Finnish territory, strengthened efforts to stand up to the Russian Empire. Germany became an ally of Finnish activists in the fight for achieving autonomy from Russia. However, leaders of the German foreign policy were careful and promised to at least make an effort at the International Peace conference to get a guarantee of Finnish autonomy.¹³

2.3 The independent period 1917 to the interwar period

The independent Finnish republic was created on December 6, 1917, when the Parliament approved a declaration of independence drawn up by the Senate under the leadership of P.E. Svinhufvud (1861-1944). Svinhufvud was a very important person in

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 220.

Finnish history who should not be forgotten. He was the third president of Finland, (1931-1937), a lawyer and a judge. When he served as a judge during the First World War, he refused to obey the orders of a Russian procurator and for that he was sent off to Siberian exile in 1914. When he came back to Finland, he was welcomed as a national hero and led the declaration of independence, which became a pivotal moment in Finnish history.¹⁴

However, gaining independence was not so easy for Finland. In March 1917, revolutionary tendencies spread from Russia and the Finnish tentative government issued the so-called March Manifest, which annulled all legislative previously issued by the tsarist government. But in reality, most of the power was held by the uprising groups which eventually crystalized into two larger bodies. The middle class (which was backed by the Civil Guard) and the working class (which relied on the Red Guards). Disagreements between Parties became more and more aggravated, the Social Democratic Party used its majority in the Parliament and voted for the so-called right of supreme power, thanks to which the Parliament gained all the power. Military matters and foreign policy stayed in the hands of a provisional government. The provisional government dissolved the Parliament and the neo-socialists won the new elections. In November 1917, Social Democrats published a declaration *Me vaatimme* (“*We require*”), which was refused by the Parliament. Political violence became more common and the Finnish society continually divided into two camps.¹⁵

Success of the Bolsheviks in Russia gave courage to Finnish workers and on 14th November they organized a general strike aiming to gain power, but they were stopped by the Social Democrats. Already during the general strike there were armed conflicts between the Red and Civil guard, resulting in the deaths of several people. Therefore at the end of November, a new government was formed from the representatives of the middle class under the leadership of Pehr Eind Svinhufvud and Finnish independence was declared. Lenin’s Council of People’s Commissars recognized the Finnish

¹⁴ Ibid. Pg. 220.

¹⁵ "Finland – The Finnish Civil" Nations Encyclopedia. December 1988. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-4577.html>.

independence on 31st December the very same year and Russia was soon followed by the most of other countries.¹⁶

Svinhufvud's government did not want at any case to grant socialists any power and on 9th January 1918 it authorized the Civil Guard to act as an organ of state security. This decision caused a huge wave of opposition from the socialists. Over the course of several days, violence between both camps broke out. The government appointed former tsarist general Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim to lead the armed forces. The Civil Guard (also called the White Guard or simply Whites) had several advantages on its side. These advantages were mainly professional leadership, better equipment and the help of professional Swedish military officers. Russian units, which were still present on the Finnish territory, helped the Reds in a limited fashion and when the situation reached its peak, were withdrawn after the signing of Brest-Latvian Peace in March 1918. At the end of March, the tactical superiority of the Whites became obvious and on 16th May general Mannerheim declared the conflict to be concluded by entering Helsinki.

The civil war was a catastrophe for Finland. In only several months, 30 000 Finns were killed, which amounted to 1% of the population by the time. As a consequence of the war, Finnish society was divided into two camps – the winners and the defeated. This division lingered for several generations and some Finns expressed their dissatisfaction with the system by voting communists, which meant that the communists were getting more sympathies in Finland than in the majority of Western democracies until 60's of the 20th century.¹⁷

2.4 Interwar period

Two days after the end of the civil war, Svinhufvud was elected as first regent and he appointed a new government with Juho Kusti Paasikivi in the lead. The new government consisted only of supporters of monarchy and since October 1918 general Mannerheim was in the lead. However, in the elections in March 1919, the Social

¹⁶ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 227.

¹⁷ "Finland – The Finnish Civil" Nations Encyclopedia. December 1988. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-4577.html>.

Democratic Party won and it championed the establishment of a republic. In June, a new Constitution came into force, according to which Finland became a republic whose president was elected for 6 years and had a wide range of powers. In July, Kaarlo Juho Ståhlberg became the first Finnish president.

Finnish foreign policy was influenced by the fear of an attack from the Russian side. The biggest priority was to end the conflict between Finland and Russia, which unofficially kept going on since the civil war, and the establishment of common border. After lengthy negotiations, a peace agreement with Russia was signed in Tartu by the Finnish delegation led by Paasikivi in October 1920. Soviet Russia again recognized the Finnish independence and in addition to its historical territory, Finland gained a narrow corridor leading to the Arctic ocean, a territory called Petsama. At that time, Finland's territory was the vastest it has ever been in the country's history and the Finnish-Russian border was only 30 km from St. Petersburg.¹⁸

However, Finnish-Russian relations were still problematic, which was caused by the historical distrust of Finns towards their Russian neighbor and different political systems of both countries. Finns felt that they live on the very last outpost between the West and the East. In 1931, Finland made a non-aggression pact valid for ten years with the Soviet Union. But this pact did not decrease the mutual distrust anyway. Finland was not able to find outside help against the Soviet threat. In March 1922, Finland signed an agreement with Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, but such states would not be able to provide considerable help in the case of need. That is why Finland tried to get support through an active presence in United Nations. With growing inefficiency of the United Nations in the 1930s, Finland tried to ensure its security through collective neutrality with other Nordic countries. By the time, the ruling class was strongly pro-German. For that reason, Soviets suspected that the Finns would allow Germany to use Finnish territory to attack the Soviet Union.

2.5 Three Finnish wars (Winter War, Continuation War, Lapland War)

These three Finnish wars were crucial not only for Finnish nationalism, but also for international recognition. With 3,5 mil. population, Finland was not a threat for the

¹⁸ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 237.

Soviet Union, however, its territory was seen by the Soviets as a potential German base.¹⁹ Until the summer of 1939, the Soviet Union initiated several negotiations with the Finnish side, which ensured that Finland would never let Germany to break its neutrality. The Soviet Union required more concrete guarantees – a base on the north shore of the Finnish bay, from where it could stop possible attacks. Finnish government did not accede to this demand.

In August 1939, Nazi Germany signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, also called the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. This agreement also contained a secret appendix about the presumed spheres of influence of both countries and Finland fell within the Soviet sphere of interest. In October, the Soviet Union introduced its territorial claims to Finland. However, the Finnish government refused the proposal. There was a distrust in Finland towards the Soviet Union and ceding territory was seen as a step towards subjection of Finland.

2.5.1 The Winter War

The Winter war was the most important collective experience in Finland's history. After the end of Winter War it became clear that Germany underestimated Russia. Therefore, Germany strengthened its hostility to communism in Finland. Also, the Winter War brought about a kind of unity, which is not common in nations as young as Finland was at the time. The Winter War began in 1939, when the Soviet Union and Germany signed the aforementioned non-aggression pact, where Finland was secretly placed within the Soviet sphere of interest. This caused a problem when Finland refused to allow the Soviet Union to build military bases on its territory. In answer, the Soviet Union attacked Finland. By the start of 1939, the Soviet Union wanted to negotiate with Finland about "concrete political questions" and the main requirement was to give small parts of Karelia to Russia as well as the Hanko peninsula. As a counterproposal, Finland could keep east Karelia. But Paasikivi's biggest fear was that this requirement would end with occupation of Finland. The Czechoslovakian case served as proof, where firstly giving up the borderland would inevitably lead to an occupation of the whole country. During Finland's negotiations in Moscow, where Molotov stated Russia's

¹⁹ "Finland - The Winter War." Nations Encyclopedia. December 1988. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-4580.html>.

demands, Finland managed to mobilize its forces and was ready for an attack. The formal reason for starting the war was alleged fire from the Finnish side at a small village called Mainila, which supposedly killed and injured Soviet soldiers. Later, it was found in Soviet archives that the order to shoot was given by the Party Secretary of the Leningrad region A.A. Ždanov. On 30th November, the Russian army crossed the Finnish border and an imminent collapse of Finland was expected from all other states.²⁰

During the first two months of the war, the Finnish army succeeded in successfully protecting the Mannerheim line, achieving its first victory in the north in a direct attack. Thanks to the Finns knowledge of the forest terrain and their experience, they started to encircle and slowly liquidate Russian units. Public opinion in Britain and in France called for more and more help to Finland. The offer of help to Finland caused Russia to change tactics and start negotiating about peace. The peace agreement, which was signed on 13th March 1940 in Moscow led to a concession of a part of Finnish south-eastern territory and a part of north-eastern border. The inhabitants who had to move because of territorial concessions amounted to roughly 11% of Finnish population.²¹

After the end of war, Finland had two priorities: deal with the 400 000 refugees from the lost territories and rearm the army.²² The fact that the Soviet Union meddled with Finnish matters led Finland to worry that its Eastern neighbor might intend to subjugate Finland. The annexation of Baltic states in June and July 1940 even intensified Finnish fears. For these reasons, Finland entered into a contract with Germany. It started out as an informal agreement, which was formalized in September 1940 and enabled the transport of German units through Finnish territory into Norway. An agreement from December enabled placement of German units on the Finnish territory.²³ Finland hoped to get back its lost territories through this union with

²⁰ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 250-252.

²¹ Ibid. Pg. 253-554.

²² "Finland - The Continuation War." Nations Encyclopedia. December 1988. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-4581.html>.

²³ "Finland - The Winter War." Nations Encyclopedia. December 1988. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-4580.html>.

Germany. On the other hand, Hitler saw an ideal interstation for his attack of the Soviet Union in Finland.

2.5.2 The Continuation War

The Winter War and its events set the stage for yet another armed conflict, which came to be known as the Continuation War, which, as the name suggests, was perceived as a continuation of the Winter War. Finland sought to reconquer the territories it lost in the previous war.²⁴ In August 1941, Finland attacked Russian positions in Karelia and succeeded in reclaiming it. The Finnish attack ended at the start of December 1941. Until June 1944, there was relative peace on the frontlines with occasional Russian attacks.

In spring 1941, the Finnish and German armies planned an invasion of the Soviet Union. In the mid-June, the mobilization of Finnish units was completed and war was declared. Finland launched a massive offensive and managed to pass through the Karelian Isthmus and Ladoga lake to the periphery of Leningrad. By the end of 1941, the front stabilized and over the course of two years, no major operations took place. After the German defeat at Stalingrad, Finland tried to exit the war. In 1943 and 1944, there were negotiations with the Soviet Union and with the Western allies, but no agreement was reached. In June 1944, the Soviets again initiated an offensive in the Karelian Isthmus and at the Ladoga lake. A month later, the offensive was stopped with the help of German units at a longitude approximately corresponding to the border from 1940.

Another situation started to emerge by the year 1943 and it came to be known as the Lapland War. It was thus called mainly because the fights took place in the north region of Finland, called Lapland. The situation arose from the German suspicion that Finland could conclude a separate peace with the Soviet Union. To avoid as many losses as possible, Germans planned to withdraw forces northward in order to shield the nickel mines near Petsamo. Fearing that Finland might indeed sign a peace agreement with the Soviet Union in 1944, the Germans were preparing for an escalation of the conflict by improving the roads to the North the entire time. The fights broke out even

²⁴ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 259.

before the agreement was signed and many lives were lost and cities in Lapland destroyed. Finally, Germans were driven out from Finland. The Finnish general, Hjalmar Siilasvuo, was leading the operations against Germans and managed to drive most of them to the north of Finland. This unfortunately caused Germans to take revenge on Lapland by destroying cities and the provincial capital of Rovaniemi was burned down.²⁵

The Finns, exhausted by the war were trying to finally seal a peace agreement with the Soviet Union. A truce agreement signed in Moscow from September 1944 significantly reduced Finnish sovereignty. Borders from 1940 were restored and furthermore, Finland lost the town of Petsamo and the Porkkala peninsula was leased to the Soviet Union for 50 years.²⁶ As mentioned earlier, Finland had to expel German units from its territory and pay reparations to the Soviet Union. Also, an audit commission was assembled mainly consisting of Soviets, to control observance of conditions of the agreement. The very last German troops were expelled in 1945. Unfortunately, as a time-delayed act revenge, Germans planted many land mines in Lapland during their retreat. They were so cleverly placed that they were still killing civilians by the 1948.²⁷ In 1947, a final Finnish-Soviet peace treaty was signed. Even though Finland was defeated for a second time, it managed to retain its independence.

2.6 Juho Kusti Paasikivi and his politics

Juho Kusti Paasikivi (1870-1956) was a Finnish politician, prime-minister and 7th President of Finland. He was elected by the parliament after Mannerheim's resignation in 1945.²⁸ Paasikivi was not elected for the full 6 year term as usual, but only for the remainder of Mannerheim's term, that is until 1950. However, Paasikivi also succeeded in the next elections and therefore stayed in the presidential function

²⁵ "Finland - The Lapland War." Nations Encyclopedia. December 1988. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://countrystudies.us/finland/21.htm>.

²⁶ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 262.

²⁷ "Finland - The Lapland War." Nations Encyclopedia. December 1988. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://countrystudies.us/finland/21.htm>.

²⁸ "Elections to the Finnish Eduskunta (Parliament)." Election Resources on the Internet. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://electionresources.org/fi/eduskunta.php?election=1945>.

until 1956. Paasikivi did not often attend international negotiations, however, he tried to actively operate from abroad. As an example we may note a negotiation in Moscow, which led to the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between Finland and the Soviet Union on 6th April 1948. Finland was represented by Peckala, Leino and Kekkonen (by the time serving as the speaker of the Parliament). Even though Kekkonen was a member of a different Party than Paasikivi (and they also competed politically with each other), they had the same stances on foreign policy; they preferred a friendly policy towards the Soviet Union. Therefore it can be presumed that they helped each other in assertion of this policy.²⁹

The Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance became a corner stone for Finnish-Russian relations. The key part of the agreement were Article 1 and Article 2. Article 1 called for a military cooperation of Finland and the Soviet Union in a case that and attack on either one of the parties by Germany or its allies would occur. Article 2 commanded military consultations, which would precede the cooperation. Sovereignty and democracy were granted to Finland and the agreement helped stabilize Finnish-Russian relations by giving guarantees to the Soviet Union that it will not face any military threat from the Finnish side.³⁰ On the basis of this agreement, a so-called model of Finlandization emerged in the course of the Cold War. In practice, it meant that Finland kept its plural political system in the inner policy and the market economy and in the questions of foreign and security policy it cooperated with the Soviet Union.

In the area of leading foreign policy it can be assumed that Paasikivi was the main ideologist of neutrality and supporter of Soviet-Finnish relations, which is clearly demonstrated by his refusal of the Marshall plan. Its approval would otherwise mean an increase of mistrust in the eyes of Soviets. The importance of this decision also proves the fact that Finland was economically lagging by the time and as a defeated country had to pay high reparations.³¹ Other fact that proves that Paasikivi intended to determine

²⁹ Kullaa, Rinna. *Non-Alignment and Its Origins in Cold War Europe: Yugoslavia, Finland and the Soviet Challenge*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012. Pg. 63-69.

³⁰ Hanhimäki, Jussi M. *Containing Coexistence: America, Russia, and the "Finnish Solution"* Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997. Pg. 207.

³¹ Kuusisto, Allan Andrew. *Paasikivi Line in Finland's Foreign Policy*. Western Political Quarterly, 1959. Pg. 44.

the direction of foreign policy was his inaugural speech in 1950, when he emphasized that according to Article 33 of the Constitution, directing the country's foreign policy falls within to the president's competence and he also stated his firm goals.³² In this case, Kekkonen did not define the direction of foreign policy, but tried to persuade other Scandinavian countries to implement the same kind of policy.³³

Paasikivi's leadership was rewarded in 1955, when the Soviet Union gave the Porkkala peninsula back to Finland, 40 years before the agreement expired. This ended the presence of Soviet troops on Finnish territory and strengthened the claim of Finland on its neutrality. Finland started to participate more actively on the international scene. In 1949, it joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and in 1955 entered the United Nations and the Nordic Council.³⁴

2.7 Urho Kekkonen and his politics

Urho Kekkonen served as president from 1956 to 1982; he was elected four times in a row, which makes him longest-serving President. Kekkonen was elected into his first term mainly because of a tactical distribution of votes in previous rounds. Communists expressed their support for Kekkonen in the third round and therefore Kekkonen became 8th President of Finland.³⁵ Kekkonen was very firm in his attitude, as we can observe in his 1960 announcement in the Parliament "*Whoever is with Kekkonen, is as well for friendship with the Soviet Union and whoever is against Kekkonen, is against friendship with the Soviet Union.*"³⁶

Kekkonen had strong public support in his foreign policy as a public opinion inquiry later showed. This research showed that 85-96% of people agreed with Finnish

³² Nousiainen, Jaakko. *From Semi-presidentialism to Parliamentary Government: Political and Constitutional Developments in Finland*. Scandinavian Political Studies, 2001. Pg. 100.

³³ Kuusisto, Allan Andrew. *Paasikivi Line in Finland's Foreign Policy*. Western Political Quarterly, 1959. Pg. 47.

³⁴ "Finland - Domestic Developments and Foreign Politics, 1948-66." Finland - Domestic Developments and Foreign Politics, 1948-66. Accessed May 02, 2016. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-4586.html>.

³⁵ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 268.

³⁶ Singleton, Fred. *The Myth of Finlandisation*. 2nd ed. Vol. 57. International Affairs, 1981. Pg. 271.

foreign policy in 1964, 1974 and 1984.³⁷ Kekkonen represented his neutral attitude as well in the General Assembly in the UN in 1961 by saying: “*We perceive ourselves more like doctors than judges, it is not up to us to pass judgment or condemn. We rather diagnose and cure.*”³⁸ Kekkonen was very active in negotiating and initiating for example the Nordic nuclear weapon free zone.³⁹ During Kekkonen’s term, Helsinki hosted one of key conferences of the Cold War, Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe were signed and the very same year Kekkonen dissolved the Parliament (and therefore strengthened his domination on the political scene). During his long presidency, Kekkonen achieved to dominate not only the Finnish foreign policy, but also the entire political scene. He attended key negotiations himself and also acted secretly under the rule of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰

In 1958, Communists won the Parliamentary elections thanks to the dissatisfaction on the labor market and other parties became increasingly worried because of the Communist victory and formed a majority government with Fagerholm in the lead. This fact together with the increasing share of Western countries present on the Finnish market caused a suspicion of changes in the foreign political orientation in the Soviet Union. As a reaction, the Soviet Union recalled its envoy from Helsinki and expressed its dissatisfaction with Fagerholm’s government. Consequently, the government resigned and a minority agrarian government was created. This crisis was later called as the “Night Frost”, which however thawed in the end. Under Khrushchev government, even the thesis about neutrality proclaimed by the Finns was accepted, thanks to which Finland in the case of war between superpowers would profess neutrality.⁴¹ A very serious situation occurred in the 1970s when under Brezhnev’s

³⁷ Kirby, David G. *Finland in the Twentieth Century: A History and an Interpretation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979. Pg. 208.

³⁸ Vesa, Unto. *Finland in the United Nations: Consistent and Credible Constructivism*. Helsinki: Finnish Foreign Policy Papers, 2012. Pg. 27.

³⁹ Archer, Clive. *Plans for a Nordic Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone*. Digital Repository of the University of Helsinki. Accessed April 30, 2016. <https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10224/3635/archer201-207.pdf>.

⁴⁰ "EILEN | Suomen Ulkopoliittikan Asiakirja-arkisto Ja Kronologia." Archive and Chronology of Finnish Foreign Policy. 2012. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.eilen.fi/>.

⁴¹ Jutikkala, Eino, Lenka Fárová, and Kauko Pirinen. *Dějiny Finska*. Praha: NLN, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2001. Pg. 269.

government, the Soviet Union refused to accept the Finnish neutrality and the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was renewed. In 1973, Finland entered into a contract with the European Economic Community, which did not really help to the Finnish-Russian relations. In 1981, Kekkonen resigned because of his health issues and was replaced by social democrat Mauno Koivisto.

2.8 Mauno Koivisto and his politics

The Finnish foreign policy and the entire political scene began to change significantly in the 80's. And one of the most important factors was President Mauno Koivisto, who replaced the ill President Kekkonen in 1981. Koivisto brought a brand new approach to the presidential position in Finnish politics. He did not intervene too significantly in the functioning of the government and did not use foreign policy for domestic political machinations (as his predecessors did), he gave a free course to the political situation in the country and therefore he distanced himself from Kekkonen's former authoritarian attitude. Thanks to this approach, the government became more stable and Sorsa's government formed after elections in 1983 ruled steadily throughout its four-year mandate and became the longest ruling government in the Finnish history.

However, he based his approach to directing foreign economy policy on the same principles as his predecessors, the so called Paasikivi-Kekkonen line, thus supporting neutrality, but also maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union. This kind of policy developed during the time of the Second World War when President Paasikivi was in power. Mauno Koivisto supported strengthening of parliamentarism.⁴² Koivisto summarized his priorities in directing foreign policy into four points: "*good relations with Moscow, good relations with present Moscow leaders, cooperation with Estonian aspirations and protection of Western reputation*"⁴³

Koivisto was a guarantee of long-term good relations with the Soviet Union rather than just a leader. During Koivisto's term, the Soviet Union collapsed, which had a

⁴² Bergman, Torbjörn, and Kaare Strøm. *The Madisonian Turn: Political Parties and Parliamentary Democracy in Nordic Europe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011. Pg. 142.

⁴³ Hiden, John, Vahur Made, and David J. Smith. *The Baltic Question during the Cold War*. London: Routledge, 2008. Pg. 168.

crucial impact on Finnish foreign policy. Finland became more Europe-oriented and the government took a very positive stance towards such integration.

2.9 Martti Ahtisaari and his politics

Mauno Koivisto was succeeded as president by Martti Ahtisaari. Ahtisaari had a clear vision of future Finnish foreign policy, which included an active membership in the European Union and participation in the European Monetary Union. He believed that the European Union could play a stabilizing role in the difficult times for Finnish economy.⁴⁴ As for NATO membership, Ahtisaari was pragmatic about it. He said he was in favor of non-alignment “in the present circumstances”.⁴⁵ Ahtisaari tried to develop bilateral relations with Russia on one side and on the other he also tried to create a framework of cooperation inside the EU. Finland was interested more than other countries in a closer cooperation between European Union and Russian Federation. The basic argument was security and that mutually dependent countries would not take aggressive action towards each other. Finland wanted to prove that even a state so small, while also being a new member state, could be important in common politics of the EU.

2.10 Tarja Halonen and her politics

With 51,6% of votes in total, Tarja Halonen became the only female President in Finland and as well third social-democratic President in a row.⁴⁶ Halonen focused strongly on the significance of the United Nations in which she often engaged and supported the development of security system in the area of the Security Council.⁴⁷ Halonen herself wrote: “*The United Nations are the central element of a multi-lateral*

⁴⁴ Altola, Mika. *Agile Small State Agency: Heuristic Plays and Flexible National Identity Markers in Finnish Foreign Policy*. Nationalities Papers, 2001. Pg. 270.

⁴⁵ Merikallio, Katri, and Tapani Ruokanen. *The Mediator: A Biography of Martti Ahtisaari*. Hurst, 2015. Pg. 201.

⁴⁶ "Presidential Elections 1919-2006." The President of the Republic of Finland. Accessed April 30, 2016. <http://www.presidentti.fi/halonen/Public/download0b3f.pdf?ID=41064&GUID={14594FC0-BB10-4617-88F4-7483FFCC20AA}>.

⁴⁷ Aalto, Pami, Vilho Harle, and Sami Moisio. *Global and Regional Problems: Towards an Interdisciplinary Study*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012. Pg. 44.

international system. The ability or inability of the international system to react to present challenges crystallizes in the United Nations."⁴⁸ We can perceive Halonen as a peace activist, who was against the NATO membership and described herself as a "relative Pacifist". She also supported Finnish engagement in International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, where Finland also actively participated.⁴⁹

2.11 Sauli Niinistö and his politics

Sauli Niinistö is the current Finnish president affiliated with the National Coalition Party and he is in office since 2012 up to the present day. In his inauguration speech Niinistö expressed his intention to continue Finnish foreign policy in the same direction as before and to strive for good relations with Russia and optionally to endeavor to convey a dialogue between Russia and the European Union.⁵⁰ Niinistö does not negotiate excessively with other EU countries, but he is very active in negotiations with Russia. He met with the Russian president Putin in his first year of presidency and his importance increased after the start of crisis in Ukraine and he intends to maintain his position of an intermediary in negotiations between the European Union and Russia in the future.⁵¹

He recently expressed his opinion on the NATO membership affirming that a referendum on NATO membership needs to take a place. And the same situation applies to Sweden, where a similar referendum should also take place, according to Niinistö. He

⁴⁸ Halonen, Tarja. *United Nation's Role in Global Challenges*. Presidents, 2003. Pg. 14.

⁴⁹ "Afghanistan." The Finnish Defence Forces. 2012. Accessed April 30, 2016. http://www.puolustusvoimat.fi/portal/puolustusvoimat.fi/!ut/p/c5/vZPLcrJAEIWfJQ-gcwEGWKoz4CDDHQ2lhqjSLioGANP_1OVVra_q5R9lqf6fFV9qkEORtXbr-K47Yqm3n6CFORkY2KiLS2IdNdDDHLXWhJFmaMQYrAGKZQ34blv-VAOwXkIPKeEg2PHD0GNIshlfDuHWNCA3HRCyqG8OzjkH07aK-jxPDZjGni2JdvY1b-m7YS85Fmw0S1PbQw4XMfoh-fSGzFHFNGpreQIQ9prEexKpkxebrvBuqPD_8zMwgykKubuZ9EJpNcqNmOBjLZWFOsqwqNIij-8BrPWfh1LOmVLO11LOuFfc1fyfrbviyQF7tq-thXUzglMtEkRCCWFE3F4_vnMVTpjT-ojVZufe08W5xmAbezS3DjaWK3Iryz9rDGY3LGabfJN93Oe4_rDds7invfuWawLjRrz3CwmCzi1v-41VG.

⁵⁰ "Inauguration Speech by President of the Republic Sauli Niinistö on 1 March 2012." The President of the Republic of Finland. 2012. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.presidentti.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=243180>.

⁵¹ "Finland's Niinisto to Putin: Sanctions Bite Both, Let's Discuss Ukraine." Reuters. 2014. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/15/uk-ukraine-crisis-russia-finland- idUSKBN0GF0X920140815>.

also stated that opinions and results could differ even if the political leaders of both countries were to back the membership. The decision to join NATO is not a less important than the one to join EU, where a referendum was necessary as well. Also, Russian actions are marked by unpredictability, but he sees a new kind of dialogue between the United States and Russia on Syria as a positive sign.⁵²

⁵² "President Niinistö: Possible NATO Membership Not a Joint Finnish-Swedish Decision." YLE UUTISET. May 1, 2016. Accessed May 02, 2016. http://yle.fi/uutiset/president_niinisto_possible_nato_membership_not_a_joint_finnish-swedish_decision/8850984.

3 Finland and the EU

The year 1995 was one of great importance for Finland, because together with Austria and Sweden, Finland acceded to the European Union. It is necessary to mention that only 57% of the Finnish population voted “yes” to the European Union. In 2000, only 40% of the population would vote “yes” to the European Union if they had the chance again. The referendum gave people the opportunity to vote “no” without having to take responsibility for the consequences of their action. Believing that everything would remain the same if Finland stayed outside of the Union was an illusion.

By accepting EMU in 1997, Finland got ahead of its neighbors and therefore became a role model for countries such as Sweden, which became a member of the European Union earlier, but still had not accepted EMU. All in all, Finland had three obvious reasons to join the monetary union. The first one was security, so the EMU was a way to connect Finland securely to Western Europe. The second one was to stabilize the Finnish economy and the third reason was to get ahead of its neighbors. Because of its history with Sweden and Russia, Finland suffered from an inferiority complex, so it would be nice to be the first ones at least for once.⁵³

Before joining the EU, women in Finland feared that membership would lead to deterioration of their social and employment rights and people living in the north feared discrimination as result of increasing centralization of power, which would mean that partnership in the EU would prioritize more central than nationalist arguments. But at the end, had the opposition succeeded, Finland would have been left in a limbo, without a coherent alternative policy on how to deal with the relentless march of integration in Europe, so the membership was inevitable.

3.1 Reasons for joining the European Union

There were several reasons for joining the EU, such as security, economy, better connection to Europe itself and showing that Finland is a real part of Europe rather than former Soviet Union. By joining the European Union, Finland showed that it feels to be

⁵³ "Finland and the EU: In and Happy." *The Economist*. October 09, 1997. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.economist.com/node/102291>.

a part of the West, but the non-alignment with NATO on the other hand showed that Finland still wants to keep good relations with its Eastern neighbor, Russia.

But opposition against EU was quite strong as well. Right-wing nationalists and former Communists stood side by side in defense of sovereignty, conservative farmers joined liberal intellectuals in attacking the Union as too market-oriented, feminists believed the status of women would suffer from association with countries like Spain or Greece, environmentalists were convinced Finnish standards were higher than those in most EU countries, and Lutheran fundamentalists regarded Brussels as an annex to the Vatican.⁵⁴

The opposition was quite strong, but there were some preconditions, which directly led to the EU membership. One of the preconditions for Finland joining the EU was the ending of the Cold War. In the 80's, the EU membership was viewed as inconceivable and the former Prime minister Harri Holkeri expressed his opinion about the EU, which was that "*Finnish neutrality constitutes the corner stone in the protection of our living, our independence, our sovereignty and our national existence*". Therefore joining the EU would be in a certain way an abandonment of Finnish independence. But on the other hand, by joining the EU, Finland would escape its past from the Soviet Union and therefore the outcome would be more secure future for Finland.⁵⁵

3.2 Political relations of Finland and Russia after Finland joined the European Union

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, foreign policy matters changed rapidly in Finland. Finland tried to integrate into the European structures of which it could not be part of earlier. On 18th March 1992, the Parliament has decided by majority to file an application to the EU and that is where Finland's road towards European integration officially started. During 1994, conditions of the membership were negotiated and on 16th October of the same year, majority of population agreed on the

⁵⁴ Jakobson, Max. *Finland in the New Europe*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998. Pg. 121.

⁵⁵ Hansen, Lene, and Ole Waever. *European Integration and National Identity*. London: Routledge, 2002. Pg. 183-185.

entrance to the EU in referendum and the Parliament confirmed this decision by two-thirds majority.

3.3 First years of membership

With Finland's joining of the EU started a brand new era in Finnish-Russian relations. For nearly 10 years, Finland was the only country of the EU that had common border with the Russian Federation. This fact gave a significant political importance in the eyes of not only the EU, but also Russia and offered a lot of chances to use its initiatives. Finland actively tried to be the bridge between the EU and Russia. On one side, Finland had to coordinate its foreign policy with the EU and on the other to keep developing bilateral relations with the Russian Federation.

Finland had to learn that the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line was not everlasting during their first years of membership and that discussions and disagreements in foreign policy matters were permitted. For the Finnish politics, joining EU meant a learning process, where new concepts and political thinking entered the Finnish politics. Furthermore, the first years of membership were a great challenge for Finnish farmers and agriculture.⁵⁶

3.4 Finnish presidency in the EU in 1999

As a member state of the European Union, Finland has the right to participate in the EU's decision-making. All in all, Finland has held the rotating Presidency of the European Union twice. For the first time in 1999 and then again in 2006. The next presidency is scheduled for 2020.

The very first presidency for Finland was in the second half of 1999. This year was full of changes and events that significantly influenced priorities of Finland as a presidency country of the EU. The first major event of the year was the introduction of the Euro in non-cash transactions, which represented the essential component in functioning of the economic and monetary union. The introduction of the single currency had a big influence on strengthening the internal market of the Union and also on its position in the terms of the world's economy. In the beginning of May, the

⁵⁶ Raunio, Tapio, and Teija Tiilikainen. *Finland in the European Union*. London: F. Cass, 2003. Pg. 36.

Amsterdam Treaty came into force, which also strengthened the role of the European Parliament, determined representation of the member states in the Commission on one Commissioner from each state and also integrated the Schengen Agreement into the legal framework of the EU. The Amsterdam Treaty also introduced the idea of common strategy, which means that the EU should have a long-term vision about its foreign and security policy with given priorities. The priority became a common strategy towards Russia.

The aim of Finnish presidency was the creation of relations with Russia on long-term basis corresponding with Common strategy accepted by the European Council in Cologne. The relation with Russia was meant to be supported by the North dimension policy, which had to be created at the EU and partner states conference in November. This conference provided a common space for discussion about concepts and concrete opinions for development of the North dimension for the EU, its members, partner states and observers. Participants of the conference agreed on common priorities and expressed necessity to create an action plan of the North dimension. They also stated the importance of the on-going cooperation, especially on a local level and adaptation of priorities to changing conditions in the region. The emphasis was placed on the role of already functioning regional organizations such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States or the Council of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.⁵⁷

Other important event during the Finnish Presidency in the EU became the summit of the European Union and Russia on 22nd October 1999 in Helsinki. Finnish premier Paavo Lipponen presided this meeting and the Russian delegation was led by former Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. The topics of the summit were relations between the EU and Russia, North dimension, cooperation in the area of justice and home-affairs and contemporary topics of the international scene. As for EU-Russia relations, medium-term strategy of Russia towards EU for years 2000-2010 was discussed and introduced by Prime Minister Putin and positively welcomed by the European Union. Furthermore, common strategy of the EU towards Russia and inside matters of the Union and Russia, including the war in Chechnya.

⁵⁷ "Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja: The Northern Dimension as a Continuing Process." Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland: Current Affairs. May 9, 2001. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=54219>.

As former President Tarja Halonen stated in her speech at the Summit Meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council on 22nd November 2002, Finland hopes that the EU and NATO can agree on their mutual cooperation without any delay and that any major military crisis-management operations undertaken by the EU must be done in close cooperation with NATO. Halonen also stated that Finland values Partnership for Peace cooperation with NATO and that there are still new threats and challenges (especially international terrorism) and therefore new forms of cooperation must be found.⁵⁸

3.5 Finnish Presidency in the EU in 2006

Since 1st July 2006, Finland was in the lead of the EU for the second time. Priorities during the six-month presidency of Finland in the EU Council were introduced by Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen on 21st July 2006 in the Finnish Parliament. Priorities of the second half of 2006 were as follows: globalization and demographic changes, increasing competitiveness, improving the quality of education, repression of climate changes, the area of freedom, security and justice, future of Europe and financial perspectives 2007-2013.⁵⁹

Demographic changes were focused on improving the quality of working life for better employment followed by a better productivity. These demographic changes are also focused on gender equality in working life. Increasing competitiveness is mainly focused on the support of domestic markets especially in the area of service and energy, where it is necessary to improve relations with developing countries. In the area of education, Finland intended to increase investment into education and common cooperation between the states of the European Union on the topic of education, so that the economy of the European Union would slowly become the most dynamic economy of the world. Finland also intended to decrease climate changes as much as possible and wanted to work on a replacement document after the Kyoto protocol expires. All of these were to be worked on in cooperation with developing countries. Priorities in the

⁵⁸ "NATO Speech by President Tarja Halonen of the Republic of Finland." NATO Speeches. January 22, 2003. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s021122ae.htm>.

⁵⁹ "Hlavní Priority Finského Přesednictví." Euroskop. Accessed May 01, 2016. <https://www.euroskop.cz/820/1089/clanek/finske-predsednictvi-1-7---31-12-2006/>.

area of freedom, justice and security were mainly focused on the problem of terrorism, its prevention and the problem of legal and illegal migration. Another priority was to strengthen external relations outside the European Union, mainly with the United States on the problem of global and regional problems. Three main areas of this cooperation are as follows: climate changes, economic initiative and support of democracy and stability, solving conflict situations and support of stable governments in the East and Southeast Europe.

Relations with Russia were not meant to be focused only on trade and energetic relations, but had to be widened on new and more mutual relations flowing from common European values and global interests. The way to achieve the strengthening of mutual relations of the EU and Russia was meant to be a bigger interaction of individual member states and Russia, for example student exchange programs and cultural cooperation. The aim of the Finnish presidency was to create long-term framework of mutual cooperation.

This question was supposed to be discussed at the EU-Russia summit, which took place on 24th November. Finland was represented by premier Vanhanen, Russia by President Putin and the European Union by José Manuel Barroso and Javier Solana, Summit was supposed to focus on cooperation of the EU and Russia in the area of energy, environment, education, culture, justice and home-affairs. The aim of the summit was to agree on initiation of negotiations about a new framework agreement between Russia and the EU, which would contain a wide spectrum of cooperation guidelines, including trade and energetic questions and it would replace the present Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation. This aim, however, was not achieved and therefore the EU did not have the mandate to start negotiations.

Current Finnish priorities in the EU policy for 2015 were mainly competitiveness (to strengthen growth and employment), better regulation and the Union as a strong global actor. One of the most important objectives was to target investments at top growth sectors such as digitalization, bioeconomy and cleantech. Creation of green growth is a very important objective as well as a reform of industrial structures. Other goal is to promote the attainment of the climate and energy objectives

2030.⁶⁰ The next Finnish Presidency in the European Union is expected in the first half of 2020.

3.6 Cooperation between the EU and NATO

The European Union and NATO cooperate on several issues. These are issues of common interest and crisis management, capability development and political consultations. Also, both organizations share a majority of members, a total of 22 with a further enlargement in 2004 when Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia joined. The cooperation started in the 1990s with the goal to promote greater responsibility in defense matters. Since then, several important events improved the NATO-EU relations. In December 2002, the Declaration on a European Security and Defense Policy was set out, which underlined the political principles and which assured for the EU the access to NATO's planning capabilities for the EU's own military operations. A crucial change took place in 2010 at the Lisbon Summit in order to improve the NATO-EU strategic partnership and by NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept committed alliance to prevent crises, manage conflicts and stabilize post-conflict situations. In March 2014, there were informal talks of NATO and EU Security Committee Ambassadors on Ukraine and one more in June 2014.⁶¹

As for the areas of cooperation, political consultations grew in number significantly over the past two years between NATO and EU. Particularly on security issues within the European space since the Ukraine crisis, which is a topic on which EU and NATO regularly exchanged views, perspectives and decisions especially with regard to Russia. Capability development is another area where cooperation is necessary and where there is a potential for growth. To ensure the coherence and mutual reinforcement of NATO and EU capability development efforts, the NATO-EU Capability Group was established in May 2003. In July 2014, the European Defense Agency coordinated work within the EU on the development of defense capabilities, armaments cooperation, acquisition and research. Furthermore, NATO and EU

⁶⁰ "Finland's EU Policy Priorities: Competitiveness, Better Regulation and Union as a Strong Global Actor." Finland's Permanent Representation to the European Union. December 8, 2014. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.finland.eu/public/default.aspx?contentid=317895>.

⁶¹ "Relations with the European Union." North Atlantic Treaty Organization. April 7, 2016. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49217.htm.

cooperate also in the issues of terrorism and WMD proliferation and the new areas for cooperation are energy security issues and cyber defense as of now.⁶²

⁶² Ibid.

4 The Ukrainian Crisis and its impact on the Ukrainian society

As I usher in the introduction, my thesis is focused on the change of public opinion in Finland on its membership in NATO in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. In this chapter I will briefly introduce the timeline of the Ukrainian crisis, how it started and how it unfolded, as well as the intervention from international organizations and opinions from other countries and its impacts on Russia and Ukraine. I will also research Finnish opinions, publications and declarations to understand better the Finnish stance toward the issue.

4.1 *The official start of the Ukrainian crisis with demonstrations in Kiev*

The roots of the Ukrainian conflict come from the history of tsarist Russia, nevertheless the current situation is believed to have started with protests at Maidan (Maidan, meaning ‘square’ in Ukrainian and referring to Maidan Nezalezhnosti (‘Independence Square’) in Kiev, it has become a commonly used term in this shortened one word form) in Kiev. The start of the Ukrainian crisis dates back to the end of November 2013 to be exact, when the Ukrainian government under the leadership of president Viktor Yanukovich and prime minister Mykola Azarov broke off their preparations to sign an association agreement between the EU and Ukraine. One of the parts of this association agreement was supposed to be a deepened and complex free market agreement. This agreement was supposed to be signed one week after the Summit of Eastern Partnership in Vilnius. Instead, Ukraine was challenged by Russia to start preparations for admission to the Russian-Ukrainian customs union. Russia also supported government of Mykola Azarov by a financial loan, which was meant to help the government to stabilize the economy, a lowering of the price of gas by 33%⁶³. In the course of one week, this move by the Ukrainian government caused extensive demonstrations in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities. On the last day in November, the demonstration in Kiev was violently suppressed by the state police.

⁶³ "The Ukraine Crisis Timeline – Maidan Protests Violence Peaks." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://csis.org/ukraine/kyiv.htm#8>.

The day after, 300 000 people were present on the Independence Square for the demonstration in Kiev (some estimate even 1 million)⁶⁴. This led to an occupation and blockade of government buildings by protesters and the Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich was asked to resign. Neither president nor government reacted to the demonstrations. The protesters stayed in the center of Kiev and on the so-called Maidan stayed even on the start of 2014. A tent city was formed, to which people streamed constantly, flophouses, field kitchens and even legal aid centers were created and demonstrations went on continuously⁶⁵. In order to suppress the demonstrations and removal the tent cities in the center of Kiev, Yanukovich's Party of Regions enforced in a law in the parliament, tightening restrictions towards demonstrations. This caused resistance not only from the citizens of Ukraine, but also from the international community. In the first half of February 2014, peace talks took place between representatives of the opposition and the Ukrainian government under the leadership of OSCE, which resulted in the release of some protesters from custody. In return, protesters withdrew from the Kiev town hall, which had been occupied for 3 months. The main requirement of the protesters, the resignation of president Yanukovich, remained unfulfilled⁶⁶.

In spite of the partly successful peace talks of both sides, a violent conflict erupted on 18th January between the protesters and the police. 88 people were killed and hundreds were injured⁶⁷. On 21st February, after a meeting of opposition leaders with president Yanukovich, an agreement was signed under the mediation of Russia, Germany, France and Poland, which stated a date of early presidential elections (which were moved to 25th May 2014) and a new government was established. One part of the agreement was that Ukraine would revert to the Constitution from 2004, which would lead to elimination of the changes implemented during Yanukovich's administration. This would involve adjustment of changes put into action during the first months of

⁶⁴ "The Ukraine Crisis Timeline – Maidan Protests Violence Peaks." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://csis.org/ukraine/kyiv.htm#8>.

⁶⁵ Ivanova, Nadija. "Reportáž Z Kyjeva - Majdan Včera a Dnes." Amnesty International. 2014. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.amnesty.cz/z864/reportaz-z-kyjeva-majdan-vcera-a-dnes>.

⁶⁶ "The Ukraine Crisis Timeline – Maidan Protests Violence Peaks." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://csis.org/ukraine/kyiv.htm#8>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

2014, leading to restrictions on freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. Yulia Tymoshenko, a former prime minister and main competitor of president Yanukovich was dismissed⁶⁸. Shortly after, president Yanukovich left Kiev, his whereabouts remaining unknown. A stabilization of economy and other reforms, which were as well part of the agreement, were supposed to aid the stabilization of the situation in Ukraine. On the other hand, the agreement was not excessively satisfying, because Yanukovich's resignation was not a part of it. Protesters from the Right sector demonstrated against the agreement with the most vigor^{69,70}.

President Yanukovich was impeached by the parliament and Oleksandr Turchynov was appointed president instead, who until then was chairman of the Ukrainian parliament. The changes taking place on the Independence Square (so called "Maidan") were seen mostly in a positive light. On the other hand, in other Eastern Ukrainian cities approval was not as widespread. For example, in Odessa clashes took place between protestors supporting the situation at Maidan and those who were against. Despite the fact that the state police Berkut was accused of violent suppressions of demonstrations in Kiev, in Donetsk (Eastern Ukraine) the state police was widely supported. Demonstrations in Kiev were perceived as Neo-Nazi from the point of view of the Eastern Ukraine, mainly because of the involvement of the Right wing. The unrest in the eastern Ukraine (inhabited mainly by the Russian minority) also motivated a voting in the parliament about revoking the status of Russian as an official language, but the attempt failed.

4.2 Annexation of Crimea

In the last days of February 2014, some of the very important buildings such as government structures were occupied by pro-Russian gunmen in Simferopol, the capital city of Crimea. Even though these gunmen did not have any characteristics, which would identify them as belonging to any particular army, they were considered to be

⁶⁸ "The Ukraine Crisis Timeline – The Russia and Eurasia Program." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://csis.org/ukraine/index.htm>.

⁶⁹ "Profile: Ukraine's Ultra-nationalist Right Sector." BBC News. April 28, 2014. Accessed April 1, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27173857>.

⁷⁰ "The Ukraine Crisis Timeline – Maidan Protests Violence Peaks." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://csis.org/ukraine/kyiv.htm#8>.

Russian because of their language and other indications. On 1st March 2014, Vladimir Putin was granted powers by the government to use power resources to protect Russian interests in Ukraine. Two weeks after that, a referendum about separation of Crimea from Ukraine and its annexation to Russia was organized in Crimea. In this referendum, which took place on 16th March 2014, inhabitants of Crimea supported annexation to Russia by 97% of votes⁷¹. This referendum was declared unlawful by the USA, member states of the EU and the new Ukrainian government. Not even the sanctions, which were imposed on Russia by the EU member states had any effect on the results. On 11th March 2014, the Crimean parliament declared Crimean independence and seven days later signed an agreement about entry into the Russian federation.⁷² Shortly after, pro-Russian militia (supported by the Russian army) occupied Ukrainian bases on the peninsula.⁷³ Consequently, annexing Crimea to Russia caused mass migration of inhabitants, mainly Ukrainian speakers and Crimean Tatars, which constitute 12% of Crimean inhabitants.⁷⁴

4.3 Fights in Eastern Ukraine

The Ukrainian society is based on a culture which is divided into two parts. This partition manifests, from the long-term point of view, in disparate vote results. The best example would be the Orange revolution of 2004, when the Western regions in Ukraine supported presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich and on the other hand, the eastern and south regions supported Viktor Yushchenko. However, the resignation of president Yanukovich and Russian annexation of Crimea caused tensions and demonstrations in the Eastern Ukraine, where thousands of protestors expressed their disagreement with the new government in Kiev and proclaimed it illegitimate. These tensions were also

⁷¹ "Ukraine Crisis: Timeline." BBC News. November 13, 2014. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>.

⁷² Procházková, Petra. "Od Majdanu K Boji Na život a Na Smrt. Ukrajinská Krize Očima Petry Procházkové." Lidovky.cz. December 27, 2014. http://www.lidovky.cz/od-majdanu-k-boji-na-zivot-a-na-smrt-ukrajinska-krize-ocima-petry-prochazkove-1s5-/zpravy-svet.aspx?c=A141222_161910_ln_zahranici_msl.

⁷³ "Russian Troops Storm Ukrainian Bases in Crimea." BBC News. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26698754> .

⁷⁴ "Crimean Refugees in Lviv." The Economist. March 28, 2014. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2014/03/ukraine>.

increased by the fact that the Ukrainian parliament discussed abolition of Russian language as the official language, but this change was not approved.

Other protests were headed against the planned diversion of Ukraine from Russia towards the EU.⁷⁵ On 7th April 2014, protesters in Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk occupied local government buildings with a demand for a referendum on the independence of Eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian government managed to regain control over occupied local government buildings, but not over the entire area. Therefore the government launched a military operation to regain control over the eastern part of the country. This violence went on in April as well and there were also first casualties. The clashes between pro-Russian protestors and pro-Ukrainian ones in Odessa became a symbol of violence in Ukraine. After an internationally unrecognized referendum held in May 2014, separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions declared independence. The newly elected president Petro Poroshenko was supposed to bring stability, despite the fact that a substantial part of the population of Eastern Ukraine, where the armed conflict still continued, did not participate in the presidential elections.

Ukrainian authorities have repeatedly accused Russia of supporting pro-Russian separatists with supplies of weapons and military equipment, professional consulting and even direct military support. The Russian side has been denying all of these allegations throughout the conflict⁷⁶. USA and the EU responded to these allegations with economic sanctions against Russia⁷⁷. Despite the attempts to negotiate an end of the armed conflict, struggles in Ukraine kept going on throughout fall and winter 2015. The last attempt to solve the crisis were talks in Minsk on 2nd February 2015 between the Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, French President Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. These talks were expected

⁷⁵ "Ukraine Crisis: Timeline." BBC News. November 13, 2014. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>.

⁷⁶ "Report: Abductions and Torture in Eastern Ukraine." Amnesty International. 2014. <https://www.google.cz/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCEQFjAA&url=https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/8000/eur500342014en.pdf&ei=i2ZOVZ--IYufygOemoHwDQ&usg=AFQjCNFDxqkdOxXYQwotJAEg9ByTH34O7w&sig2=NyTpF1CNOjCUpRymxvaAsA&bvm=bv.92885102,d.bGQ>.

⁷⁷ "The Ukraine Crisis Timeline – Obama Announces New Unilateral Sanctions on Russia." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://csis.org/ukraine/east2.htm>.

to follow up on the previous unsuccessful agreement from Minsk from September 2014. The New Minsk agreement from February 2015 is based on an instant, both-sided ceasefire, withdrawal of troops and heavy weapons from the area and creation of peaceful lines under control of OBSE⁷⁸. Despite this agreement, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine still continued in March 2015. However, it can be said that these peace agreements at least contributed to alleviate the conflict. But the risk of the conflict erupting again in full extent, including the use of heavy weapons, is still tremendous.⁷⁹

During the armed conflict in the eastern Ukraine, cases of human rights violations were documented by both sides of the conflict – both the Ukrainian army and the separatist group. A large number of kidnappings of Ukrainian inhabitants was reported, especially of journalists and international observers. Some of them were also victims of torture. The pro-Russian separatists are suspected of these activities, as are members of Ukrainian units.⁸⁰ In addition, fights took place in densely populated areas (such as the Luhansk region for example) with use of cluster bombs, which pose a particular threat to local residents and their use is forbidden in most of the countries of the world.⁸¹ According to estimated numbers from February 2015, so far 5 486 people were killed in fights in eastern Ukraine and 12 972 people were injured. The areas, where the armed conflict takes place are inhabited by approximately 5 million people.⁸²

⁷⁸ "Ukraine Ceasefire: New Minsk Agreement Key Points." BBC News. February 12, 2015. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31436513>.

⁷⁹ "The Ukraine Crisis: Risks of Renewed Military Conflict after Minsk II." International Crisis Group. 2015. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/ukraine/b073-the-ukraine-crisis-risks-of-renewed-military-conflict-after-minsk-ii.aspx>

⁸⁰ "Report: Abductions and Torture in Eastern Ukraine." Amnesty International. 2014. <https://www.google.cz/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCEQFjAA&url=https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/8000/eur500342014en.pdf&ei=i2ZOVZ--IYufygOemoHwDQ&usg=AFQjCNFDxqkdOxXYQwotJAEg9ByTH34O7w&sig2=NyTpF1CNOjCUpRymxvaAsA&bvm=bv.92885102,d.bGQ>.

⁸¹ "Ukraine: Widespread Use of Cluster Munitions." Rights Watch. October 20, 2014. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/20/ukraine-widespread-use-cluster-munitions>.

⁸² "Ukraine Conflict: Death Toll Rises Ahead of Peace Talks." BBC News. February 11, 2015. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31392473>.

4.4 Finnish point of view on the Ukrainian crisis

Naturally, Finland had to express its stance towards the Ukrainian crisis and the Russian foreign policy. This stance is discussed in several sources. In June 2014, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited Finland and was met with consternation from the West amidst the ongoing Ukrainian crisis and Finland's prospects of joining NATO. Sauli Niinistö stated that a referendum might change the country's neutral status even before an eventual application for NATO membership could be filed. As Aleksandr Lukashevich, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman states, Finland's position on the Ukraine crisis had brought about a decline in the Russian-Finnish relations that saw previously no significant tensions, but Lavrov himself claimed that Finland is not going to move closer to NATO, because what happened in Ukraine is impossible in Finland. Some analysts even spoke of the Finlandization of Ukraine and even the reverse, called ukrainization of Finland, with its alleged aspirations to get into NATO.⁸³

Robert Legvold, Professor Emeritus at Department of Political Sciences and the Harriman Institute of Columbia University expresses his point of view on the problematics of Ukraine-Finland-Russia and NATO. He states that it is not clear whether Russian leaders predicted the consequences that might follow when annexing Crimea; both of these consequences being the current developments in Finland and Sweden as well as NATO's almost certain decision to strengthen its military presence on Russian borders.⁸⁴

Even though Finland has no intention to join NATO yet, it has increased cooperation with the western military alliance and mobilized its military rapid reaction forces. Sauli Niinistö said that Finland also wishes to send a rapid reaction force to the Russian border because of the events in Eastern Ukraine, not to mention the reassuring effect it would have on the preoccupied population.⁸⁵ Finland could play a significant

⁸³ Koshkin, Pavel. "Will the Ukraine Crisis Bring Finland into NATO?" Russia Direct. June 17, 2014. Accessed May 09, 2016. <http://www.russia-direct.org/debates/will-ukraine-crisis-bring-finland-nato>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Tarasenko, Pavel, Mikhail Korostikov, Ivan Safranov, and Galina Dydina. "Ukrainian Crisis Rekindles Russia Fears In Finland." World Crunch. July 24, 2015. Accessed May 09, 2016.

role in ending the conflict because it has a long history of cooperating with both Russians and the West and can bring all sides together to resolve the crisis. Both Finland and Russia are interested in ending the sanctions, because sanctions imposed by Russia hurt Finnish economy.⁸⁶

Finland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Timo Soini, expressed his concern that the Ukraine conflict may become an overlooked crisis and called on the international community not to ignore the Ukrainian crisis, saying that it needs to remain on top of the agenda to settle this conflict down. Also, Niinistö stated that Finland's armed forces were preparing for a possible occupation of the Aland Islands by the Russian Federation.⁸⁷

<http://www.worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/ukrainian-crisis-rekindles-russia-fears-in-finland/finland-ukrainian-crisis-russia-borders-military-c1s19324/>.

⁸⁶ Slobodchikoff, Michael. "Why Finland's Role Is Vital to Resolving the Ukrainian Crisis." Russia Direct. August 19, 2014. Accessed May 09, 2016. <http://www.russia-direct.org/opinion/why-finlands-role-vital-resolving-ukrainian-crisis>.

⁸⁷ "Finnish Foreign Minister: Ukraine Conflict Not to Become Neglected Crisis." UNIAN News. August 18, 2015. Accessed May 09, 2016. <http://www.unian.info/politics/1112710-finnish-foreign-minister-ukraine-conflict-not-to-become-neglected-crisis.html>.

5 NATO and Finland

During the Cold War period, Finnish security policy was deduced from the Pact about Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Help with the Soviet Union from 1948, according to which Finland was a neutral state. This pact also impeded Finland from security cooperation with Scandinavian countries, Western Europe and the United States. It also prevented Finland from letting any other third party to use Finland as a base for a possible attack against Russia. For various reasons and in various conditions, Finland, thanks to maintaining friendly relationships, predictable foreign policy and a trustful defense force, managed to partly extricate itself from the influence of the Soviet Union. Firstly with the restitution of the Navy base in Porkkala in 1956, and admission to the United Nations and Nordic Security council a year later. The end of the Cold War enabled Finland to move towards European integration and the European Union while keeping its neutral stance in the area of security. The reasons why Finland in the 90's decided to join the European Union rather than NATO were at that time more important economic challenges rather than security matters. In 1992, a new pact was negotiated, but this time it did not require any commitment to military cooperation. Also, Finland preferred to enter the European Union instead of entering NATO, because an increase of NATO member states would only irritate Russia and would cause unwanted problems.

Nowadays, Finland's membership in NATO is still considered a possibility that should not be neglected according to a government statement on security and defense policy.⁸⁸ However, none of the official sources report what situation would have to arise for Finland to accept this opportunity. There are many reasons for and against Finland's membership in NATO, but not all of them are connected directly the country's relations with Russia. But the fact that Finland shares a common border with Russia hinders its decision. In the current international and political system Russia is not entitled to define the Finnish security policy. However, Russia's views and activities

⁸⁸ "Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009." Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://www.finland.ee/public/download.aspx?ID=40190&GUID={060257D2-EC28-4396-A03A-4ED0BE5CCA7B}>.

still have a huge impact on Finnish foreign, security and military policy in terms of decision-making and public debate.⁸⁹

5.1 Finnish policy of non-alignment and cooperation of Finland with NATO in the history and nowadays

Finnish cooperation with NATO is based on its long-standing policy of military impartiality. Finland participated in both of the world wars and during the Cold War it sought a specific concept of peaceful neutrality. This was mainly because of the Pact about Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Help with the Soviet Union, which contained commitments in the security field. Finland was not allowed to become a member of an alliance directed against the Soviet Union, Finland also had to promise military assistance in case of attack and discuss their foreign policy actions. However, during the time of peace, Finland strived for neutrality, which it retained even after the end of the Cold War. By joining the European Union and signing of the Maastricht Treaty, Finland ceased to be a neutral state. The term “neutrality” has also gradually disappeared from the vocabulary of foreign policy. Currently, Finland is very active in the field of European integration and cooperation with international organizations, but in the military area relies heavily on self-defense. The army is one of the most important symbols of Finnish statehood and local pride.

Finland is not a NATO member, but very actively cooperates with NATO. The cooperation, of course, reflects the opinion of the Finnish official security policy. The relationship with NATO is developing multilaterally through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) since 1997 and bilaterally through the Partnership for Peace (PfP), which Finland joined in 1994. Finland’s plan of cooperation with NATO is based on the Individual Partnership Program (IPP), which includes peace and security operations, crisis management and civil defense plan. IPP is jointly agreed on for a period of two years.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Jakobson, Max. *Finland in the New Europe*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998. Pg. 192.

⁹⁰ "NATO's Relations with Finland." NATO. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://www.nato.int/issues/nato-finland/index.html>.

Participation in the Partnership for Peace program allows Finland to fully participate in NATO-led operations. In the years 1996-2003, Finland participated on a peacekeeping mission IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as from 1999 participates on the KFOR mission in Kosovo and since 2003 the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Nowadays, approximately 450 Finnish soldiers operate in Kosovo, and the Finnish contingent in Afghanistan includes about 120 people operating in Kabul and in the Provincial Reconstruction Team in the north area of the country.⁹¹ Very appreciated was Finland's role in training the forces of partner states, particularly in peacekeeping operations. In 2001, there was even established a training center Partnership for Peace program in the Finnish city Niniälö. Finland participates in many projects within the framework of cooperation with NATO. Since 1995, Finland is involved in the Planning and Review Process (PARP), also supports the NATO program to support security sector reform in the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Finland also contributes to the project fund NATO/PfP in other partner countries. This also includes for example mine clearance in Albania, Serbia and Montenegro and anti-aircraft missiles in Georgia. The most important area of bilateral cooperation between Finland and NATO is civilian defense, i.e. providing mutual assistance in the event of a serious accident or disaster.

Despite Finland's extensive cooperation with NATO one question remains unanswered; the unresolved possibility of Finland's membership. It became a subject of public debate in Finland as well as a subject of political interest in Russia. Meanwhile Russia takes a suspicious attitude towards the possibility of Finnish membership in NATO, opinions of Finnish politicians and academics differ, and so does the public opinion.

5.2 Different attitudes of Finland and Russia on Finnish membership in NATO

Generally, Finnish society is divided into two groups on the question of membership in NATO. The first group would favor joining NATO as soon as possible, because they believe in the historical circle of influence and expansibility of Russia. On

⁹¹ "Mission of Finland to NATO." Finland and Nato. Accessed May 05, 2016. <http://www.finlandnato.org/Public/Print.aspx?contentid=101587>.

the other hand, some believe that staying as long as possible outside of NATO would be the best option in order to preserve good relations with Russia. Finnish politicians are similarly divided. As an example, Mauno Koivisto (Finland's president 1982-1994) takes a stance that "Russia as a flat country tends to expand its territory and seeks subjugation of neighboring states, but does not agree with joining NATO".⁹² Koivisto says that Finland should stay out of NATO, not to anger Russia and at the same time to avoid being a center of attention in the world nowadays. Koivisto's successor, Martti Ahtissari (serving as president from 1994-2000) takes another stance and it is the opposite. According to him "Finland should join the alliance regardless of Russia's political stance, because it is the only way to prove that Finland is a part of the Western world. Otherwise, Finland will remain overshadowed by memories of Finlandization."⁹³ The last former president, Tarja Halonen (in function 2000-2012) did not support membership of Finland in NATO, for which she was greatly appreciated by Russia and Social Democrats.

Social Democrats along with the Christian Democrats do not belong amongst the supporters of joining NATO. On the other hand, the Nation Coalition Party and the Swedish People's Party are very positive towards NATO. However, none of these parties actively enforce membership.

The eventual possibility of Finland entering of NATO would influence Russia as well and there is a mainly negative attitude towards Finland entering NATO from Russian officials. Discussions about the possibility of NATO enlargement to the north are not common. Most of the comments come from Russian diplomats in Finland or from Russian politicians who have been asked the question directly. According to an expert on Finland and former Russian ambassador in Finland, Yuri Deryabin, "Russia sees NATO as a threat primarily aimed at Russia and fears that a potential Finnish membership would bring NATO's military structures to Finland."⁹⁴ From the Russian perspective, an expansion of NATO to Nordic countries would bring to an end the

⁹² Jakobson, Max. "Finland, NATO, and Russia." *Helsingin Sanomat*. January 20, 2014. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://www2.hs.fi/english/archive/news.asp?id=20040120IE3>.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ "Russia Prepares for Finland's NATO Membership." *Helsinki Times*. July 23, 2009. <http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/htimes/finnish-papers/7249-russia-prepares-for-finlands-nato-membership.html>.

military and political stability of the entire region. Deryabin says that “Russia cannot remain passive, as long as NATO keeps getting closer to the northwestern borders of Russia”.⁹⁵

5.3 Four pillars of Finnish security

All in all, Finnish security policy is based on four pillars. The first one is that the Finnish security is based on a strong national defense as well as on strong military forces based on general conscription, numerous reserves and high-class defense material, which is the first pillar. The second pillar is the defense cooperation with the EU, CSDP, enhanced partnership with NATO, Nordic defense cooperation (NORDEFECO), bilateral defense cooperation with Sweden, bilateral defense cooperation with United States. Finland’s good relations with Russia form the third pillar and it is formed by international law, rules and norms (UN, OSCE etc.).⁹⁶

Finnish President Sauli Niinistö considers the first pillar (Finnish own military forces) the most important one, because unlike almost all of the member states of the EU, Finland has always maintained a strong army. If these trained military forces were mobilized, Finland would have 250 000 men at its disposal. The second pillar, centred on cooperation, as President Niinistö states, is the subject of a very intense discussion with Sweden on how Finland should cooperate in the defense sector. Moreover, Sweden considers Finland to be a very active NATO partner. On the other hand, Niinistö would like to see more EU based security and defense policies in order to create more security for Europeans, who would definitely appreciate it according to Niinistö.⁹⁷

5.4 Finland’s possible admission to NATO in the future

Not only supporters, but also opponents of Finland entering NATO delineate a number of reasons for and against Finnish involvement with NATO. The arguments in favor of membership are such as that the eventual entry to NATO would protect Finland

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Matišák, Andrej. "Finnish President: The EU Should Also Take Care of Security." Defence Matters. 2015. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://defencematters.org/news/finnish-president-the-eu-should-also-take-care-of-security/406/>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

from Russian political pressure and that the current policy of neutrality leaves Finland in a vulnerable position; politically it is a part of the West, but it remains militarily independent. But being militarily independent does not mean that Finland can defend itself or solve any crisis in the region on its own. Also, as a member Finland would join the security structures in Europe and furthermore it would retain its position in the core of the European Union. Therefore as a result we may summarize that NATO would provide for a significant rise to security guarantees associated with membership, as well as a possibility to develop relations with the United States.

On the other hand, there are also opponents of the NATO membership. These opponents base their opinions mainly on the possibility of deterioration of their special relations with Russia. They also argue that the enlargement of NATO to the north would provoke Russia and destabilize the balance in Europe. In the current situation of Finnish military non-alignment in NATO allows Finland to act as a mediator in the period of international tension or conflict. The last but not least important argument is the fact that as a NATO member, Finland might become dependent on the Western powers and their help and will be dragged into various regional crises, which are not necessarily related to Finland itself.⁹⁸ Another point that opponents stress is that by joining NATO, Finland would lose its unique position between Russia and the West. Finland is the only EU country that borders with Russia and the only country that did not ask for acceptance to NATO, which is very appreciated by Russia. From the geopolitical point of view, Finland is a buffer zone for Russia and for this reason Finnish policy of non-alignment suits Russia. On the other side, this particular Russian point of view only strengthens the Finnish belief that the country should prepare for political and military pressure from Russia, which could coincide with a period of international tension between Russia and the West.

The question remains, how Russia would respond if Finland joined NATO. It would probably undermine the current Finnish security situation. Even though Russia would believe that Finnish entry to NATO is not directed against Russia, the logic of a security dilemma would force Russia to prepare for the possible use of Finnish territory

⁹⁸ "Finland's NATO Option and Russia." UPI Reports. 2002. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=CAB359A3-9328-19CC-A1D2-8023E646B22C&lng=en&id=10734>.

by possible enemies against Russia in the international crisis. This means that there would be an increase in military activity in northern Europe. Taking into perspective the balance of power, the current combination of independent defense, membership in the EU and cooperation with NATO creates a stability and balance that satisfy both Russia and Finland. Therefore the possibility of Finland entering NATO is the most unstable alternative security policy.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ "Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2009." Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://www.finland.ee/public/download.aspx?ID=40190&GUID={060257D2-EC28-4396-A03A-4ED0BE5CCA7B}>.

6 Change of the public opinion about membership in NATO

The change in the public, political and overall opinion on NATO membership over time needs to be evaluated. It is my belief that the opinion has changed after the Ukrainian crisis. I shall use several primary sources to prove my hypothesis. An interview study conducted by University of Tampere in 2015 and published in January 2016 and published in English by the Advisory Board for Defense Information (ABDI), which has investigated Opinions of the Finnish on the foreign, security and defense policy of Finland, is a crucial source for this thesis. The study was comprised of 22 questions and a total of 1 005 individuals were interviewed and each of them answered every question. Therefore the percentage is always made up of all 1 005 individuals. The target group was composed of the entire population aged between 15 and 79, excluding residents of the Aland Islands. Interviews were conducted in 104 localities, 68 of which were cities and interviews were conducted between 5th November and 23rd November 2015. ¹⁰⁰

As an additional source, I used an article from a Finnish periodical Suomen Kuvalehti from 26th February 2016, which is originally in Finnish. On Sauli Niinistö's opinion I revised an interview from 1st November 2015. Another crucial source was the Strategic Program of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government on foreign, security and defense policy from 29th May 2015. For a comparison, I used Prospects on NATO membership by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs from 2009 and Tarja Cronberg's article on the NATO divide in Finnish politics.

6.1 Society's opinion

Firstly, I revised an interview study conducted by University of Tampere in 2015 and published in January 2016, also issued in English by the Advisory Board for Defense Information (ABDI), which has investigated the Finns' opinions on the foreign, security and defense policies of Finland. To understand the data better, I used graphs created by the Ministry of Defence of Finland, which were in turn based on data

¹⁰⁰ *Turvallisuuspolitiikka- Ja Maanpuolustustutkimus 2015*. Publication no. FI-33014. Tampere: University of Tampere, 2016. Accessed May 10, 2016. <http://www.fsd.uta.fi/>.

collected from the database of University of Tampere.¹⁰¹ There were several questions in this interview and I decided to pick few of them to support my hypothesis. The very first one is: “*Considering the present world situation as a whole, do you believe that during the next five years Finland and Finns will live in a safer or in a less safe world compared to the present?*” (Figure 1) All in all, the whole population would feel by 10% safer, 23% would feel no difference and 65% answered ‘less safe’. It is important to mention that there are differences between the opinions of men and women, where women feel less safe by 68% and men by 62%. There is also a disparity between post-secondary educated and university educated population, where post-secondary feel less safer by 71% and university by 61%. Working class feels less safe by 64% and self-employed by 71%. The responses also differ between south and west Finland, where the south feels less safe by 69% and the west 59%, the east/Oulu/Lapland by 65%. This survey clearly shows that more than half of Finnish population believes in a less safer future, with slight differences between gender, education and employment. Furthermore, the numbers increased with 2014 and 2015 (Figure 2). Before the Ukrainian crisis, people felt safer, but with the Ukrainian crisis, the percentage decreased and the percentage with ‘less safe’ increased by 22%. In Autumn 2012 and 2013, people felt ‘less safe’ by 43-46%, but in Autumn 2014 the number increased to 56% and in 2015 to even 65%.¹⁰²

A question directly related to the previous one asks: “*How much do these phenomena and factors concern you regarding future?*”. (Figure 3) I picked the spectrum of questions regarding as a factor “developments in Russia”, where 26% answered “a lot”, 43% “to some extent”, 1% no opinion, 23% “a little” and 6% “not at all”. There was also a range of questions entitled “the situation in Ukraine”, where 15% answered “a lot”, 41% “to some extent”, 3% no opinion, 33% “a little” and 8% “not at all”. Still, the biggest percentage for factors, which concern Finns and their future is employment situation in Finland (49% “a lot”, 38% “to some extent”) and international

¹⁰¹ "Finns' Opinions on Foreign and Security Policy, Defence and Security Issues." *Ministry of Defence of Finland*. Advisory Board for Defence Information, 21 Jan. 2016. Web. 24 Apr. 2016.

<http://www.defmin.fi/en/tasks_and_activities/media_and_communications/the_advisory_board_for_defence_information_abdi/bulletins_and_reports/finns_opinions_on_foreign_and_security_policy_defence_and_security_issues.7640.news

¹⁰² Ibid.

terrorism (46% “a lot”, 37% “to some extent”). Consequently in Ukraine does not concern more than half of the population, but it is still on a quite high level of people considering Ukraine as a factor that concern Finns. On the other hand, these opinions changed over time. For example, in regards to the question on developments in Russia, concerns in Autumn 2013 were stable by 10% “a lot” and 32% “to some extent”, but by Autumn 2014 the situation rapidly changed to 32% “a lot” and 43% “to some extent”, which has not excessively decreased by Autumn 2015, when the situation was 26% “a lot” and 43% “to some extent” (Figure 4). On the other hand, the situation in Ukraine was 28% “a lot” and 46% “to some extent” in Autumn 2014, but in Autumn 2015 it decreased to 15% “a lot” and 41% “to some extent” (Figure 5).¹⁰³

As a next important aspect, there was a question on factors affecting security of Finland and Finns (Figure 6). As options, ABDI offered Finland’s participation in Nordic defense cooperation, Finland’s participation in the common defense of the EU, Finland’s membership in the EU, Finland’s economic cooperation increases nationality, the participation of Finnish troops in crisis-management tasks, Finland’s military non-alignment, Finland’s possible membership in NATO and increase of foreign ownership in Finland’s economy. According to this interview, the biggest percentage on the factor, which according to public opinion, affects Finland’s security the most, was the country’s participation in the Nordic defense cooperation with 74% that is “increases security” and 19% “no effect”, as of Autumn 2015 (The data from Autumn 2012 were by 66% “increases security” and 27% “no effect”) (Figure 7). Finnish participation in the common defense of the EU was answered with 56% “increases security” and 26% “no effect” by Autumn 2015, but this percentage has not increased significantly over last 10 years (the highest percentage was in 2007 and 2010, when it was 69% “increases security” and 22% “no effect”) (Figure 8). On the other hand, what lessens the security the most in the graph is an increase of foreign ownership in Finland’s economy with 46% “lessens security”.

On the question of Finland’s possible NATO membership, 35% says that it “increases security”, 18% “has no effect”, 11% “no opinion” and 36% “lessens security”, but this percentage slightly fluctuates over the past ten years by Autumn 2015

¹⁰³ Ibid.

(Figure 9). By Autumn 2014, the number was 37% “increases security” and 20% “no effect”, so by this year the percentage was at its top, which coincides with the peak of the Ukrainian crisis. But by the same years (2014-2015) 33-36% responded that it would lessen the security, which means that in these years the number of respondents who answered “no opinion” and “no effect” increased. According to the Finns, Finland’s military non-alignment increases security by 38%, 34% “no effect”, 6% “no opinion” and 23% “lessens security” and this percentage seems to be fluctuating over past ten years as well. For example, the number was at its peak in Autumn 2014 and 2015, when 22-23% said that it lessens security.¹⁰⁴

A crucial part of the interview was “what is your view on military cooperation with Nordic countries, NATO and the European Union?” (Figure 10). The possible answers were “very positive”, “rather positive”, “no opinion”, “rather negative” and “very negative”. As for the positive side of the spectrum, Finns considered cooperation with Sweden and other Nordic countries by 55% “very positive” and 39% “rather positive” and this number was not varying too much over past three years. The willingness for cooperation with NATO was regularly increasing since Autumn 2012, when 9% responded “very positive”, 36% “rather positive”, 7% “no opinion”, 36% “rather negative” and 11% “very negative”. These numbers stayed almost the same in Autumn 2013, but increased in Autumn 2014. By Autumn 2014, 17% responded “very positive”, 39% “rather positive”, 5% “no opinion”, 30% “rather negative” and 9% “very negative”. These numbers remained practically unchanged by Autumn 2015.¹⁰⁵

The inquiry about cooperation with NATO in detail was divided into categories such as gender, age, education, employment, salary, parts of Finland and political parties (Figure 11). Men see the NATO cooperation in a more positive light than women, even though the difference is not that significant. As for the category examining opinions of different ages groups, the respondents aged 35-49 see the cooperation more positively than groups under 25, between 25-34 and 50-79 years see the cooperation rather negatively and the most negative is the group between 50-79 years. In the education area, university educated respondents seemed to be the most partial to towards NATO cooperation by 73% and the less partial to educated

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

respondents by 42%. The section concerning the various form of employment yielded the following results: employed/self-employed/management had a more positive attitude towards to be more positive about the cooperation by 65% than working class with 38% negative approach. A similar percentage could be observed in the area of salaries, where people with salaries lower than 25000 € had a more negative attitude about the cooperation with NATO than people with salaries ranging between 25000-35000 € and over 35000 €. Differences between parts of Finland (South/West/East, Oulu, Lapland) were not significant, only with a slight increase in the South with 20% reporting very positive against 14% the West and 16% the East.¹⁰⁶

The perspectives on NATO cooperation vary greatly amongst Finnish political elites. The Centre Party sees the cooperation with 15% as “very positive”, 45% “rather positive”, 6% “no opinion”, 27% “rather negative” and 7% “very negative”. The Finns are 15% “very positive”, 34% “rather positive”, 1% “no opinion”, 36% “rather negative” and 15% “very negative” on the question of cooperation. The Coalition Party 37% “very positive”, 46% “rather positive”, 3% “no opinion”, 13% “rather negative” with no percentage on “very negative”. The Social Democratic Party considers NATO cooperation with 14% “very positive”, 41% “rather positive”, 2% “no opinion”, 34% “rather negative” and 9% “very negative”. The Green League can be compared on the very same level with the Social Democratic Party, because the opinions exhibit only a negligible percentile variance of 1-2%. The Left Alliance feels 4% “very positive”, 31% “rather positive”, 6% “no opinion”, 32% “rather negative” and 27% “very negative”. To include other parties in total, it is 15% “very positive”. 40% “rather positive”, 2% “no opinion”, 27% “rather negative” and 17% “very negative”.¹⁰⁷

The likelihood of a military threat was the next field on which the interview focused (Figure 12). The exact question was: “How likely is it that a military threat against Finland will emerge in the next 10 years?” For their answers, respondents could choose from “very likely”, “rather likely”, “rather unlikely”, “no opinion”, “very unlikely” and “not likely at all”. We can observe a crucial change between Autumn 2013, 2014 and 2015. In Autumn 2013, 1% of respondents answered “very likely”, 6% “rather likely”, 41% “rather unlikely”, 1% “no opinion”, 38% “very unlikely” and 13%

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

“not likely at all”. On the other hand, in Autumn 2014, the numbers were 3% “very likely”, 18% “rather likely”, 54% “rather unlikely”, 2% “no opinion”, 18% “very unlikely”, 5% “not likely at all”. In Autumn 2015, responses were 3% “very likely”, 19% “rather likely”, 50% “rather unlikely”, 3% “no opinion”, 21% “very unlikely” and 4% “no likely at all”. Consequently we can notice that with the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis, there was a slight increase of “very likely” and “rather likely” to a possibility of a military threat in the next 10 years.¹⁰⁸

Differences also manifested throughout gender, age, education, employment, salary, parts of Finland and political affiliation. Women see the likelihood of a military threat against Finland in the next 10 years slightly as greater than men. As for the different age groups, people under 25 years see the possibility of threat by 3% “very likely” and 24% “rather likely”, people between 25-34 years see it by 7% “very likely” and 13% “rather likely”. People between 35-49 see the possibility of threat only by 2% “very likely” and 18% “rather likely” and people between 50-79 years 2% “very likely” and 20% “rather likely”. In the section on education, less educated respondents see the likelihood as 4% “very likely”, 25% “rather likely”, 47% “rather unlikely”, 15% “very unlikely” and 4% “not likely at all”, which is slightly higher in probability than post-secondary educated and university educated. Post-secondary educated and university educated responded both 2% with “very likely” and “rather likely” was 17% for post-secondary and 10% for university. Working class sees the threat more likely than salaried/self-employed/management and that is 2% against 1% “very likely” and 21% against 13% “rather likely”. The respondents that see the threat as more probable are people with salaries between 25 000-35 000 € with 5% “very likely”, 19% “rather likely”, 49% “rather unlikely”, 22% “very unlikely” and 4% “not likely at all”. People with salary under 25 000 € were 3% “very likely”, 19% “rather likely”, 49% “rather unlikely”, 22% “very unlikely” and 4% “not likely at all”. The lowest likeliness was reported by people with salaries over 35 000 € with 1% “very likely”, 15% “rather likely”, 55% “rather unlikely”, 24% “very unlikely” and 4% “not likely at all”. The opinions on this issue did not differ significantly in the various regions of Finland, or were more or less equal.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

The same cannot be said for the differences between parties. The Finns presume the likelihood in the largest numbers in comparison to the Centre Party, Coalition Party, Social Democratic Party, Green League, Left Alliance and other parties; 5% “very likely”, 38% “rather likely”, 40% “rather unlikely”, 14% “very unlikely” and 2% “not likely at all”. The Left Alliance recorded the smallest likelihood with 5% “very likely”, 9% “rather likely”, 33% “rather unlikely”, 45% “very unlikely” and 10% “not likely at all”.¹¹⁰

The estimates of a military conflict in Finland’s immediate surroundings during the upcoming decades were not too high, but were changing over time as we can see on the graph (Figure 13). The possible answers were “less threatening”, “more or less the same”, “no opinion” and “more threatening”. It is important to mention that since Autumn 2004 to Autumn 2015, the answers “less threatening” were fluctuating on more or less the same level, but what was changing crucially was the answer “more threatening” (Figure 14). In Autumn 2004, 24% answered “more threatening”. In Autumn 2005, the answer was 17%, in Autumn 2007 22%, in Autumn 2011 21%. But in Autumn 2014, the answer “more threatening” rose up to 46% and in Autumn 2015 44%.¹¹¹

The impact of Russia’s recent activities on Finland’s security could be evaluated by respondents as “very negative”, “rather negative”, “neither positively nor negatively”, “no opinion”, “rather positive” and “very positive”. The evaluated period was Autumn 2014 and 2015 (Figure 15). In Autumn 2014, 13% answered “very negative” and 50% “rather negative” and in Autumn 2015, 9% answered “very negative” and 48% “rather negative”. In both years, 0% answered “very positive”.¹¹²

The next and very important question in the interview was “*Should Finland remain militarily non-aligned or should Finland aim to ally itself militarily?*” (Figure 16). When comparing years between 1996-2015, clearly 2014 and 2015 were the years with the highest number of “aim to ally itself” responses. In Autumn 2014, it was 34% and in Autumn 2015, it was 33%. On the other hand, the most people, the period when

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

most people answered “remain non-aligned” was in Autumn 2001 with 79%. Among the different age groups, people between 25-34 years had the highest percentage on “aim to ally itself” with 41%, in contrast with people between 50-79 years with 60% answering “remain non-aligned”. The university educated were in favor of allying with 41% against lower and post-secondary educated with 57% against. As expected, the party most favorable towards “aim to ally itself” Party was the Coalition Party with 57% and the party with the most “remain non-aligned” responses was Left Alliance with 73% (The Finns and the Social Democratic Party were not remarkably that behind with 66% favoring remaining non-aligned).¹¹³

The very last question in the interview was also the most crucial one for my thesis. It was a straightforward question whether Finland should seek membership in NATO. Quantifying the data collected from the entire population, the Finnish are all in all with 27% for the membership and 58% against it (Figure 17). The difference between men and women amounted to 31% for the membership and 61% against it from men. Women would support the membership by 24% and against it by 55%. People between 35-49 years were 33% for the membership, which is the most from all age categories (only 48% against the membership). People under 25 years were on the other hand with 62% against the membership and only 20% for the membership. With these 62%, people under 25 years almost shared the same percentage with people between 25-34 years (61% against) and people between 50-79 years (61% against). In the case of education, the willingness to join NATO seemed to be raising with higher level of education. Respondents with lower education were only 24% for the membership (63% against), but the ones with post-secondary education are already 27% for the membership (58% against) and the university educated ones are even 34% for the membership (50% against). Almost the same situation occurred in the section on salary, where the ones with a salary under 25 000 € are only 21% for the membership (66% against) and respondents with salary between 25 000-35 000 € and also over 35 000 € are both 32% for the membership (both 55% against it).¹¹⁴

As expected, the Coalition Party was the most in favor of the membership with 56% (28% against it) and the Left Alliance the most against it with 81% (14% for the

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

membership). The Centre Party, the Green League, the Social Democratic Party and the Finns were almost on the same level with 21-27% for the membership and 61-66% against it. Other parties stood by 29% for the membership and 58% against it. So we can see approximately the same results between parties in the case of not only NATO, but also in the question of non-alignment, military cooperation with NATO and military cooperation with Nordic countries. All of these opinions changed after the Ukrainian crisis (Figure 18). It is obvious that in Autumn 2014, was the percentage to join NATO on the highest number since 2005 and it was 30% for the membership and even though the number slightly decreased in Autumn 2015 to 27% for the membership, it was still on one of the highest ranks.¹¹⁵

6.2 *President Sauli Niinistö's opinion*

In an interview from 1st November 2015, Finnish President Sauli Niinistö argues about communication with Moscow regarding the situation in Syria and Ukraine. He states that his duty is primarily to keep the situation as calm as possible and that they have not experienced any major difficulties in communication with Russia. On the other hand, he states that they have clearly condemn the annexation of Crimea and that Finland has agreed to every sanction against Russia. On the topic of NATO and possible Finnish membership, Niinistö mentioned again the four pillars on which the Finnish concept of security reasoning is based. He mainly talks about the second pillar, which is cooperation. Niinistö mentions that there is a very intense discussion with Sweden on cooperation in the defense sector and also that Finland is a very active NATO partner and that this cooperation is also developing. Niinistö would also like to see more EU based security and defense policy by creating more security for Europeans. On the question of possible membership, Niinistö stated that there are many discussions about NATO in Finland and in Sweden and that the process is yet to be concluded. But right now the majority of people do not support NATO membership.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Matišák, Andrej. "Finnish President: The EU Should Also Take Care of Security." Defence Matters. 2015. Accessed May 01, 2016. <http://defencematters.org/news/finnish-president-the-eu-should-also-take-care-of-security/406/>.

Furthermore, Defense Minister Jussi Niinistö (not related to President Sauli Niinistö) as well as Sauli Niinistö advocates cooperation and the Minister even speculated that the cooperation could develop into an alliance. On the other hand, the government under Prime minister Juha Sipilä (Centre Party) has left the question open in their program, according to which Finland should maintain the possibility to seek membership.¹¹⁷

A great change in these opinions can be seen thanks to Finnish Institute of International Affairs and its prospects on NATO membership from 2009. These prospects describe a historical context of the Finnish (non)alignment, arguments pro and con, political opinions, the implications of membership and the Stoltenberg report. On a political level, Finland was divided into two groups. The ones on the extreme left saw NATO as an imperialist alliance led by the United States. In conservative circles, Finland was seen as a country that should defend its own territory and sovereignty and not participate too much in foreign operations. By 2008, 60% of Finns felt that Finland should remain non-aligned, while 28% felt the other way. There were differences in opinion between political parties as well. The Conservative party was by 62% in favor and 29% opposed the membership, in the Center party it was 22% against 70% and Social Democrats 23% against 60%, the Left League 3% against 88% and the Greens 22% against 66%. The situation which would be considered vital for changing opinions among political elites is, according to the prospects, a potential serious military crisis and eventual danger for Finland in such situation. Nevertheless, Finnish political opinion was in 2009 divided on two issues; the ones that strongly believe in Washington and its declarations and that they will honor their commitments and the ones that (a realist's conservative school) do not believe that neither the United States nor the leading EU states would ever engage themselves in a serious military manner in a secondary country having a 1300 km long border with Russia.¹¹⁸

He recently expressed his opinion on the NATO membership affirming that a referendum on NATO membership needs to take a place. And the same situation applies

¹¹⁷ "Soldier's Opinions on NATO Membership." Suomen Kuvalehti. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://suomenkuvalehti.fi/jutut/koti...2-4a57b626-500>.

¹¹⁸ Väyrynen, Raimo. "FINLAND AND PROSPECTS FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP." Finnish Institute of International Affairs. February 2009. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/stockholm/06526.pdf>.

to Sweden, where a referendum about the NATO membership should take place, according to Niinistö. He also stated that opinions and results could differ even if the political leaders of both countries were to back the membership. The decision to join NATO is not a less important than the one to join the EU, where a referendum was necessary as well. Also, Russian actions are marked by unpredictability, but he sees a new kind of dialogue between the United States and Russia on Syria as a positive sign.¹¹⁹

6.3 Soldier's opinion

On an article from Finnish periodical Suomen Kuvalehti from 26 February 2016, the support for NATO has risen to a new record high among the officer corps of the Defense forces and out of the answers from a poll among members of the Officers Union, 70% support Finland joining NATO.¹²⁰

The biggest support seems to be within the Navy, where almost 80% are for the membership as well as the Air Force, where the clear majority of 72% supports joining. On the other hand, the lowest support for NATO can be found among the officer staff of the Border Guards with only 64% for joining. One of the senior lieutenants serving with the Border Guards claimed that *"Finland joining NATO is the only credible form of defense cooperation against the threat represented by Russia"*. This rise of support for NATO has risen during the last two years, because at the end of 2013 support for a Finnish NATO membership was 51% with a third against it and 20% declining to answer. Following spring 2014, when Russia occupied Crimea, the number has raised to 66%. Also, 80% of the officers are feeling positive about an increased military cooperation with Sweden, which might strengthen Finland's position in the Baltic region and restrain Russia's aspirations to destabilize the balance in the area. On the

¹¹⁹ "President Niinistö: Possible NATO Membership Not a Joint Finnish-Swedish Decision." YLE UUTISET. May 1, 2016. Accessed May 02, 2016. http://yle.fi/uutiset/president_niinisto_possible_nato_membership_not_a_joint_finnish-swedish_decision/8850984.

¹²⁰ "Soldier's Opinions on NATO Membership." Suomen Kuvalehti. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://suomenkuvalehti.fi/jutut/koti...2-4a57b626-500>.

other hand, there are no doubts about Sweden's ability and willingness to act in a real situation.¹²¹

Additionally, Finland has sent letters to nearly a million reservists in 2015 to collect their contact details and as well as to remind them of their duties in case of combat. BBC also reports that the letters suggests reservists, which regiment or unit to join in the event of war and a defense ministry spokesman insisted that the correspondence is not related to Russia's annexation of Crimea. Also, in April 2015 the Finnish navy dropped depth charges in the waters near Helsinki as a warning to a suspected submarine, which some media reports said was Russian.¹²² However, the BBC article states that even though Finland is not a NATO member, it has strengthened its ties with the Western military alliance since the Ukrainian crisis and earlier in April, Finland agreed on increasing defense cooperation with other Nordic countries in response to Russia's activity in Ukraine.¹²³

6.4 Related problems

Another problem related to membership in NATO is the town of Lappeenranta, which is situated approximately 25 km from Finnish/Russian border. Usually, Russian tourists rush into the city for EU food products that Kremlin has banned after the EU sanctions. Approximately 2 million tourists spent over 280 million euros last year in Lappeenranta and therefore it is important for local sellers to keep good relations with Russia. Otherwise, unemployment would grow as well as investment would decrease in the area. On the other hand, while Finns are enjoying the benefit of cheaper local produce, many are preoccupied by Russia's intervention in Ukraine and the repercussions it may have for Finland's future security.¹²⁴

Tarja Cronberg (Former Member of the European Parliament, Distinguished Associate Fellow at SIPRI and Member of the Executive Board of the European

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² "Finland Instructs Nearly a Million Military Reservists." BBC News. May 22, 2015. Accessed May 05, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32843558>.

¹²³ "Finland Drops Depth Charges in 'submarine' Alert." BBC News. April 28, 2015. Accessed May 05, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32498790>.

¹²⁴ Bosworth, Mark. "Finns on Russian Border Wary of Nato Ties." BBC News. September 4, 2014. Accessed May 05, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29049601>.

Leadership Network) focuses in an article from 4th September 2014 on the NATO divide in Finnish politics. She states that even after joining the EU, Finland keeps its national military capabilities on which it relies, because the Lisbon Treaty still cannot be compared to Article V in the North Atlantic Treaty. Cronberg sees the Ukrainian Crisis as a wake up call not only for Finland, but also for the whole of Europe, because with this move Russia proved that it still could be dangerous to its neighbors. Also, the Conservatives have come out openly in favor of the membership and the Prime minister Alexander Stubb is effectively leading the campaign for joining the Alliance. The Social Democrats are more reserved and the biggest opposition is the Center Party. The True Finns (a populist anti-EU and anti-immigration party) is against the membership and a similar position is taken by the Greens and the Left Party.¹²⁵

In conclusion, Cronberg sees the Ukrainian Crisis as clearly impacting issue on the political debate, but does not yet have a decisive impact on the minds of voters. Cronberg identifies Sauli Niinistö as a balancing force, because although he was always a conservative and NATO supporter, he suddenly changed his position in 2012, when he started openly seeking new alliances within the EU rather than pushing the issue of NATO membership. Even though Russia has assured Finland that it is up to the Finnish people to decide whether to join NATO or not, both President Putin and the Army Commander General Makarov have warned that Finnish membership in the Alliance would be seen as a military threat to Russia. Another problem that Cronberg affirms, an one that I already mentioned earlier, is the mutual dependence in some spheres. The first one is that Finland is, like many other countries, dependent on Russian gas and oil. Furthermore, cross-border economic programs are important for the Russians as well as for Finns, because Russians can buy cheaper goods in Finnish border cities. Therefore these border cities are dependent on Russian customers. Naturally, because of the Ukrainian crisis there is a pervasive fear of war, economic downturn, loss jobs and increased unemployment. The EU policy of sanctions has already had its impact on Finland, because it affected for example Russian individuals with economic interests in Finland and it also has impact on technology exports and individual enterprises. On the other hand, in the case of Ukraine, Finland has been proposed as a model to Ukraine, for

¹²⁵ Cronberg, Tarja. "The NATO Divide in Finnish Politics." European Leadership Network. September 2, 2014. Accessed May 05, 2016. http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/the-nato-divide-in-finnish-politics_1836.html.

its good relations with Russia as well as with the EU and NATO and that Ukraine should remove its either/or choice policy in favor of good relations with both Russia and the EU.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Ibid.

7 Conclusion

So far the public opinion in Finland on NATO membership in the context of the Ukrainian crisis has definitely changed, albeit very slightly. As I presume in my hypothesis the public opinion in Finland on NATO membership changed as a result of the Ukrainian crisis and my research proved my assumption even though not in very significant numbers.

The public opinion on the situation in the world as a whole and the security of the Finns clearly demonstrates that the Finns feel less safe nowadays and also that developments in Russia are a factor that does concern the future of Finns. The fact is that these concerns about safety increased after the Ukrainian crisis, because if in Autumn 2013 Finns were preoccupied about developments Russia “a lot” by 10%, then an increase to 32% by Autumn 2014 is such a significant increase that cannot be ignored. The number of Finns who see the possible NATO membership as a means to increase security also increased in Autumn 2014 and also in Autumn 2015. All things considered, there is no doubt that the Ukrainian crisis slightly increased fears about the security of Finland and makes Finns reconsider the NATO membership and their policy of non-alignment. Finns consider military cooperation with Nordic countries as very positive and the willingness to cooperate with NATO has been increasing since 2012 and after the Ukrainian crisis even more so. In the years 2014 and 2015 the highest number of respondents in a decade would recommend that Finland aim to ally itself militarily. The likelihood of a military threat against Finland was also reconsidered by the public, with an increase of more than 15% after the Ukrainian crisis occurred, which is a substantial development that cannot be disregarded.

However, on the issue of NATO membership, the general public preference was not to join NATO, even though there was a significant increase in the amount of people who actually wanted Finland to join NATO after Autumn 2014. Similar tendencies can be observed in the nation’s opinion on previous issues, such as the situation in Ukraine, non-alignment and the Nordic cooperation, where the public clearly stated that even though they feel less safe than they did before the Ukrainian crisis, they do not want to seek the membership within any multinational organization. However, the amount increased significantly during the years 2014 and 2015, which proved to be the most crucial years for the Ukrainian crisis. In asserting that the Ukrainian crisis is an event

that has (has had) profound effects on public opinion, great importance is placed in several sources: the questions in the survey conducted by ABDI, an interview with Sauli Niinistö and newspaper articles.

Even though differences persist in the public opinion in general, and when examining different demographic categories such as gender, age, education, employment, salary, origin within Finland and political affiliation separately, my research proved a slight increase, supporting my hypothesis. Mainly middle-aged people with higher education and higher salary are more preoccupied about their future and security. The same situation occurred within the Coalition Party, which is generally always high on the percentage in favor of the membership and that Finland should ally with various multinational organizations. As expected, the Left Alliance was very low on the percentage in favor of the membership, which is obvious because of its close ties to Russia and its effort to keep the relations with Russia as friendly and close as possible.

Sauli Niinistö, who is very active in negotiations with Russia, recently expressed his opinion about the NATO membership, as already stated above. He said that for such a decision to be taken, a referendum needs to be conducted and that Russian actions are marked by unpredictability, but he sees a new kind of dialogue between the United States and Russia on Syria as a positive sign. This is a change from his other earlier interview, where when asked about the NATO membership he mentions the four pillars on which the Finnish concept of security reasoning is based and talks in detail about the second pillar, which is Finland's cooperation with Russia.

The most significant change could be observed in the opinions of soldiers, with a rather significant increase of pro-NATO opinions. As I already mentioned, 80% of the Navy and 72% of the Air Force clearly supported joining as opposed to the results of a survey from 2013, when only about 50% were pro-NATO membership. Furthermore, as one of the senior lieutenants serving with the Border Guards claimed: "*Finland joining NATO is the only credible form of defense cooperation against the threat represented by Russia*".¹²⁷ What also supported my hypothesis was the fact that the Finnish government sent letters to nearly a million reservists in 2015 to collect their contact

¹²⁷ "Soldier's Opinions on NATO Membership." Suomen Kuvalehti. Accessed May 1, 2016. <http://suomenkuvalehti.fi/jutut/koti...2-4a57b626-500>.

details, as well as to remind them of their duties in case of armed conflict. However, even though the opinions of both the public and military personnel changed and overall there is a rather positive stance on NATO membership, the urge to be a NATO member is still not that strong to apply for a membership.

Furthermore, an observation of Tarja Cronberg statements supported my stance as well, because she perceives the Ukrainian Crisis as a wake up call not only for Finland, but also for the whole of Europe, because with this move Russia proved that it still could be dangerous to its neighbors. Nevertheless, a problem still remains; the mutual dependence of Russia and Finland in some areas, which hinders the possibility of Finnish NATO membership. If Finland were to join NATO, Russian-Finnish relations would deteriorate. Cross-border economic programs are important for the Russians as well as for Finns, because Russians can buy cheaper goods in Finnish border cities. Therefore these border cities are dependent on Russian customers. Naturally, because of the Ukrainian crisis there is a pervasive fear of war, economic downturn, loss of jobs and increased unemployment.

The public opinion has indeed changed due to the Ukrainian crisis. A clear manifestation of said changes is the fact that Finns started to concern themselves slightly more with their security and future mostly because of developments in Russia. They also started reconsidering their political alignment and the prospect of NATO membership, albeit not on so serious level that it would call for a referendum. Nonetheless I can positively assert that my initial hypothesis about public opinions changing after the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis was proven in this thesis.

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List of attachments

Figure 1: A more secure or more insecure future (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

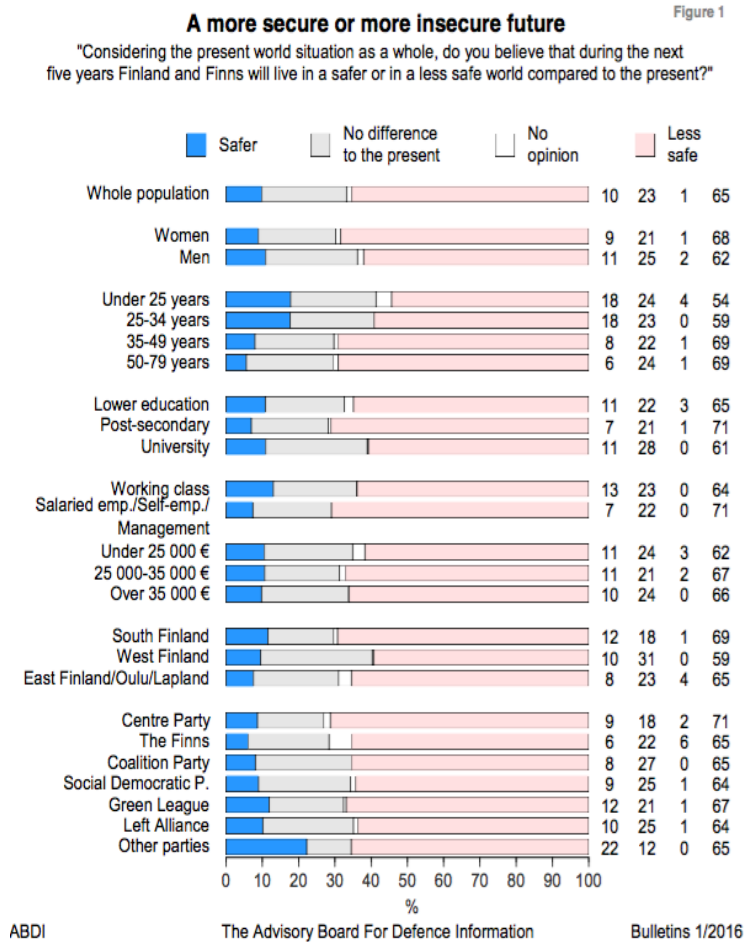


Figure 2: A more secure or more insecure future II (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

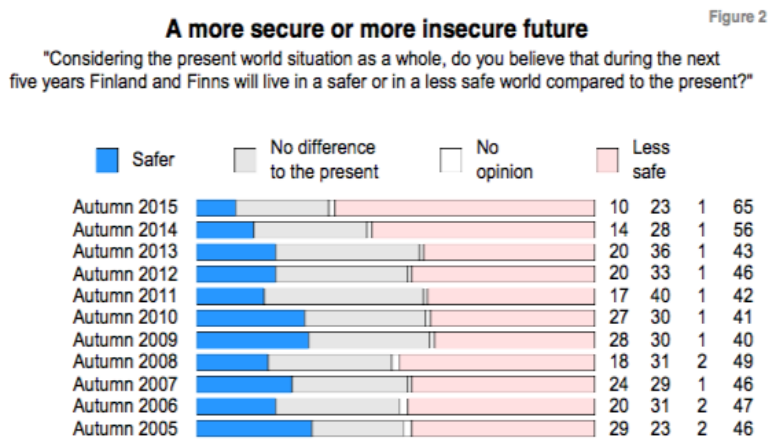


Figure 3: Factors causing concern among the citizens (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

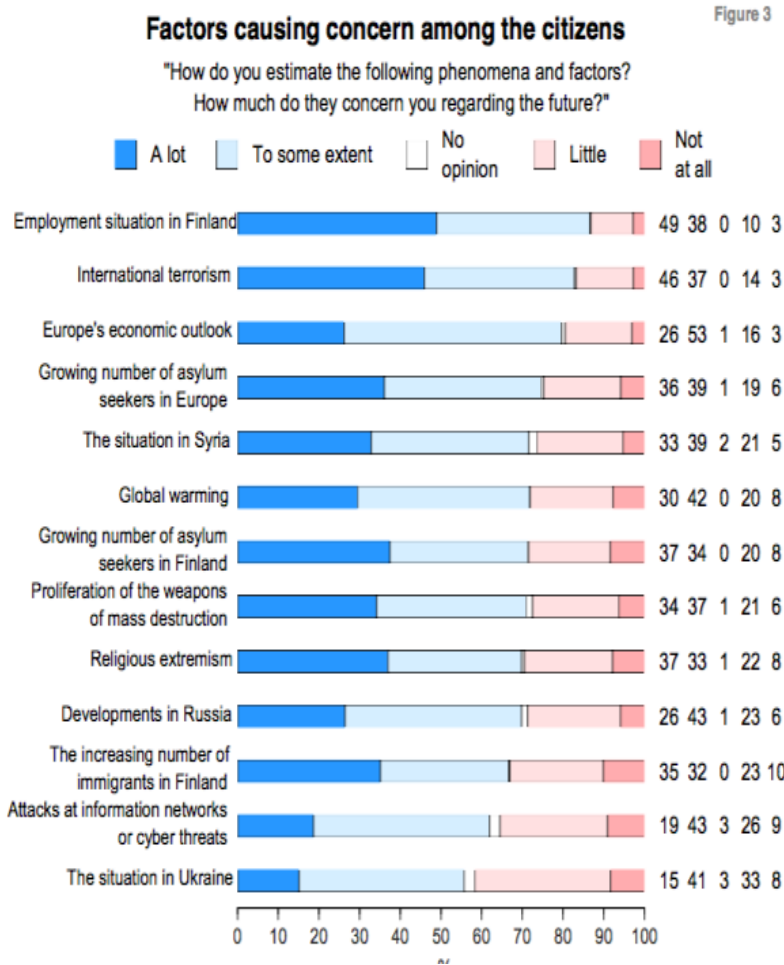


Figure 4: Factors causing concern among the citizens II (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

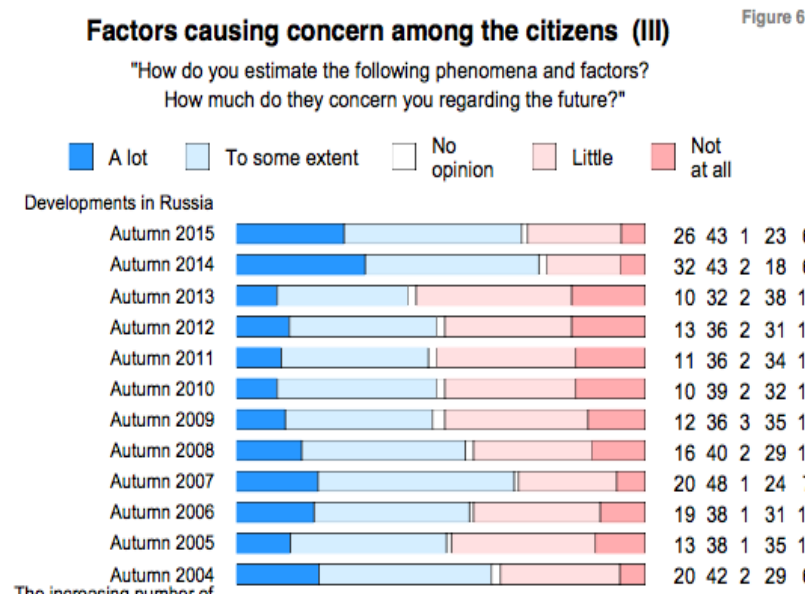


Figure 5: Factors causing concern among the citizens III (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

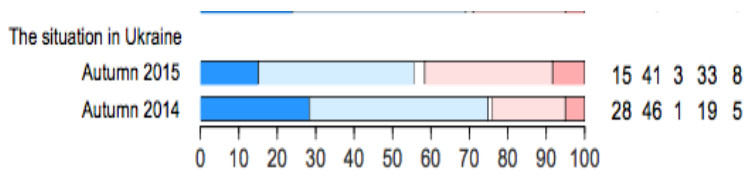


Figure 6: Factors affecting security (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

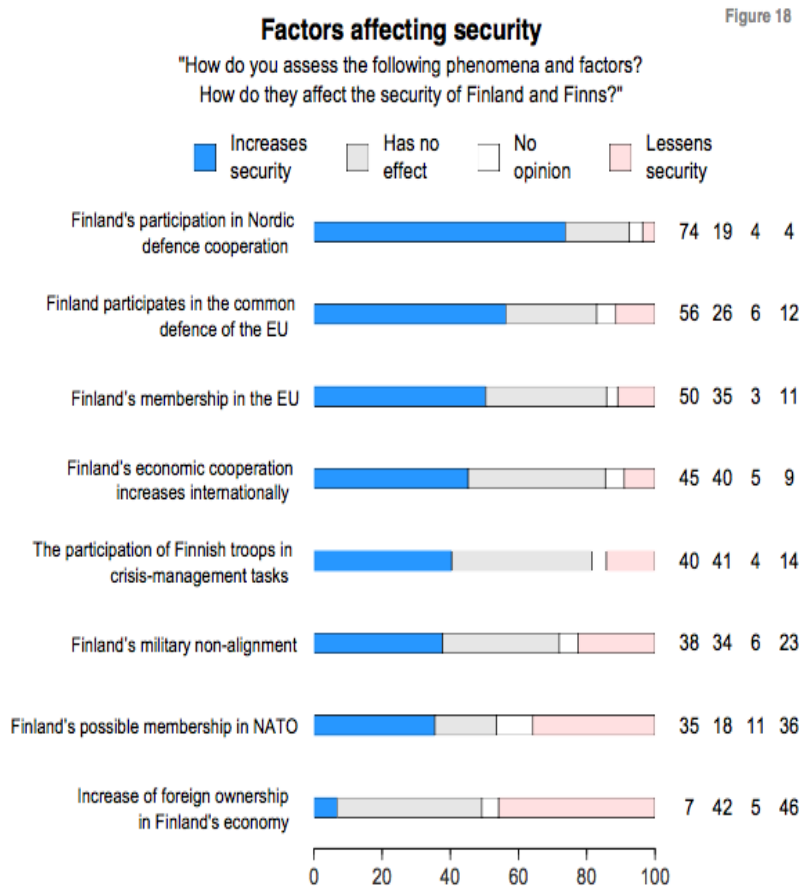


Figure 7: Factors affecting security II (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

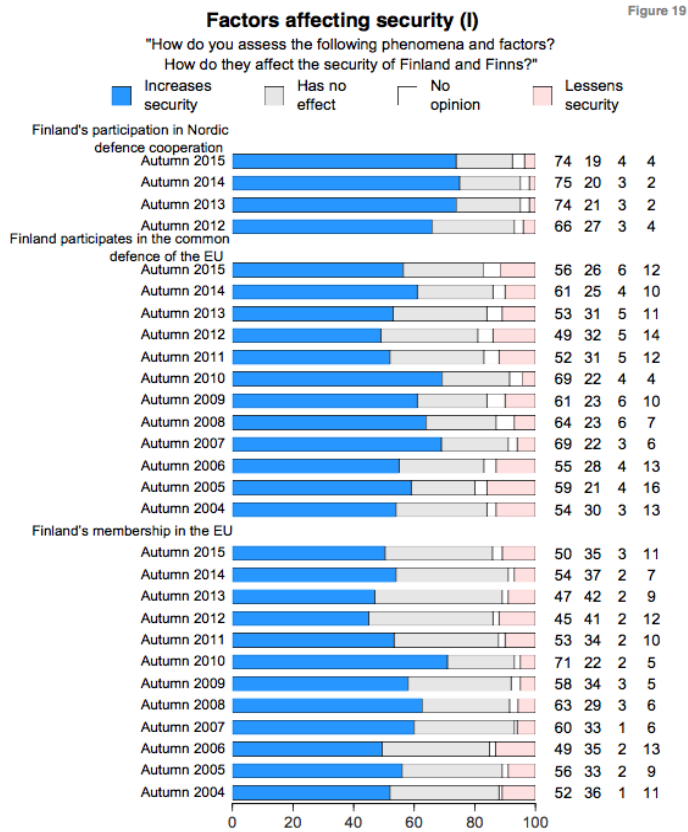


Figure 8: Factors affecting security III (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

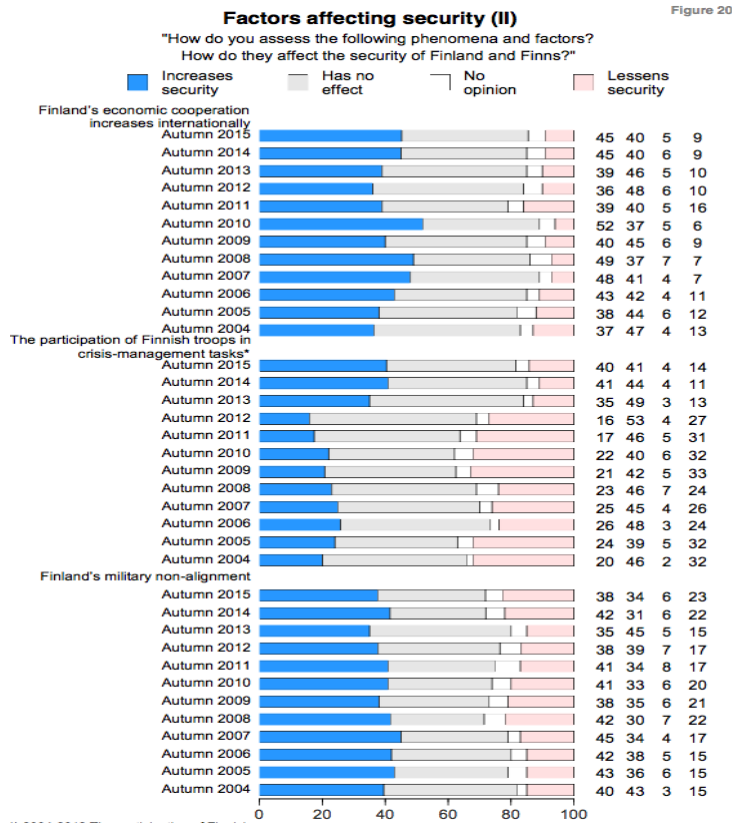


Figure 9: Factors affecting security IV (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

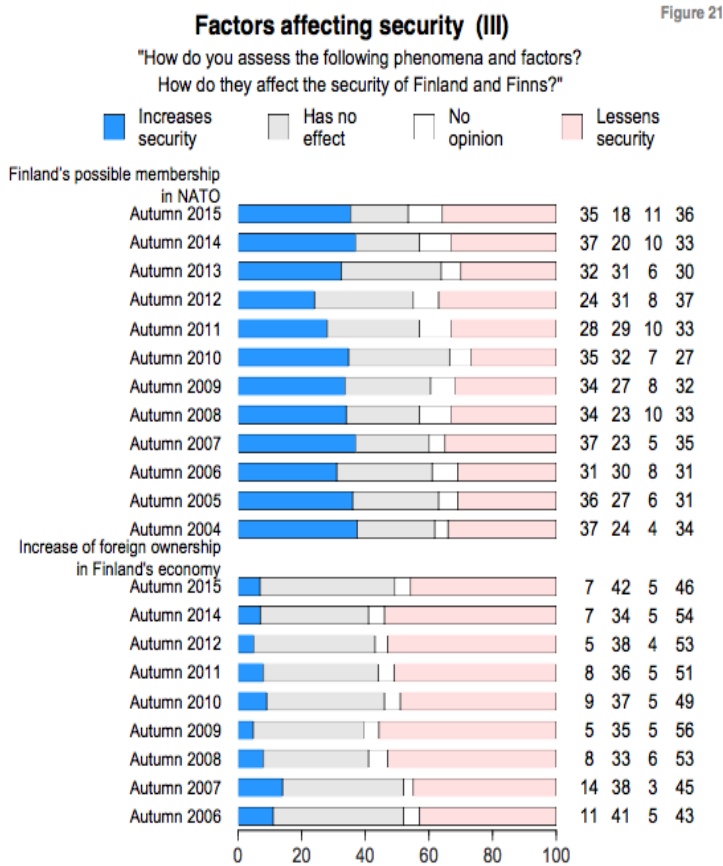


Figure 10: Military cooperation (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

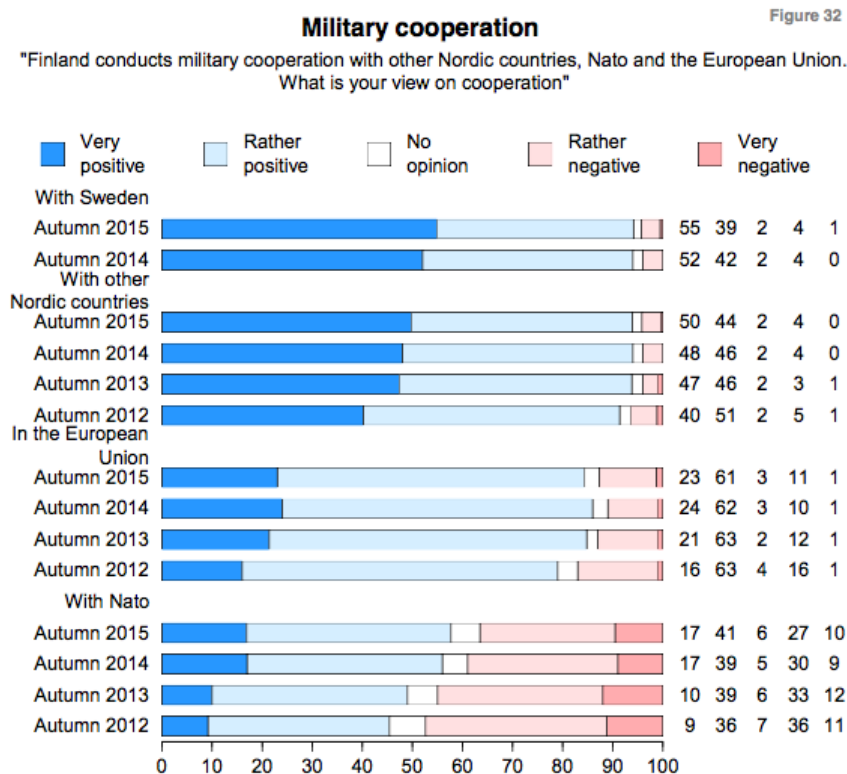


Figure 11: Military cooperation with NATO (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

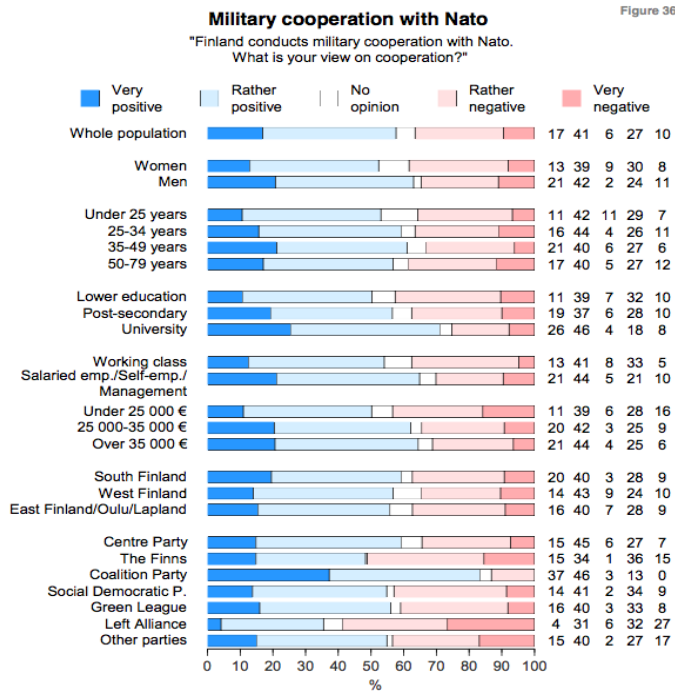


Figure 12: The likelihood of a military threat (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

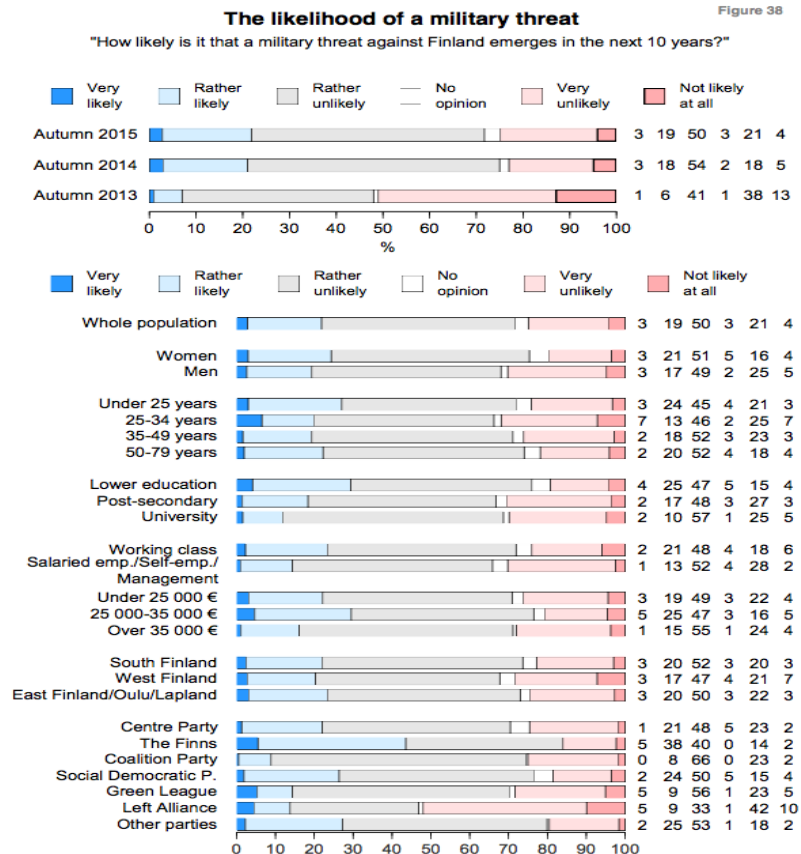


Figure 13: The military situation in Finland's near environs (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

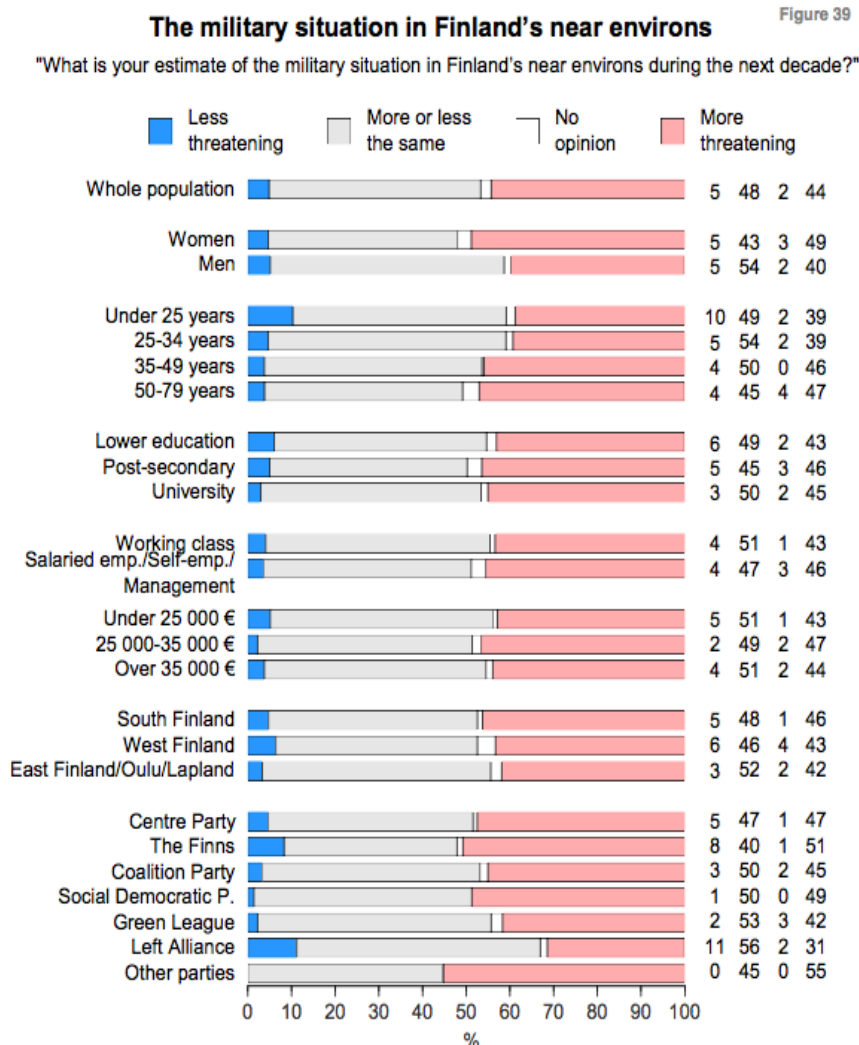


Figure 14: The military situation in Finland's near environs II (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

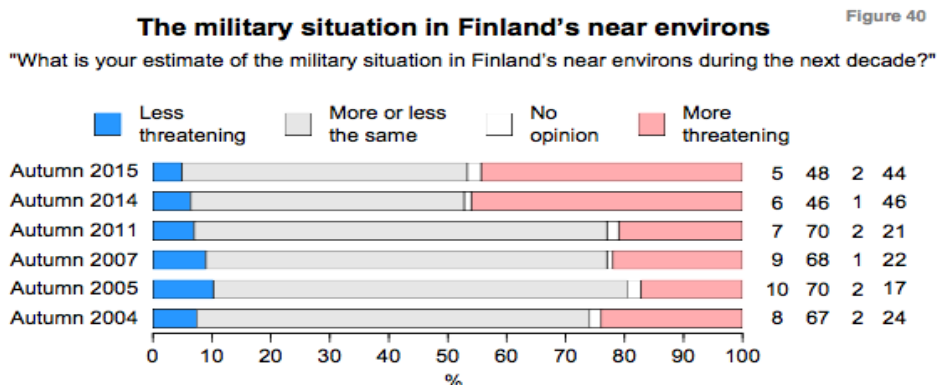


Figure 15: The impact of Russia's recent activities on Finland's security (graph)
 (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

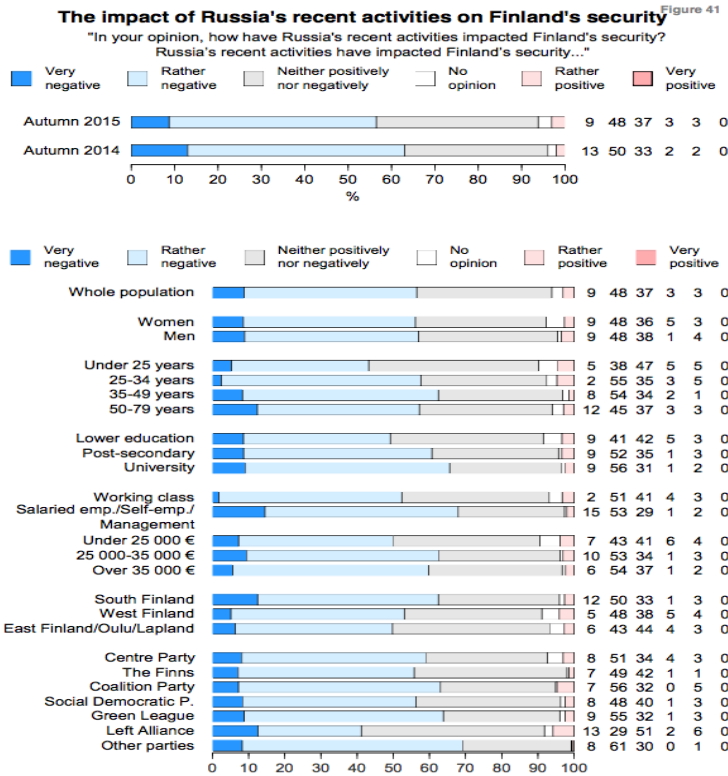


Figure 16: Military alignment or non-alignment (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

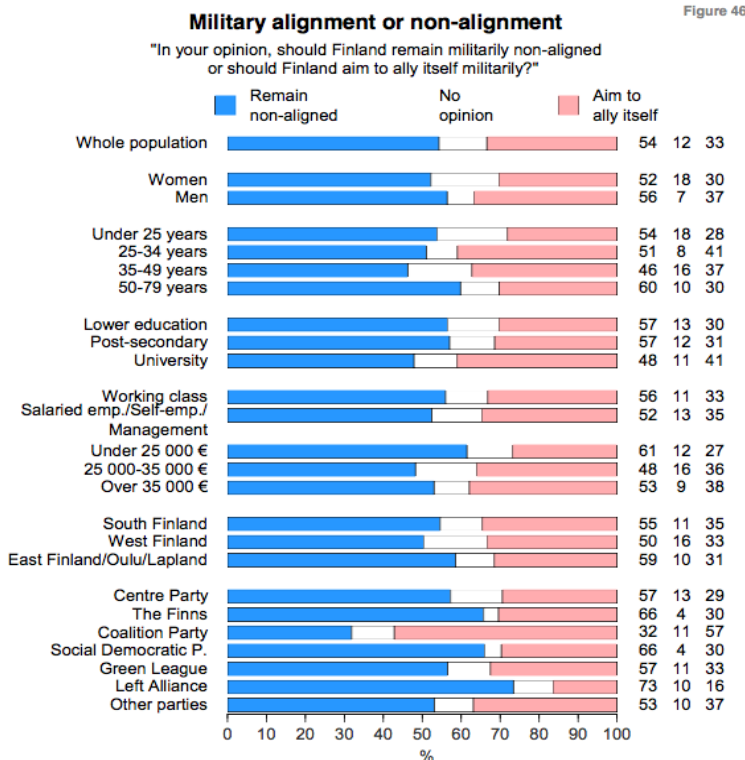


Figure 17: NATO membership (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

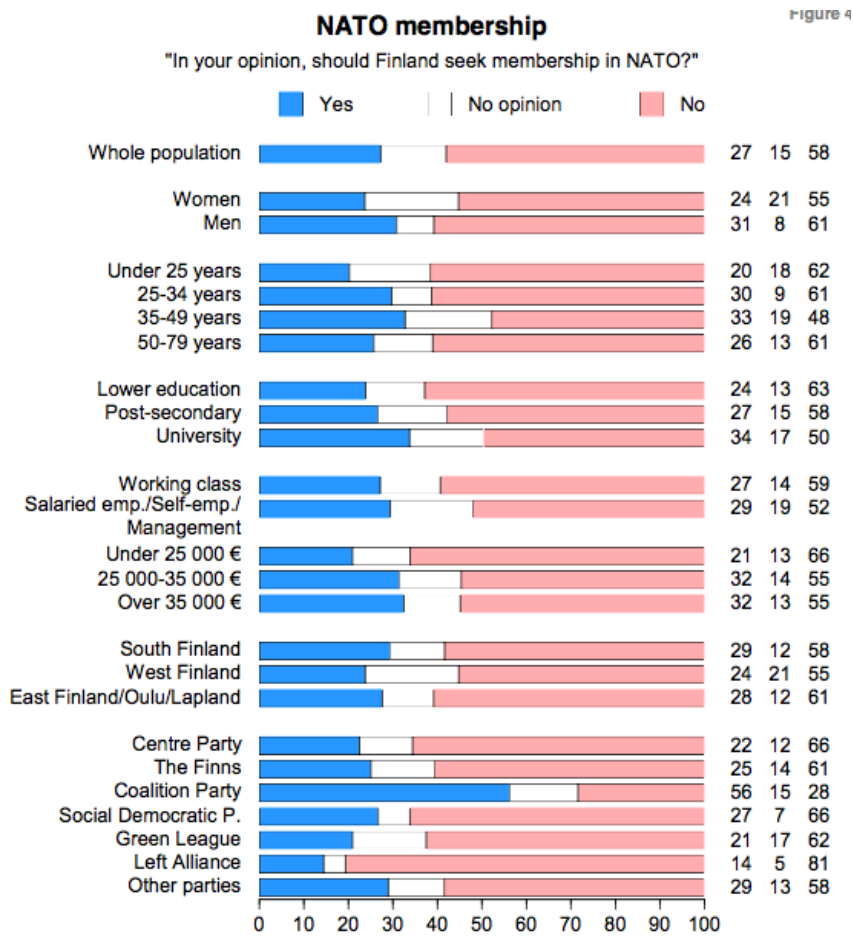


Figure 18: NATO membership II (graph) (Ministry of Defence of Finland)

