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Assessing the Effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on EU Defence Cooperation: A Strategic Management Analysis

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**Assessing the Effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on EU Defence
Cooperation:
A Strategic Management Analysis.**

By

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Master Thesis on EU Defence Cooperation

2023

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Niels van Leeuwen

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Introduction: The end of the ‘Pax Europaea’

Motivation and subject

On the 24th of February, 2022, Europe, Ukraine and the rest of the world woke-up in a changed world. With Russian president Vladimir Putin in a video declaring the approval and execution of a ‘special military operation’ in Ukraine in order to, in the president’s words, ‘demilitarize and de-nazify Ukraine’ (Reuters, 2022). With that decision, a conflict brewing since the Maidan Revolution and the subsequent Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, escalated into a full-scale war and the first full-scale war of aggression in Europe since World War II (Chatham House, 2023). And with that, ending what some scholars called ‘Pax Europaea’; the period of relative peace on European soil since World War II (Petrelli Melim Santos, 2022).

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict, now escalated in a full-scale war, has been a defining moment for European security and defence. The current escalation has challenged the principles of international law, territorial integrity and sovereignty that underpin the European security order. And while it has been the cause for more national defence spending by certain countries such as Germany (Aljazeera, 2023), it has also been a driver behind more public support of a strong Common Security and Defence Policy (European Commission, 2022).

At the same time, however, the war has also exposed the limitations of the European Union’s (EU) defence capabilities and highlighted the need for greater cooperation and integration in this field (Fiott, 2022). And while there has been a steady flow of donations and support to the Ukrainian cause at national level, at the same time, the question about the feasibility and effectiveness of future EU defence cooperation remains. Has the escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian war finally aligned EU Member States to the importance of further EU defence cooperation? Or has the war only created more division, pushing a strong EU defence force and common policy further into the future? And while the EU’s security mechanisms have been criticized for its slow decision-making processes, retrenchments, insufficient funding and limited operational capabilities (European Parliament, 2023; Congressional Research Service, 2023) a change might possibly be on the horizon. With the Russo-Ukrainian war currently having lasted for over one and a half year as of writing, might we be at the critical juncture that launches further EU defence cooperation forward?

Problem definition

Ever since the creation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) by the EU, with the signing of the 1998 St. Malo declaration (Kielmansegg, 2019), it has been the subject of research and analysis. Scholars have studied the development and implementation of the CSDP, as well as its impact on foreign policy and relations with other countries or organizations such as NATO. However, a larger part of this research, especially in earlier years, has seen a focus not on the relationship with other organizations, but on the institutional and political framework and the changes in Member State policies in their individual views. Most of these studies in regards to the CSDP and EU defence cooperation have been, as earlier mentioned, blaming political unwillingness, slow decision-making, limited stakeholder engagement and inadequate resource allocation as the main drivers of its current inertia (Carnegie Europe, 2020; Asderaki, Fiott, & Molnár, 2022). This combination of barriers in turn has led to a lack of perceived public value and the inability to set goals that make an impact on the security and defence landscape. This in turn created a vicious cycle in which these barriers support each other, resulting in a lock-in of the current EU defence cooperation situation, which the EU defence sector cannot escape from. And with the main driver needing to be to eventually fend for themselves in a world with an increasingly changing security order, these challenges cause a problem.

However, as mentioned earlier, the current conflict in Ukraine might be the critical juncture that brings forward a change. Now that European security itself is in danger, EU Member States are heavily investing in their own defence capabilities and there has been a shift in public opinion towards a strong CSDP (EDA, 2022), it is time to reevaluate these barriers and see if they still stand in the way of further EU defence cooperation.

Goals and methods

This is the problem this thesis is seeking to address. To find out what the historical challenges and hurdles of further EU defence cooperation have been, and if and how the Russo-Ukrainian war as of February 24th 2022 has impacted these barriers. Given the unique window of opportunity to bring forth a change in the EU defence and security landscape, the focus will be placed on a few key concepts of public administration presented by Harvard professor Mark Moore (2013). With the researchers' primary focus on change in response to political, economic and social change (Harvard Kennedy School, sd), the subsequent works of the author narrowly fit the goal and subject of this research.

Therefore, this research will mainly use Moore's 'strategic triangle' as presented in his work 'Recognizing Public Value' (Moore, *The Strategic Triangle*, 2013). Moore's strategic triangle framework serves as a tool for analysing and evaluating the earlier mentioned challenges and most interesting and impactful areas of change since the invasion. According to Moore, successful strategies require three key components to be aligned: public value, operational capabilities and legitimacy and support (the legitimizing environment). By applying this framework to the case of EU defence cooperation (and the CSDP) this thesis aims to examine the potential for strategic alignment of the legitimizing environment of the EU Member States, and the public value and operational capabilities of the EU on defence and security. By evaluating each of these components before the beginning of the war in 2022 and how they might have evolved during the course of the war right up until the current day, this thesis seeks to find out if any of these key components have now changed to support further alignment towards EU defence cooperation and possibly lift the barriers preventing cooperation. In order to evaluate these components, this thesis seeks to answer the question:

“What are the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the EU's organizational strategy towards defence cooperation?”

In order to answer the research question, this thesis will first try to answer a number of sub-questions based on the previously mentioned theoretical framework. These questions will mainly address each of the key components of the strategic triangle as presented by Mark Moore (2013), but then more specifically towards the EU in its international context. These sub-questions are:

1. How has the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted the creation of public value from a defence and security perspective?
2. How has the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted the EU's legitimizing environment and political decision-making towards EU defence cooperation?
3. How has the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted the EU's operational capabilities among Member States and their contribution towards the EU?

These questions will form the basis for this research and will be answered later in the comparative analyses of this research.

Relevance

So why is this research important for understanding EU defence cooperation? And how can this research contribute to understanding the historical hurdles and challenges to effective and efficient cooperation? For a long time, EU defence has been a cold topic on both the national as well as the EU political level. Often, more pressing issues or political issues, such as Brexit, dominated the political agenda. This in turn led to a diminishing interest in EU defence or talks about further defence cooperation at the EU level. Now, with the largest conflict on European soil since WW2, the Russian invasion of Ukraine offers a unique possibility to research how conflicts like this influence political decision-making and see if there is a possibility to expand on EU defence cooperation.

But why is the Moore's (2013) strategic triangle framework useful for analyzing the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on EU defence cooperation? The framework allows a global look at several key points of defence cooperation, such as the European Defence Agency's (EDA) mission, the EU's defence relation to NATO and the EU/ Member States' operational capabilities, such as financial instruments and military defence instruments. With an example being the impact of the EU defence spending reaching €200 billion for the first time ever since the beginning of the war (European Defence Agency, 2022).

By diving into how the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the events resulting from this invasion have impacted EU defence cooperation, this thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature on EU defence studies. Not only that, but by evaluating how the largest war on the European continent since WW2 has impacted European security, this thesis will evaluate if and how a large-scale conflict on the borders of the EU might impact political decision-making when it comes to defence related issues. Not only might this be of interest to the study of EU policy making, but by using Mark Moore's theoretical framework this study can also contribute to the scientific debate by seeing if this strategic triangle can be applied to the study of EU defence cooperation in an international context.

Finally, by analysing these three key components this thesis may provide a better understanding in what the political and societal views are in regards to the current EU defence situation. And if the results of this study indeed show that a 'window of opportunity' (Giugni, 2009) for change has opened (because of increased public support or political will for example), this thesis may provide recommendations for policymakers and possibly propose a shift towards the EU commission to take the lead.

Methodology and chapters

In order to find an answer to the previously mentioned research question, this research will take a qualitative and inductive approach, with in-depth interviews, as well as desk research and a literature study. By performing a literature study at the beginning of this research, the author attempts to build a conceptual framework tailored to analyse the situation. This conceptual model then forms the basis for empirical desk research and the creation of the interview protocol for in-depth interviews, leading to a deeper understanding and interpretation of reality. The results from this empirical research are then analysed and compared in a before/after invasion situation.

Chapter outline

Going forward this research will firstly discuss the theoretical framework and literature study. This will allow for a better understanding of the concepts and theories that will be used during the remainder of this thesis. Once the most interesting literature has been discussed, this thesis will then discuss the methods and techniques used for this research in the methodology, expanding on the previously mentioned information. In the following chapters thereafter, this thesis will discuss the results produced by the analyses and discuss the conclusions that can be made up as a result of that analyses. Finally, the research will conclude with a discussion, in which the author will reflect on the research itself, as well provide some recommendations for future policy and study.

Theoretical framework and literature study

In this chapter, this thesis will discuss the ideas, theories and models that are most important in relation to the research question. In order to get a better understanding of the scientific approach this thesis will be using; this chapter will start by introducing the ‘strategic triangle’ as presented by public management scholar Mark Moore (2013). With a specific focus on the key components that make up this triangle: Legitimizing Environment, Operational Capacity and Public Value. And while the strategic triangle is a useful tool for understanding public organizations, public value creation and government actions, it needs to be (based on the literature) tailored in order to the specific context of this research. By performing a literature study, this study aims to find the mediating variables that will form the core of the conceptual framework which, in turn, will form the basis of the review in this research. Finally, this research will explore the current standings and challenges that EU defence cooperation has been facing, place these in the framework, and see how the invasion in Ukraine has or might have impacted these challenges and changes

Strategic Triangle Framework

In his book, *Recognizing Public Value* (2013), Moore explores the concept of public value and provides a framework for understanding and assessing the impact and importance of public organizations and their actions. In this book not only does the author give his view and definition of the term public value, but also proposes a framework for understanding and recognizing public value. Within this framework, which he calls the ‘strategic triangle’ (Moore, 2013, p. 103), the author introduces a triangle made up out of three key concepts making up the corners of the triangle, which form the basis of the framework (see Figure 1, p.13). According to Moore these three points need to be aligned and balanced in order to create meaningful public value. The idea is that, for example, the support of the legitimizing environment, such as political support for a policy, no real meaningful (or inefficient amounts) of public value can be created. The same is true for when there is a lack of operational capabilities. Even if there is support from the legitimizing environment and a clear goal for public value creation, without the operational capabilities to efficiently and effectively implement a policy or change, public value creation will suffer from it. This is the main idea behind the strategic triangle; there needs to be a good alignment between the three points of the strategic triangle in order to create meaningful public value. In the next sub-chapters this research will highlight these points in specific detail. In order to get a better understanding of how these points play a role in the

evaluation of EU defence cooperation, this research will further explain each of these points in relation to previous research and attach expected mediating variables to the strategy triangle.

Public Value (& Public Value Account)

The first and most essential component of the strategic triangle is the concept of public value. Moore defines public value as the value created by public organizations and activities that contribute to the welfare and well-being of society as a whole (Moore, *Recognizing Public Value*, 2013, p. 110). According to Moore it is also the right of the legitimizing environment, in this case the EU Member States, to define public value (Moore, 2013, p. 104). Imagine the EU for example wanting to create a better life for all the citizens of its Member States. It includes the positive impact and value created by public policies, programmes and services. It can also manifest itself in many forms, such as improved quality of life, increased social well-being, improved public safety or economic development. In other words, public value goes beyond just economic considerations and encompasses social, political and moral dimensions. Not only is public value at the heart of the strategic triangle itself, the triangle also emphasizes the importance of creating and maximizing public value as the central goal of government actions (Moore, 2013).

Another major part of Moore's (2013) work is the 'Public Value Account'. In short, according to Moore it helps to translate the abstract idea of public value into a concrete set of performance measures (Moore, *Recognizing Public Value*, 2013, p. 110). The performance measures will then allow an organization, or researcher, to monitor value creation in the past as well as help guide managers to create greater net value in the future. However, since public value encompasses anything that creates value to the ones on the receiving end of government action, it is a fairly large and difficult concept to define indefinitely. Especially in the case of a subject as large and entangled as EU defence. However, some performance measures can definitely be taken from the public value account. Such as the ability to reach the goals and terms of public value creation, set by a specific legitimizing environment itself (Moore, 2013). This again links public value to the legitimizing environment. In the case of EU defence, an example could be the ability of the EU defence sector/ Member States to achieve the defence goals set by itself.

What is important to note, and what make this framework useful for the goal of this research, is that by operationalizing the term public value in this case it will allow this research to do two things.

1. On the political side (legitimizing environment) monitor the political environment and imagine how developments there might impact the public value account (or the net public value) (Moore, *Recognizing Public Value*, 2013, p. 110). And with the make sure that the EU stays responsive its own goals.
2. On the operational capability side, look for improvements that can be made through productivity gains, or by investments or reallocations of resources among units or producing outputs (Moore, *Recognizing Public Value*, 2013, p. 110).

Because the points are interconnected, and we see the importance of change according to Moore, this also means that the definition of public value used could change as environmental conditions change (Moore, *Recognizing Public Value*, 2013, p. 104). In other words, the legitimizing environment, who has the ability to define public value, can, based on changing environmental conditions change how they define public value. Public value is therefore not set in stone. Also, if new political aspirations or new issues emerge that challenge the organization's performance or provide new opportunities for the organization to create public value, the public organization may need to amend or update the old public value statement. This would result in a new public value proposal which addresses the new realities and opportunities (Moore, *Recognizing Public Value*, 2013, p. 104).

And this is the encompassing goal of this research; to evaluate how the recent developments in European security, by means of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, have impacted these three key components within EU defence. But also, how the variable public value (in regards to EU defence) has been defined in the years leading up to the invasion and thereafter.

Legitimizing environment (Legitimacy and Support)

This part of the triangle evolves around the context in which government and politicians work. It includes the laws, regulations, policies and political dynamics that shape the decision-making process in the public sector (Moore, 2013, p. 104). It is also about the constraints and boundaries in which policy is made, while trying got create public value. This for example can mean several things, such as lack of political will, lack of trust or bureaucratic decision-making processes, which in turn influences the opportunities and challenges for public managers. As mentioned earlier, this is also the part of triangle that defines public value and what it should

look like. It sets out the aims and goals that should be reached. Finally, and most importantly it also includes the level of support from both the political side as well as from the public. In other words, without support for policy or the legitimacy to implement such a policy, public value cannot be created or not in the way it is intended.

Operational Capabilities

Finally, the last corner of the triangle refers to the resources, capabilities and competences that are available to public managers to implement strategies and create public value (Moore, 2013, p. 105). In other words, the means needed and available to create public value Some of these include the human, financial, technological and information resources needed to implement policies effectively. Operational capabilities can also include the skills, expertise, organizational structures and government programmes that make creating public value easier or more efficient. It's a broad term, that encompasses everything that government managers need to transform policy objectives into executable plans and manage the complexity of implementation (Moore, 2013, p. 105).

Figure 1 (Moore, Recognizing Public Value, 2013, p. 110) shows these three points and their interconnectedness, as well as how to evaluate the three points in regards to public value creation and performance.

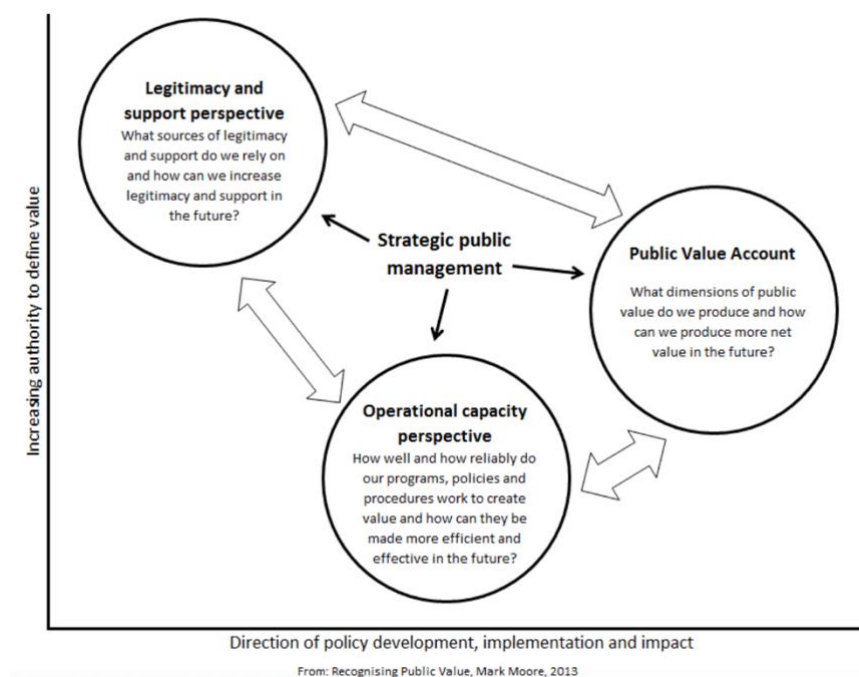


Figure 1: The Strategic Triangle and the three key concepts (Moore, 2013)

The strategic triangle emphasizes the importance of the interaction and alignment between these three components. By effectively navigating the area of the legitimizing environment and leveraging their operational capabilities to its most efficient and effective use, public managers can optimize their efforts to achieve desired outcomes of public value. In other words, the strategic triangle shows that public value is created when a given strategy or action has democratic legitimacy (the public wants it), the support of an authorizing board (a government or public organization) and when they have the operational capabilities to implement the action successfully (Moore, *Managing for Value*, 2000).

What is important in this triangle is also the role of public organizations and leaders in public organizations. Moore describes the importance by stating that public leaders should have a clear vision, the ability to align organizational actions with societal values and the capacity to engage stakeholders (such as political leaders and the general public) in meaningful ways. What is important in the context of continuity is that they should therefore try to also foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement (Moore, 2000). And while measuring public value can be hard according to Moore, he suggests that evaluation should consider multiple dimensions, such as citizen satisfaction and cost-effectiveness. Finally, the last part of Moore's work highlights the importance of value creation in order to prevent the tendency of organizations to become more concerned about their survival than the creation of public value (Moore, *Recognizing Public Value*, 2013, p. 111). According to Moore (2013), public managers should always try to pursue public value creation, be it in a more efficient way, rather than be concerned about their own survival.

Key components and current standings

Legitimizing environment

The question now is, how does the term legitimizing environment of Moore's (2013) theoretical framework translate to the goal of this research and how does the scientific community view the legitimizing environment surrounding the CSDP and EU defence cooperation? One view is what role the EU defence sector plays in comparison to that of NATO. There is an abundance of literature in regards to the role of the EU's defence and security mission and that of NATO. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the expansion of NATO with the addition of Finland, the EU and NATO now share 22 member countries that are part of both the EU and NATO (NATO, 2023). The discussion surrounding the coexistence and overlap of both NATO as being responsible for its Member States' protection, and the existence of the EU defence institutions for protection of EU Member States mainly evolves around the legitimacy of the latter. One

author even described determining their relation since the introduction of the CSDP as the main priority of both analysts and policymakers alike (Lachmann, 2010, p. 185). According to the author, the focus of this debate mainly revolves around the question whether the EU developing military capabilities in autonomy from NATO has led, or will lead to either competition or cooperation. Or can the EU for example play a complementary role to NATO in international crisis management, security and defence (Lachmann, 2010)? Because of the nature of both the CSDP and NATO, with their main goal of providing security for the citizens of their respective Members States, and the overlap of the previously mentioned 22 members, there is also something to be said about both organizations' obligations to rely on the same pool of operational capabilities and from its EU contributors.

According to the same author, the main challenge affecting the NATO-CSDP/EU relationship, is that both organizations have failed to define a comprehensive, efficient and effective outlook on the international environment and how their relationship should work (Lachmann, 2010). This 'battle' for authority and legitimacy, the question of there being competition or cooperation between these two organizations and what role they can play in producing public value is a common topic in EU defence research. This is important because in order to secure resources and maintain (public) support for your goals of public value creation, you not only need support from the community, but also approval at the political and institutional level (NSW Government, sd).

Another research by Bickerton (*The Perils of Performance: EU Foreign Policy and the Problem of Legitimization*, 2007) discusses that the legitimizing strategy of the EU and finds that the EU's ability to achieve international goals is negatively affected by its own internal functioning. The author also states that the individual interest of EU Member States often takes precedence over their collective efforts in global affairs, limiting the EU's effectiveness (Bickerton, 2007).

Finally, some interesting discussions about the legitimizing environment in regards to the Russian invasion of Ukraine is about the importance of agenda-setting and the political debate. One article discusses how the political debate around Ukraine and agenda-setting has caused the debate on Ukraine to be on the front pages for such a long time (*The Perpetually Irrational Ukraine Debate*, 2022). This in turn has caused the legitimizing environment to keep being occupied with the discussion on Ukrainian support and EU security, keeping both public relevance and political action high. One article uses Zelensky's way of keeping the attention on Ukraine as a main example of how this can influence political decision-making (Pisano, 2022).

Operational capabilities

In order to deliver public value and reach the goals set out to by an organization or government body, one needs the operational capabilities to do so (Moore, 2013). In other words, you will need the people, funds, technology, skills and information available in order to deliver public value. However, since resources in the public sector are often fixed (NSW Government, sd), officials, boards or programmes might have to use their influence in order to increase, reallocate or redeploy their assets in order to achieve the most effective outcome (Moore, 2013). This again shows the link between operational capabilities and the two other concepts.

Looking at the discussion on operational capabilities, a 2003 article (Garden) states that, if the EU (and CSDP) were to become a more meaningful organization and meaningful partner, serious investments in all shapes and sizes would be required to be made. Another article (EFCR, 2023), states that in order to keep up with the modern security needs, the EU should: 'Devise a new strategic approach to defence and security and obtain the capabilities to reach that approach' (ECFR, 2023). This is also in line with official statements made by EU institutions. Saying that the goal for 2022 and 2023 should mainly be to close the existing defence investment gaps (European Commission, sd). For this purpose of this research, and looking at the main goal of EU defence (as stated in the CSDP), which is providing security for its citizens and its neighbors, as well as protect EU values (European Commission, sd), this research will further build on how the situation in regards to capabilities (financial, military etc.) has changed during the course of the war and affected the EU's. Has any desired progress been made in regards to the EU's defence capabilities? Has more money been invested? Or were there programmes, organizing capacities or institutional changes that might have influenced the capability side of the triangle?

Public value

In the current literature there are few sources that indicate exactly what can be classified as public value or public value creation in regards to EU defence. As discussed previously, public value, in the broadest sense, can be seen as the main goal of an organization in the public domain to create value in the form of welfare and well-being for society (Moore, 2013). But what does this mean in terms of EU defence? One article on national defence describes that by performing national defence the product is the 'protection of national interests, by active involvement of state institutions with responsibilities in the field, but not only these, being committed the available resources of the state in order to ensure sovereignty, independence,

unity, territorial integrity and the constitutional democracy under the conditions of combating a threat or any other type of aggression (Manolache & Chis, 2019). Looking at this description together with that as described in the report of the European External Action Service (EEAS, 2016) and the previously mentioned description in the CSDP, we see some similarities in how this is phrased. In the EEAS report it states that: ‘‘Europeans must be able to protect Europe, respond to external crises, and assist in developing defence capacities’’ (EEAS, 2016). In his work, *Managing for Value* (2000) there, he provides a table with a possible measure for public value (See Figure 2).

Table 1. Basic Strategic Concepts in the Private For-Profit Sector and the Public Sector

	<i>For-Profit Sector</i>	<i>Public Sector (nonprofit and governmental)</i>
Normative goal	Enhance shareholder wealth	Achieve social mission
Principal source of revenue	Revenues earned by sale of products and services	Charitable contributions or tax appropriations
Measure of performance	Financial bottom line or increased equity value	Efficiency and effectiveness in achieving mission
Key calculation	Find and exploit distinctive competence of firm by positioning it in product/ service markets	Find better ways to achieve mission

Figure 2: Basic concepts and goals for private and public sector (Moore, 2000)

Based on Figure 2, as well as the previously mentioned definitions of public value by Mark Moore in his earlier work (Moore, *The Strategic Triangle*, 2013), the goals set by the EU, and earlier discussed ways of looking at public value, combined with the lack of such a clear definition in current literature, this research proposes the following definition:

- This research will look at public value from a stance of the EU defence perspective and to what extent it is able to reach its own goals. These goals thus being the ability to provide security, assist in developing defence capacities;
- provide a sense of security for its citizens. In other words, how the public values the effort of EU defence organizations (CSDP, EDA, etc.) in providing a sense of value for society.
- Public opinion on the EU defence stance and how more or less cooperation is perceived and;
- The EU's ability to provide more net public value / be more efficient in the way public value is produced.

By using this four-way working definition of public value for the goal of this research, public value is also linked to the EU's operational capabilities by evaluating if the EU makes efficient and effective use of its capabilities in providing the former. And if so, if this in turn means that society, because of this perceived sense of public value, in turn supports the EU in more defence related actions, linking it to the legitimizing environment.

Other literature

Even though the Russian invasion of Ukraine has only been going on for just over a year-and-a-half as of writing, this research already found some interesting works that take a look at the effects of the invasion on EU defence and EU defence cooperation. An article by Fiott (2023), looks at the situation in regards to EU defence cooperation since the Russian invasion of Ukraine from a 'new intergovernmentalism' standpoint. It explored the effect the war in Ukraine had on the development of EU programmes and institutions such as the European Defence Fund (EDF) and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) (Fiott, In every crisis an opportunity? European Union integration in defence and the War on Ukraine, 2023). The article states that, while it might be too early to draw definitive conclusions on the effect of the invasion on EU defence cooperation as a whole, there are certain aspects that can't be ignored. The goal and phenomenon of the article is likewise to that of this research, but the scientific approach is different. The point the article makes is that despite there having been many efforts in EU defence policy since the war, such as amendment of the European Peace Facility (EPF) to support Ukraine (European Council, 2023) and the Strategic Compass, that there is little evidence of substantive supranational integration in EU defence (Fiott, In every crisis an opportunity? European Union integration in defence and the War on Ukraine, 2023). And while the study found that there were efforts made based on behalf of the European Commission to push for common defence procurement, the author describes it as policy entrepreneurship rather than true cooperation (Fiott, In every crisis an opportunity? European Union integration in defence and the War on Ukraine, 2023).

Finally, in his book *The Economics of Defence Policy* (2010) renowned economist and defence researcher Keith Hartley points out two characteristics that distinct the defence sector from any other sector. First, Hartley points out that the products of defence and peace are non-excludable and non-rival. In other words, it's a service that is provided by the government without profit, but provides a certain level of welfare of public value to all the citizens of a country (Hartley,

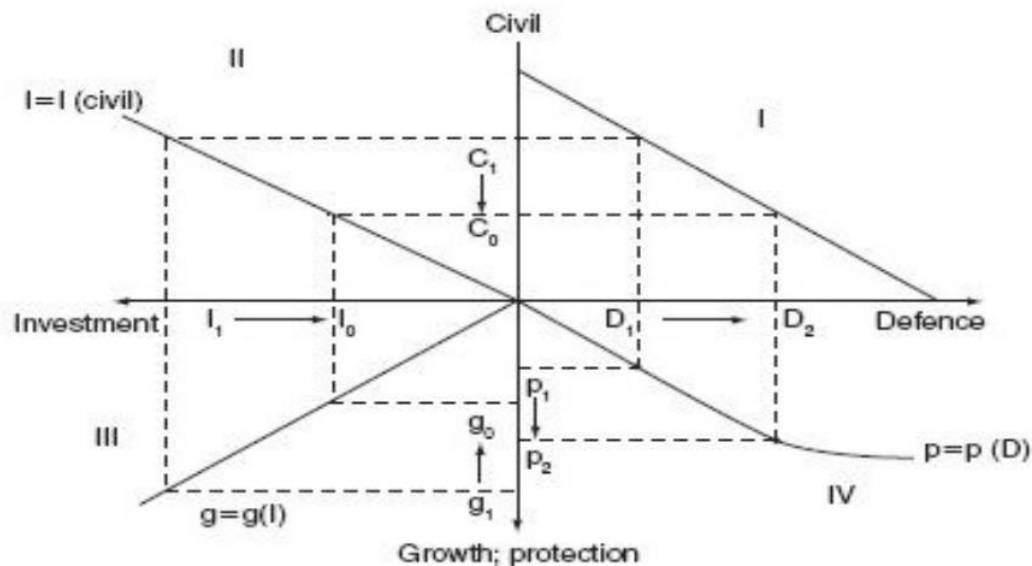


Figure 3: Defence spending and the effect on society (Hartley, 2010, p. 35)

2010). However, since governments are the foremost procurers of military services and defence capabilities, their procurement strategies eventually influence the total amount of public value gained from defence and security. He then argues that, like any other purchase, governments are confronted with opportunity costs when thinking about defence spending. In other words, more spending on defence, means less spending available for other sectors. Keeping this in mind Hartley also provides a framework combining government defence spending and spending on other parts of the economy. Figure 3 above (Hartley, 2010, p. 35) shows the balance between defence spending and the economy. The diagram is divided into several quadrants. Quadrant I, shows the higher investments in defence eventually lead to less spending on more civil goods and services, such as healthcare.

Quadrants II & III indicate that higher defence spending will lead to a reduction in investments, which can lead to a diminishing growth rate of the economy (Hartley, 2010). Finally, quadrant IV indicates that an increase in defence expenditure will lead to an increase in public benefits in the form of civil protection, which might lead to an increase in public value (Hartley, 2010). This framework ties in with Moore's framework; a strategic management approach in defence, by creating a strategic fit can result in a creation of public value.

Conceptual Model

Based on the previous chapter of this research, the author has set up a conceptual model which represents what variables might have an impact on the key concepts as presented by Mark Moore (2013). Looking at how both Moore (2013), the EU itself and authors of other additional literature have evaluated or characterized the legitimizing environment, public value and operational capabilities, the author has selected those variables that are expected to be of relevance. Important to note is that this conceptual model (see Figure 4) serves as a visual representation of the expected effect that some independent variables might have on the dependent variables (legitimizing environment, operational capabilities and public value).

If the analyses of sources, literature and outcome of interviews later on in this research provide a different view or different results than those expected, this will be discussed in the analyses and in the conclusion section of this thesis.

Based on the literature study and performed desk research, this thesis proposes an adapted version of Moore's (2013) strategic triangle framework for the purpose of this research. Looking at Figure 4, the conceptual model shows the core principles of Moore's triangle with the three key aspects, Public Value, Legitimacy and Support (or the legitimizing environment) and Operational Capabilities having a bi-directional effect on each other. The adapted model in Figure 4 now includes the expected mediating variables that might be of relevance for this research. Based on the previously performed literary review, it is expected that certain outside variables influence the three key concepts of Moore's triangle. For example, looking at the public value concept of the triangle in Figure 4, it is expected that in the case of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the expectation is that public opinion on not only the war, but the means of intervention, duration, as well as support for EU cooperation can influence public value. Looking at another example from the figure, it is expected that an increase in financial instruments, in the form of actual monetary investments for example, or an increase in the procurement of military equipment or increase in personnel will affect the operational capabilities used to supply more public value.

These are just examples however, and how these expected mediating variables are to be measured and operationalized is discussed in the following methodology chapter of this research.

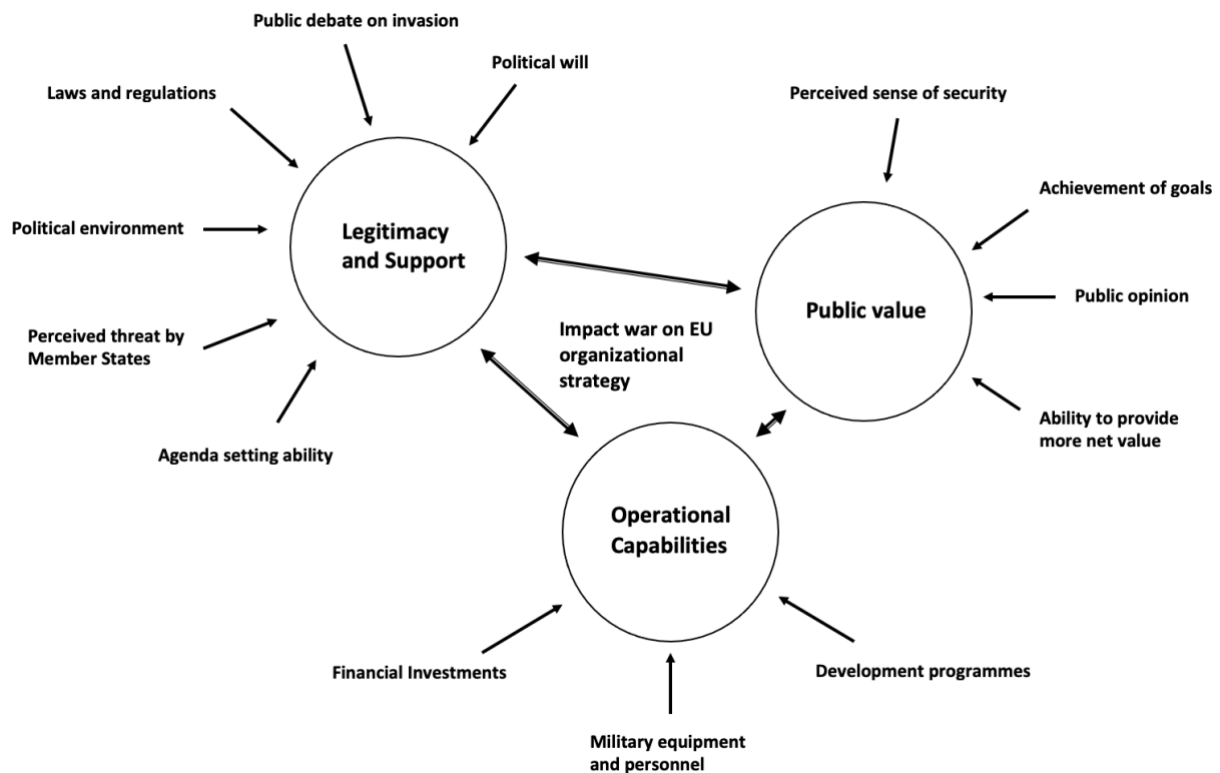


Figure 4: Conceptual model based on Moore (2013) adapted by author

This model will serve as the main support for the remainder of this research and will be used as the base for both the analyses as well as the interview protocol and the there out forthcoming interview questions. In the analyses of this research, the conceptual model will serve as a guide to see how each of the key concepts looks like in the before and after situation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The following chapter of this research will first discuss how the research was performed and what techniques were used for both the desk research, interviews and the analyses. Also, the next chapter will provide an overview of literary examples that were used for the basis of the theoretical framework of this research and the empirical documents, as well as state where these documents originate from.

Methodology

This section of the research will provide an overview of the methods used in conducting the research. With the goal of understanding if and how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has impacted EU defence cooperation, so that there may be lessons learned for the future. The previous chapter consisted of a literary review and the explanation of the strategic triangle framework by Mark Moore (2013). This part of the research will not only explain how the data for this research was collected and what the requirements were, but also explain how the strategic triangle framework will be used in order to try and provide an answer to the research question.

Design

To start off, this research consists of a qualitative, holistic, longitudinal case study method, consisting of both desk research and in-depth interviews. Performing a case study is a fitting method for this research for several reasons. In the words of Yin (*The Case Study as a Serious Research Strategy*, 1981) case studies can be a great tool for performing research and especially stating that a case study must be used when:

- *The empirical enquiry must examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, while studying a series of decisions that occur over a period of time, with no clear beginning or end point, with outcomes too complex for single factor theories, large number of participants (EU-Member States and other actors) and situations that are special in terms of agency context or historical moments in time (NATO expansion and Russian invasion) (Yin, 1981).*

Looking at this description and the goal of this research in studying this historical event in Ukraine, with the war lasting more than a year and a half with many important real-life decisions having been by several important actors makes this research clearly fit the definition by Yin (1981). It is therefore that a case-study seems to be the most fitting method for this research.

The research is also comparative in nature, in the sense that the goal is to assess if the Russian invasion of Ukraine has changed the stance on EU defence cooperation, in regards to the situation before the war. The research is also inductive in nature, meaning that the collection of general data regarding the topic at the end of the research will hopefully lead to a more general theory on EU defence cooperation.

Data-collection

Desk study

Desk research played the most significant role in this study, contributing to the literature review and the development of the theoretical framework. Relevant academic and research literature were identified through the snowball effect. Initially, a comprehensive search was conducted using various search engines including, but not limited to, Google Scholar and the Leiden University Catalogue, in order to identify seminal works and important references related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. By using several keywords and Boolean search terms, the researcher was able to gather most of the relevant data and references in relation to the research question.

Initial search results were further expanded by examining reference lists of other relevant articles, books and reports. This iterative process allowed for the inclusion of sources that otherwise might not have been found during the initial search and assisted in getting a better understanding of the current standings in regards to other works on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The literature review critically summarized and analyzed existing knowledge, providing a foundation for the research and identifying gaps in the research.

For the literary review, a wide range of literature was used. However, when it comes relevant sources, literature not older than the 2000's has been used when it comes to literature on EU defence. However, since this research covers a currently rapid developing subject, sources and literature published during the writing of this research were also included.

For the analysis and empirical findings in the form of official publications by the EU or other major EU Member States, mostly official channels as well as news articles were used. These were found in the same way as the literature, by means of Boolean searches to related subjects, filtering on specific years. In order to separate more suited empirical information from lesser ones, only those pieces of empirical information were used that either directly related to one of the key concepts of the Strategic Triangle or mediating variables of the conceptual model. The empirical findings in the form of writing sources are mostly made up of official documents, reporting or communication, as well as statements or quotes by heads of state or related individuals and offices.

An overview of document examples and where these documents originate from can be found in Table 1 on the following page. The table, while not exhaustive, provides a general overview on the types of sources and (official) channels that were consulted, together with the concept they applied the based on the conceptual model

Category	Source	Example	Concept
Official EU publications (15)	EU Parliament	<i>'Document on EU civilian perception on security'</i>	<i>Public Value</i>
	EU Commission	<i>'EU Strategy and key priorities for 2023'</i>	<i>Legitimizing Environment</i>
	European Defence Agency	<i>'Eurobarometer on perceived value on EU defence cooperation'</i>	<i>Public Value</i>
	EU Council	<i>'EU pledge on \$1 billion for ammunition'</i>	<i>Operational Capabilities</i>
Thinktanks and Opinion articles (23)	Carnegie Europe	<i>'Pre-war challenges to EU defence'</i>	<i>Legitimizing Environment</i>
	Chatham House	<i>'7 ways the war in Ukraine affected EU defence'</i>	<i>All concepts</i>
	HCSS	<i>'EU structures and decision-making on EU defence'</i>	<i>All concepts</i>
	Clingendael Institute	<i>'How to continue after the CSDP'</i>	<i>All concepts</i>
Quotes, newspapers and other sources (12)	Al Jazeera	<i>'Is Europe really united in adding Ukraine?'</i>	<i>Operational capabilities</i>
	Reuters	<i>'Russia's Putin authorizes special military operation'</i>	<i>General</i>
	Olaf Scholz	<i>'On the Global Zeitenwende'</i>	<i>Legitimizing Environment</i>

Table 1: Documents, sources and examples. Full list found in bibliography.

Interviews

As an addition to the secondary nature of the information gathered through desk research, and to gain a deeper understanding of the literature reviewed, a set of semi-structured interviews were also conducted. These semi-structured interviews, which would serve as primary source of information, consisted of approximately 13 open-ended questions designed to gain a more detailed understanding of the literature and current events. In other words, the interviews were conducted in order to see if the answers the respondents gave could reflect or add on to the empirical findings from the documentation research. The respondents, who preferred to remain anonymous, were purposively selected because of their relation to the topic, and expertise or experience in the field. Not only that, by purposively selecting the participants this research could to collect a diverse set of perspectives, experiences and ideas in regards to the topic. Some of these respondents include people with a long history in the area of security, (former) employees of foreign affairs, task force operators and former (deputy) ambassadors. The respondents provided expertise through several points of view because of their different backgrounds. For example, one of the respondents is a very high-level foreign affairs employee with over 20 years of experience in the field of public affairs and foreign affairs, who was located in Ukraine during the start of the invasion. Because of the respondents' experience and location during the start of the invasion, the respondent gave valuable insights into how he has experienced the developments and situation in Ukraine, the policy changes they have noticed and advice on how to continue. Another respondent worked as a senior policy officer on EU affairs within the Dutch Ministry on Defence, with a specialization in the field of international affairs and general policy. With a respondent close to the origins of policy with a specialization on EU affairs and defence, she was able to provide valuable thoughts on the policies that have been implemented towards EU defence and the key concepts of the triangle during the duration of the war.

The 5 respondents that were interviewed all provided different angles from both the political, scientific and personal side. An overview of the respondent can be seen in Table 2 on the following page. The table provides an overview of each of the 5 respondents, their respective roles and their importance to the goal of the research or the contribution they were able to provide.

Respondent	Role	Importance to research
R1 - Male	Sr. Policy Officer Task Force Russia-Ukraine	Insider knowledge on NL approach to Russian-Ukrainian conflict and current policy standings.
R2 - Male	Former Dutch (deputy) Ambassador to Ukraine	High-level individual in the world of foreign affairs and located in Kiev during invasion.
R3 - Male	Self-Employed advisor to (non)governmental organizations on political issues/ EU affairs.	Expert on EU and defence affairs and advisor to several organizations on organizational strategy and issues.
R4 - Female	Sr. Policy Officer EU and International Affairs at Ministry of Defence of The Netherlands	Policy officer specifically working on EU affairs at the ministry of defence and coordination on help with Ukraine.
R5 – Male	International Affairs MSc and entrepreneur located in Tbilisi, Georgia	Studied international affairs and ability to provide insider knowledge on public value perception in another region affected by Russia.

Table 2: Respondents, roles and importance to research.

The interviews themselves were all conducted electronically per preference of the respondents. In total, 5 interviews were conducted, with each interview lasting between 45-minutes to one hour, giving respondents ample time to provide comprehensive answers and engage in insightful discussions. Before the start of the interview, each respondent was assured of the confidentiality of their responses and informed consent was obtained prior to the interviews. They were also provided with detailed information about the purpose and scope of the study, and informed consent was obtained. Finally, the respondents were assured that they had the

right to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. The questionnaire used during this interview can be found in the appendix of this research. In total the questionnaire consisted of 13 questions (see appendix 1) and was based on the literature and the conceptual model. In regards to the respondents, only those respondents who are actively working in, or possessed a certain level of knowledge in regards to the research subject, were selected. Since the respondents had to be knowledgeable about the Russian-Ukrainian war and this is a topic with many rapid developments, making a selection and finding suiting respondents who met these criteria proved to be difficult. Mostly because possible respondents experienced a lack of time to take part in a 45-to-60-minute interview. Initially a target of 6 respondents was set to provide ample diversity among respondents, but this proved too difficult during the selection and outreach phase. It is therefore that the author, looking at the quality of the respondents and time needed to prepare the interviews, settled on 5 respondents rather than 6. With the aim of retaining a good quality of selected respondents, rather than meet the initially set selection amount of 6 total respondents.

Data-analysis methods

The data-analysis of this research consisted of two separate steps. First-off, the previously mentioned empirical findings that resulted from the desk research were textual analyzed by reviewing if certain key events or quotes have were related to any of the key concepts of the triangle or mediating variables. Based on the conceptual model and the theoretical framework of Moore (2013) from which it resonates, this thesis has collected some of the most important changes since the start of the invasion including numerical data, quotes and official publications. In regards to the interviews, they were first recorded, after which they were transcribed using the Amberscript transcription software. During the transcription process important and relevant statements for the research were highlighted and later on coded from the operationalization scheme (seen in table 3). By doing this, the opinions of the respondents were held against the empirical findings to see how the empirical findings from the desk research held up to those working in the field, and see if there were any areas where the empirical data from the desk research and statements from the respondents differed or similar.

These empirical findings from both the written and stated empirical findings, as well as those from the interviews were analyzed through a coding scheme, which was based on the earlier created conceptual model. An example of which can be seen in Table 3.

CONCEPT	DIMENSION	Example of questions in interviews and literature research	Change is of impact (example)
PUBLIC VALUE	Public opinion	How do EU citizens look towards EU defence integration?	+++
	Achievement of goals	Is the EU able to fulfill in the goals its goals in the form of public value creation?	+
	Ability to provide more net value	Does the EU able provide public value in an efficient way?	+ -
	Perceived sense of security	Do EU citizens feel safe overall?	++
OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES	Development programmes	New programs have been introduced that improve operational capabilities	++
	Military equipment and personnel	Are there changes to the amount of military equipment or personnel going forward?	+
	Financial investments	Is more money becoming available to defence in Europe?	+++
LEGTIMACY AND SUPPORT	Public debate on invasion	What does the political debate towards EU defence cooperation look like?	++
	Agenda setting ability	Are politicians able to keep the topic of EU defence on the agenda?	---
	Perceived threat by member states	Do EU member states perceive the war in Ukraine as a threat to national safety?	+ -
	Political environment	Is the political environment such that a change in EU defence cooperation could be possible?	---
	Laws and regulations	Did new important laws and regulations pass on either a national or the EU level that impacted EU defence cooperation?	+++
	Political will	Is there a difference in political will towards EU defence cooperation since the war?	++

Table 3: Coding scheme and examples of rating system.

Looking at the table, on the left side of the table, the key concepts of the original strategic triangle as proposed by Moore (2013) can be seen. Moving to the right the concepts are divided into mediating variables that were expected to impact the previously mentioned concepts based on the conceptual model. These mediating variables were then worked out into questions that were discussed during the interviews, as well as researched during the desk research in order to find empirical sources. Finally, if one or more of variables seemed to be of impact to the state of EU defence cooperation since the war these were coded with a ‘ - ‘ or ‘ + ’, with the + meaning either the respondents or the empirical articles seemed to indicate that this was indeed an important change since the war, and with a - meaning they were less so according to the respondents or articles. This system of minuses and plusses was used in the same way for each of the respondents individually, with a separate table made for each of the individual respondents. This makes it easier to compare the answers of each of the respondents amongst each other and the literature with one or several quotes to substantiate their answer.

After looking at the results from the coding scheme as well as the empirical findings, the results were then put together in the key concept they belonged most to and see how they impacted

the pre-invasion and post invasion situation on EU defence. The results, combined in a textual analysis can be found in the results section of this research. Interesting quotes from interviews that support or either debunked empirical finding from the desk research can be found in the appendix of this research.

The analyses chapter is divided into several sub-chapters, who themselves are divided in even smaller ones. This way, each of the expected meditating variables will be discussed in separately, fully incorporating the conceptual model into the analyses. In order to provide a clearer overview of the events and changes that occurred, this research will first discuss the pre-invasion situation in order to provide a better idea of the EU defence landscape in the years before the invasion. After, the following sub-chapter of the analyses will then discuss any major trends or changes that occurred as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the same format as that of the pre-invasion situation. Also, it will mainly discuss the most noticeable differences and trends in comparison to the pre-invasion situation, rather than go into detail on what the current situation looks like. Mostly because, as this is an ongoing conflict as of writing, and developments can be rapid, some minor details might have changed by time of publication, which might not be relevant for the purpose of this research.

Validity and reliability

In order ensure the validity and reliability of this research two methods of data collection were used. By collecting both data from desk research, which consisted mainly of published and peer-reviewed articles, as well as official documents and by interviewing experts to complement this research, the author tried to make use of the as much reliable information as possible. What further increases the reliability of this research is that the interviews were performed in the same setting, by phone, and performed with the same questionnaire for every respondent. By using one set of questions, which were based off of the literature and based Moore's (2013) well-proven theoretical framework, the author further increased the level of reliability and validity.

By making use of the previously mentioned operationalization scheme, which resulted from the conceptual model, this research attempted to turn abstract concepts into measurable and quantifiable terms. This in turn ensured that the author based the analysis of this research on concrete data, rather than subjective interpretations of the opinions of the respondents and other authors.

On top of this, in order to increase the reliability of this research, the author had the aim of binding every aspect of the research together, starting from the literature study and moving

on to the results, all while keeping the same consistency. While doing this, this research also aimed to be as transparent as possible in the explanation of theories and how and why some theories are a good fit for the purpose of the research. And by using the well-known and often used theoretical framework of a renowned public management professor, Mark Moore (2013), the author of this thesis tried to ensure the internal validity.

While some selection bias might have occurred, since the respondents were hand-selected based on their knowledge and expertise, this also assured that the author was able to assure that the answers the respondents provided were useful for the purpose and goal of this research. Not only that, but by selection respondents from different backgrounds and working locations, the author was able to secure the external validity.

Findings and results

This chapter of the research will discuss the results that were found as result of the previously mentioned desk research and interviews that were conducted. Later on in this chapter, these main findings will be confronted in the analysis to see if there are both noticeable trends and ideas that were either confronting or strengthening each other. First off, this research will discuss the major findings per main concept of the strategic triangle (Moore, 2013) and how these concepts were influenced and aligned by the other dimensions of the conceptual model (Figure 4). Secondly, this chapter will start off by discussing the main findings of the empirical findings on EU defence cooperation before the start of the invasion on the 24th of February. The findings are presented on bases of the conceptual model, with each of the concepts divided in findings on the expected mediating variables. After, this chapter will then look at how the changes in each of the key concepts has affected EU defence cooperation since the invasion and how the respondents noticed the effects of the invasion on the previously mentioned concepts.

Due to the interconnectedness of the three major concepts of the strategic triangle, some findings might be applicable to either two or sometimes all three of the concepts. In that case, the finding will be reported in the section of the concept that fits the most. In other words, there are cases where the results overlap and the results are not a clear split between concepts due to this interconnectedness. The findings will start off with some general results to that provide a general introduction into the pre-invasion empirical findings, which help to understand to situation on pre-invasion EU defence situation.

Pre-invasion research (before 24th of February 2022)

General results and trends

To start off, one renowned Dutch thinktank, formally better known as the Clingendael Institute, looked at the proposals, mechanisms and efforts provided by the EU in order to improve on their goal of defence cooperation. In their article ‘*After the EUGS: mainstreaming a new CSDP*’ (Clingendael Institute, 2016) the authors recognize that while the implementation of the EUGS, or the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policies is generally considered as ‘an excellent strategy that steers the EU in its ability to respond to challenges of a more connected and complex world (Clingendael Institute, 2016, p. 1).

However, the institute also acknowledged that the implementation of the EUGS was by far not going to be enough to reach a clear goal of EU defence cooperation and implement an

effective strategy for EU defence. The article provides several challenges and problems for why the EUGS will not be effective as it stands. The main takeaways are that EU defence cooperation around the time of publication was just not high on the agenda, mainly driven by the overshadowing of Brexit (Clingendael Institute, 2016). In other words, while there was talk about improving EU defence, other points were far higher on the agenda and there was a lack of political will for EU defence. Not only that, but according to the article there are several other things that need to be addressed when it comes to the EUGS and CSDP. These mainly are the level of ambition and tasks (how these goals should be reached), defence capabilities, tools and instruments and what EU defence should look like in the future (Clingendael Institute, 2016).

What is also interesting to note is that the article also provides specific areas of security that need to be addressed, such as the protection of energy resources and underwater communication lines (Clingendael Institute, 2016). Why this is important will be discussed later on in this research. Finally, the article concludes by stating that the political will and new tools and instruments (such as new investment programmes) are crucial for deepening European defence cooperation and that greater commitment is needed (Clingendael Institute, 2016).

Looking at the Implementation Plan, which outlines exactly how the EUGS should have been implemented, the main take away was that the Union's security and defence capabilities needed to be addressed to meet both current and future threats (EEAS, 2016).

Overall, the Implementation Plan stresses the importance of more and better defence cooperation and capability development priorities (EEAS, 2016). Also, the article stresses the further exploration of development programmes such as, the now existing, PESCO (EEAS, 2016). These three concepts of legitimizing environment, public value and operational capabilities is put into one sentence in the Implementation Plan: '*We should commit to a vision of Member States working together, to enhance their political solidarity and mutual assistance, through on shared strategic interest, by using the capabilities and instruments, in order to provide security for EU citizens, while contributing to peace beyond our borders* (EEAS, 2016, p. 14)'. Not only does this sentence underline the need for cooperation within the EU in the pre-invasion era, but also states the importance of political support, by using the operational capabilities that they need in order to provide public value, in the form of security within the EU as well as abroad.

Not only is this the notion that the EU itself proposes, but most empirical findings predating the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February of 2022 seem to generally

state the same. As in regards to the EU's defence relation to NATO, which this article labeled as part of the legitimizing environment aspect of the strategic triangle, the article also states the main goal of EU and NATO relations. When it comes to the relation between the two and the role of NATO, the EU itself states that: '*NATO remains the foundation for the collective defence of those nations who are a member of it*' (EEAS, 2016, p. 4).

What is interesting to note is that in the years before the Russian invasion of Ukraine several empirical articles in the form of official documents already noted the need for improvement on each of the three concepts of the strategic triangle. Specifically, there has been clarification on the role of EU defence to that of NATO, and an abundance of reports on what capability developments should look like.

Another pre-invasion article from 2017 that discusses EU defence cooperation in light of the window-of-opportunity theory made an interesting argument when it comes to EU Members State convergence of security interests. In his work, Haroche (2017) argues that European defence cooperation is a response to crises that places EU member and non-member states in a situation of military interdependency (Haroche, 2017). The author also makes a very interesting argument in regards to the EU, Ukraine and the US tendency to shift their attention to the Asia-Pacific region. The argument the author makes is that smaller crises such as the Crimean annexation in 2014, might not be conducive for more EU defence cooperation, as long as there is backing by the USA (Haroche, 2017). However, the author also argues that if tensions between the EU and Russia worsened, in combination with a continuing shift of US security interests towards Asia, this could lead to stronger EU defence cooperation (Haroche, 2017).

Legitimizing environment

In this sub-chapter, findings that relate to the legitimizing environment will be discussed. To start off, many articles before the invasion of Ukraine point at a long list of challenges and hurdles to EU defence cooperation from a political standpoint. This section will summarize the most recurring findings and general consensus when it comes to the legitimacy and support (legitimizing environment) concept of the strategic triangle in pre-invasion literature.

Political debate

To start off, many authors, such as Kielmansegg (2019), Damro (2012) and researchers linked to the HCSS (2023) point out the lack of decision-making mechanisms within the EU as a challenge to EU defence cooperation. And while more structures have been created into the EU

in regards defence cooperation, mostly because of more pressure on the EU in taking care of its own security needs, often these structures had to fit in with the already existing NATO structures (Kielmansegg, 2019). But according to an article by Damro (2012), more often than not has NATO membership in the past been seen by EU Member States as a substitute for strong EU collaboration on security and defence matters, allowing the EU to focus more on economic integration, while taking external security for granted (Damro, 2012).

Political will

Another interesting finding that ties in to the mediating variable of political will can be found in the previously mentioned works of the HCSS (2023) and Kielmansegg (2019) that describe the reasons that the EU defence cooperation has been challenging before the invasion state that this challenge is not as being that of a single cause. However, it is a deeply rooted collective action problem within every part of the European defence sector (HCSS, 2023). Then there is also the specialization problem, that crosses over in both operational capabilities and the legitimizing environment. This problem states that, because of the nature of defence as a public good, where it's non-excludable, certain theories that do count for the private sector do not apply here (CSIS, 2023). What is meant by this is that specialization, which in the private market can result in benefits such as economies of scale or better and more effective production and trade, does not apply to the market for defence. And because of this, it's harder for countries to cooperate, as they want to put their national interests first again and not hand-over their autonomy by dependence on other countries (CSIS, 2023).

Perceived threat by Member States

On top of that, because of the many different opinion within the EU when it comes to threat perception and a general lack thereof in the pre-war situation, the role of NATO as the defensive alliance, the risk of damaging the trust with the US, the unwillingness of Member States to give up on their military sovereignty and the neutral policy of some Member States makes it difficult for states to cooperate (Kielmansegg, 2019; Carnegie Europe, 2022). Then there is also the Strategic Cacophony Problem, as described by authors Meijer and Brooks (2021). This problem states that the most significant challenge to EU defence cooperation has been another political hurdle. The authors state that is it the sovereign states (i.e., EU Member States), that work against cooperation. They found that there is a continent-wide divergence within the EU, across every sector of national defence, with the most noticeable being threat perception. Meijer and Brooks (2021) state that this is such a deeply rooted problem, that overcoming it

would require a long-term, sustained effort. And in order to do so, the needs to be a shift from the self-interest at the national level towards to EU level (Meijer & Brooks, 2021).

Political environment

In regards to the political environment, and tying into the above-mentioned mediating variables, it was found that in situation predating the invasion of Ukraine, the political environment was not so that EU defence was a topic that was relevant. In fact, the study found that in the pre-invasion situation, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, Climate Change and several scandals in the political environment, such as the Dutch ‘*Toeslagenaffaire*’, the setting was not such that talks on EU defence cooperation seemed relevant at the time.

Laws and regulations

While over the years, the EU has expanded on regulations and policies with the intent of increasing EU defence cooperation, some findings showed that in the years pre-dating the invasion, the EU was still facing some laws and regulations that stood in the way of effective cooperation. One 2021 article described it as the CFSP being confronted by ‘specific rules and procedures’ (Wessel, Antilla, Obenheimer, & Ursu, 2021). However, besides these specific rules and the difficulty in decision-making processes, this research found little more evidence of laws and regulations impeding EU defence cooperation to a major degree. Neither official reports, decisive claims/remarks by Member States or other sources seemed to indicate that EU defence cooperation is affected by barriers in means of laws and regulations.

Agenda setting

Finally, another finding on the EU defence cooperation that was found in the years before the invasion revolves around the agenda setting variable. Findings showed that a major challenge to EU defence cooperation is that the subject of defence was not high on the political agenda. On the other hand, other points were much higher on the agenda, especially during the time of Brexit, where the Brexit negotiations were the main point of discussion within the EU. During this time. This can be seen in figures of the European Defence Agency, that shows that cooperation within EU in terms of defence has remarkably declined over the years leading up to the invasion (CSIS, 2023).

Operational capabilities

When it comes to the operational capabilities, with which we earlier described the tools needed and available in achieving the EU's goal; providing security and peace (by which the EU provides public value) as mentioned earlier, there are a lot of interesting results. Most of the pre-invasion findings show that, similar to the concept of the legitimizing environment, there seem to be several interesting points of attention.

Financial investments

One of the most occurring findings when it comes to operational capabilities is that financial investments made in order to increase the operational capacity (i.e., the purchase of military equipment, training, etc.) was not being spent efficiently. Referring to the aforementioned specialization problem, where specialization, although known by countries to be more efficient, is not being done because of several underlying reasons. In the Implementation Plan made by the EASS (2016), it is said that 80% of all defence investments is still being spent nationally, while there should be more collective output (EEAS, 2016). This trend of Member States' tendencies to prioritize their own security interests, rather than cooperating, sharing resources and a shared strategic culture, is something that other authors have also found (Schimmelfennig, Leuffen, & Rittberger, 2015). This trend can be seen when looking at a combination of graphs provided by the European Defence Agency, which shows the total new defence investment within the EU up until 2021. First, looking at the graph below, we see a rise in defence investments expenditure by EU Member States leading up until 2021.



Figure 3: Total EU defence investment expenditure (in Billions) (EDA, 2022)

In Figure 4, after a clear retrenchment trend between 2010 and 2014, a steep rise in expenditures can be seen, leading to a 15-year high in the year before the invasion. However, according to the EDA report, this increased amount of spending, while at first seeming to be a positive thing for EU defence, masks the failure of EU members to collaborate (EDA, 2022).

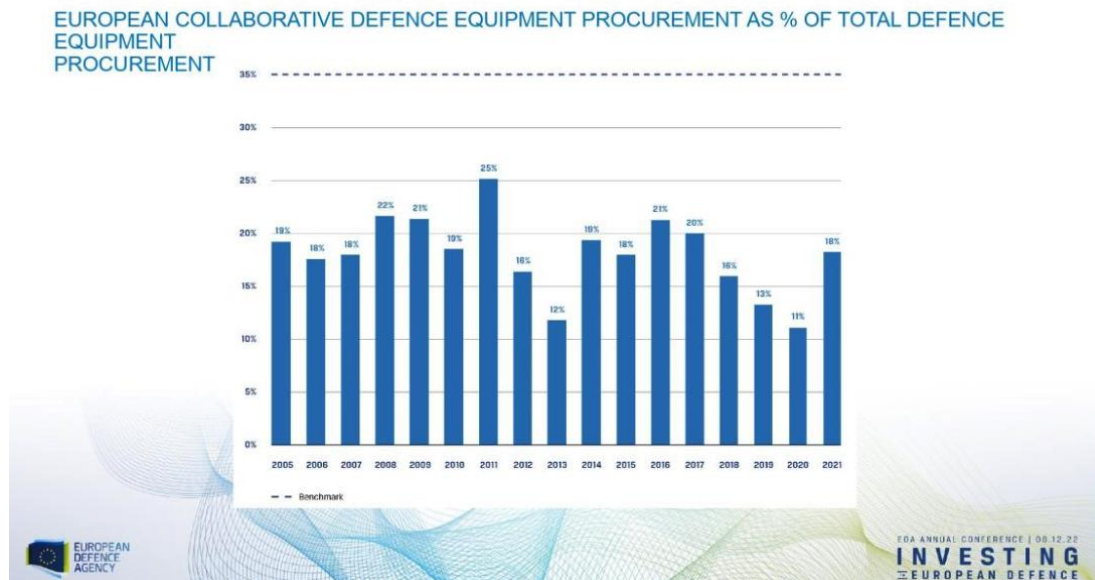


Figure 4: EU cooperative defence procurement as % of total (EDA, 2022)

Looking at figure 5, the graph provided by the EDA shows that, while collaborative European defence procurement reached a level of 18% out of the €52 billion that was spend in total in 2021, (in comparison to a decade low of 11% in 2020), it is far from the pledged 35% benchmark (EDA, 2022). Especially looking at the total amount spent on defence, this is still far from EU’s desired goal. Adding to this, are some remarks from the interview with respondent 3, which stated that even though he noticed that ‘’while countries felt the pressure to rise to the 2% GDP NATO norm for defence expenditures, and money was being made available, countries do not seem to have a clear plan on how to spend that money, while at the same time having their own personal agendas’’ (respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).

Development Programmes

And while several programmes were in place in order to increase defence cooperation in the operational capabilities sector, such as PESCO, CARD, the EDF and CDP, defence cooperation from a capability standpoint was still not up to the norms the EU had set before the invasion.

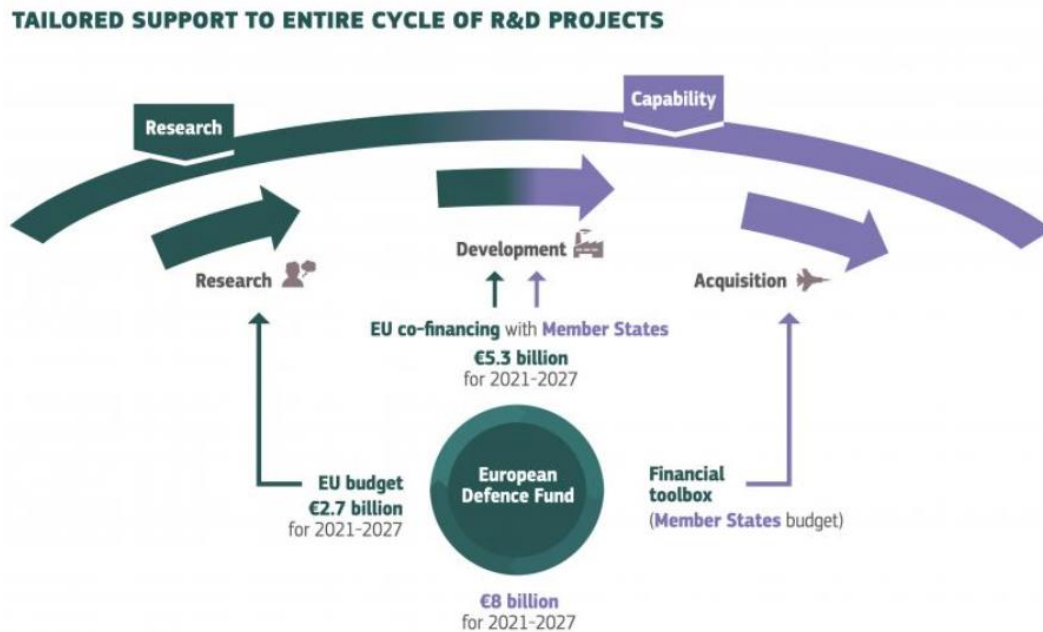


Figure 5: Visual representation of the EDF programme (European Commission, 2023)

According to some articles, there are multiple reasons as to why cooperation is difficult to achieve. One reason why joint cooperation in procurement is difficult is that, because of differing national requirements, work share, investment share and other preferences, these procurement plans are difficult to align. So, while in the pre-war situation it seems that there is no lack of development programmes to support or increase EU defence cooperation on an operational basis, with funds like the EDF and CARD initiatives, it seems that these programmes have not had the desired effect so far. According to one author, these initiatives in the pre-war situation are good but: *“For the time being, they are no more than fragmentary pieces of a puzzle which will require a great deal of time, efforts and resources if it is ever to be completed”* (Kielmansegg, 2019). This finding might bind into the previous one about the inability to meet cooperated EU defence procurement goals, and assist in understanding the EU operational defence situation before and after the war.

Military equipment & personnel

And while low-cost, non-specific items that many Member States can use, such as rations, small arms or medical supplies do see a lot of joint procurement, it is the highly specific, technological advanced capabilities in which cooperation provides gains that far outweigh that of low-cost ones (CSIS, 2023). Another example is that the increasing complexity of modern defence capabilities makes procurement hard on a national level, but even more so when more nations are involved (CSIS, 2023). One such project is the development of the F-35 or Joint-Strike-Fighter project, which with an estimated cost for the Dutch government went from €800 million, towards a realized cost of €5 billion (RTLNieuws, 2019).

This view is supported by one of the respondents, who stated that: *‘Buying low-technology items, from a short-term standpoint seems to be the trend in Europe. This is where the EU is good at, with the US serving as a supplier, because it’s easier, while neglecting our own developments and defence industry’* (respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023). In order to breach these problems, according to the EASS (2016), as also mentioned earlier in the Strategic Cacophony Problem (Meijer & Brooks, 2021), a ‘hard trigger’ is needed in order to reverse the long-standing fragmentation of the European defence sector, which the Russian invasion might offer (EEAS, 2016).

Public value

Achievement of goals + ability to provide more net value

In regards to public value, not many results were found as a result of the empirical study. And while there is something to state about the inability of the EU to cooperate on defence procurement for example, it is difficult to say how this affects the EU's ability to provide public value or how EU citizens experience something like that. However, when it comes to those that do talk about the civilian support for EU defence, the results are very clear. In general, it proved difficult to find in great detail to what extent the EU was able to succeed in the years before the war looking at the general goals of ‘security’ and ‘protecting EU values’. However, referring to the previous part on development programmes, political will and financial investments for example, this thesis finds that there seems to still be room for improvement on several sectors and the achievement of goals.

Public opinion

Mainly looking at the Eurobarometer, a collection of regularly cross-country opinion polls on EU topics, public support of EU citizens for more common defence and security policies had the support of 77% of all EU citizens between the 18th of January 2021 and the 14th of February 2022 (European Union, 2022). In other words, in the years and months before the war, EU citizens were looking very positively towards more EU defence cooperation. Indicating that EU cooperation defence is valued by a large part of the public in EU Member States.

But not only was 77% of all Europeans before the invasion in support of a CSDP, but every Member State individually saw a majority in favor within their borders as well (European Union, 2022). In other words, not only on an EU-level, but also on a national level was the majority of EU Member State populations in favor of more EU defence cooperation. According to an article by Schilde, Anderson and Garner (A more martial Europe? Public opinion, permissive consensus, and EU defence policy, 2019), this public support for EU defence cooperation may come from their understanding that the consequences and costs of defence are lower on the EU-level, than they are on the national level (Schilder, Anderson, & Garner, 2019). They conclude by saying their research found that the slow progress of defence cooperation at the EU-level is more due to the reluctance of the political elite (i.e., a lack of political will) rather than the reticence of European citizens towards cooperation (Schilder, Anderson, & Garner, 2019). This is interesting as it might indicate that, in combination to the earlier points and at least in the years before the Russian invasion, the EU's challenges to provide public value is less due to a lack of public desire for cooperation. Instead, it seems to be originating more out of the operational sector and legitimizing environment.

Perceived sense of security

In regards to the EU public's sense of (perceived) security, during the interviews almost all respondents indicated that there is at least a difference between the pre-invasion sense of security and the post. The respondents did not in great detail provide specifics too what degree, but most indicated that some change had taken place and that '*We as Europeans now realize that our security is not taken for granted, and that we somehow had to be reminded about that*' (Respondent 2, personal communication, 2023). It proved hard to indicate what exactly this meant for public value and what this sense of security looked like in the pre-war situation. It is safe to assume that the perceived sense of security among EU citizens however can differ, based on location, time, personal situations and amongst other factors.

In the following chapter, this research will discuss how the previously mentioned concepts and mediating variables seem to have been impacted or changed as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As mentioned earlier, the following sub-chapter will mainly discuss the most noticeable changes and trends in regards to the previous situation, rather than go into full detail on what EU defence cooperation currently looks like.

Post-invasion desk research (24th of February 2022 and onwards)

General results

Now that the findings of the pre-invasion situation have been mentioned and an outline of the situation on pre-war EU defence cooperation has been discussed, the most important results from the desk research in the post-invasion situation will be mentioned.

Legitimizing environment

When it comes to the legitimacy and support aspect of the strategic triangle this research found some interesting results. Most of these findings relate to changes in the political landscape. The main drivers being changes in political will towards more action in regards to EU defence cooperation, as well as changes to agenda setting abilities and the perceived threat that Member States feel.

Political debate

According to a report made by the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, EU defence is now on the political agenda more than ever, and the discussion for our strategic autonomy, or how the EU can sustain itself in its own security and defence needs, has never been greater (HCSS, 2023). In the words of one of the respondents, *“defence is currently high on the agenda, and I think that not only the public, but also on the political level this debate is more active than before”* (Respondent 4, personal communication, June 2023). The respondent also noted that this can be seen in the way political leaders discuss EU defence. She quoted the Dutch minister of defence by stating that: *“in a speech the day before Europe day, [the Dutch minister of Defence] wanted to get the EU defence ministers to meet together more often. That is something we normally wouldn't have heard off before the war”* (Respondent 4, personal communication, June 2023). In the words of another respondent, who seems to notice a sort of ‘wake-up’ call, he states that: *“We have been literally scared to death, we are currently even threatening with nuclear weapons. That didn't even happen during the Cold War (...) this turned the political*

debate hotter than ever before” (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023). Respondent also noticed this during his work. When asked about if he saw any changes in the political debate regarding EU defence, he stated that: *‘I’ve been to many parliamentary debates (...) but it is clear that they [the Dutch parliament] the debate has become more serious. And you can see that for example in the CDA¹, who recently proposed to move to the 2% NATO expenditure norm*” (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023)

So, looking at the answers of the respondents operating in the field, it definitely seems that there has been an increase in the level of political discussions in regards to EU defence. At least, all of them seem to some degree experience this in their work, or noticed this in any other way.

Political will

When it comes to political will, most respondents indicated that, while there seemed to be some improvement in regards to political will, they also had some reservations about ‘just’ political will being enough to improve on EU defence cooperation. When asked if Respondent 2 noticed if political will in regards to EU defence cooperation changed since the beginning of the war, the respondent stated: *‘Definitely, definitely, most countries have been showing huge willingness to cooperate. This [willingness] is undeniably huge within the European Union*” (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023). An article by the CSIS, while underlining that the EU still seems to be having some critical shortcomings, says that European nations have announced vast investment in their defence budgets and stated that this only happened because of burst of political will, (CSIS, 2022).

However, while there seems to be a sense of increased political will, some findings show that it depends on how this will affect EU defence cooperation. And some respondents have a reserved stance in regards to the increased level of political will. For example, when asked if and how an increase in political will might affect EU defence, respondent 3 states that: *‘There has definitely been an increase in action and political will (...) but how will we organize? What is our strategy? How will we make sure we can fend for ourselves? (...) This is drive by political, will. And I think that especially within Europe, at least in my experience, steps are slow and gradual and for every two steps we go forward, we always step one back*” (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023). So, the respondent seems to indicate that while he notices

¹ Christen Democratisch Appèl, one of the larger Dutch political parties.

an increase in political will towards EU defence cooperation, he also states that without a strategy or clear goal, steps will remain slow.

Perceived threat by Member States

As mentioned earlier in the sub-chapter on the political debate, respondent 3 indicated that Member States have been scared to death and saw that the Russian threat is now very real (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023). He added to this by saying that: *Russia, by means of this invasion, really put things on its head. This conflict and everything was of course brewing for a long time, but has pulled everything that was going on, with NATO, EU defence and threats into the light*” (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023). Respondent 5 said something similar. Stating that: *“For too long have EU Member States taken their security for granted, and I think that they are now starting to realize that this is not the case”* (Respondent 5, personal communication, June 2023). Adding to this is an answer from respondent 2, who underlined that the war in Ukraine already started in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea. He further noted that: *“That was the first wake-up call, causing the EU to take a different look at Russia. It didn’t affect our defence, but it did affect us politically. (...) We really became aware that Russia does form a threat to the security on our continent. (...) and while this happened before in The Donbas, Georgia and Abkhazia, the current situation is on such a large scale that it shocked everybody”* (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023). Overall, it can be stated that, at least in comparison to the years before the war, (most) Member States have experienced an increased sense of threat to their security.

Political environment

Looking at how the political environment for EU defence looks now, findings show that it has become an increased factor of discussion, and next to subjects such as climate change. While most respondents stated that, while the political environment is now such that actual changes for the good of EU defence can be made, they also have their reservations about the decisiveness of the EU. Respondent 5 had the following to say: *“Member States are very limited in their common security policy (CSDP). Of course, now with authoritarian regimes in Hungary, it shows how one state can limit what is left of any effectiveness of foreign security policy.* (Respondent 5, personal communication, June 2023). Respondent 2 noted that there is indeed a case of a ‘window-of-opportunity’ for bringing positive change to EU defence cooperation, but that the question is if and how the EU is able to accomplish this, before the topic falls off the political radar (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023). This same

argument was found in a 2023 article by CSIS. It states that, while the momentum for the EU to embed cooperation and fix its fragmentation seems to be here, the question is if the EU is able to hold on to it (CSIS, 2023). And because the future is uncertain, the same applies for the political environment too bring forth change (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023). However, they note that, the political environment was so shook up and that whatever will be made or implemented “*will not erode. I think this will remain, because it is not just an immediate realization because of this war. Something definitely changed politically, and to some degree amongst the public*” (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023). Finally, an example from a change in the political environment comes from EU Member State Denmark. According to a Danish researcher, Denmark has “*seen a fundamental change of direction on one of Denmark’s key political questions. Namely the end of the State’s almost thirty year opt-out of EU security and defence matters*” (Moser, 2022). And while Denmark is just one example, at least in a sense from a political side, some major historical changes seem to have been broken.

Laws and regulations

When it comes to changes in laws and regulations, no major or noticeable changes were found in the empirical desk research. The same was true for the interviews. When the respondents were asked if they found any major initiatives or changes towards defence cooperation (see appendix, questionnaire, question 3), in none of the interviews was the respondent able to provide or state that they noticed anything they would describe as impactful in this regard.

Agenda setting

In regards to agenda setting, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and EU defence have been major headlines in both politics as well as amongst the public, indicating that the effort to keep this topic on the agenda has been successful. However, there are also articles that tie in to the previous point on the political environment (Respondent 2, Respondent 5, statement on political environment). Respondent 4 also made a statement in regards to agenda setting and the financial investments that are needed for EU defence cooperation. She stated that: “*If you look at the financial investments, you need to keep EU defence on the agenda in order to keep the support of the public. So, you need to keep EU defence on the agenda and in order to justify those investments*” (Respondent 4, personal communication, June 2023). While the topic seems to still be high on the political agenda, the question seems to be if the EU can make use of this momentum and actually turn this attention into actionable points and strategy.

Operational capabilities

Financial investments

Looking at the expected mediating variable of financial investments, this research finds that indeed a lot has happened in regards to investments in operational capabilities. At least, on paper, this research finds that many EU Member States have been heavily investing in their operational capabilities since the start of the invasion. One major example is the Germany's historical pledge to invest billions in its defence, something that has not happened since WW2. On top of that, it now seems that almost all of the EU Member States have pledged to reach the 2% NATO mark in spending in terms of GDP (UK Parliament, 2022). This is also something Respondent 5 noted: *“One major shift is that Germany is increasing their defence budget, which is I think, since it is the first time since WW2 that they really have done so. And the same applies for other Member States and their defence budgets”* (Respondent 5, personal communication, June 2023). However, besides these investments, most empirical studies and respondents do state that, investments or pledges alone do not automatically mean cooperation. And while most authors agree that these investments are a good change for the best, looking at the past (and figures 4 and 5), an increase in investment does not directly mean an increase in cooperation or efficient spending (EDA, 2022). Not only this, but according to the CSIS (2023) spending on collaborative projects does not seem to be a priority for Member States. Respondent 3 somewhat agreed with the above, stating that: *“Our own defence for example, now we have tons of money being made available (...) and one of those departments get money and they are told we are going to spend money again. Yes, but on what? The Navy want ships, the Airforce wants-35's. Do we innovate? Or just buy of the shelf again? Do we produce ourselves or not? You need strategy for that* (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).

What is interesting is that, despite their previously being a debate on the goals and how money needed to be spend, there seems to be a clearer picture resonating from the EU on how capability gaps need to be filled. With the implementation of the Defence Joint Procurement Task Force, the EU aims at filling the short-term procurement needs of EU Member States in light of the Ukrainian conflict (European Commission, 2022). On top of that, the EU made €500 million available for incentivizing Member States to address defence needs in a collaborative way (EU Commission, 2022). So at least in some way, there seems to be steps taken towards EU defence cooperation in regards to financial investments.

Development programmes

Building on the previous section, the same seems to be true in regards to development programmes. While there were already a lot of programmes and initiatives introduced by the EU with the goal of increasing EU defence cooperation, some new ones were introduced too. One of these proposed initiatives is the European Defence Capability Consortia, which is designed at joint procurement for defence capabilities of participating Member States, which will benefit from VAT exemptions, with the goal of making cooperation more attractive (European Commission, 2022). Something that can be of interest now that many EU Member States have been donating much of their own military supplies to the Ukrainian cause and will need to be replenished as a result of the war. With this initiative, the EU aims to build upon previous programmes, such as the aforementioned PESCO, CARD and the EDF initiatives. However, not only were new programmes introduced, on the 12th of December 2022, the European Council agreed on increasing the financial ceiling of the European Peace Facility (EPF) by €2 billion in 2023 and, if need be, with another €3.5 billion until 2027 (European Council, 2023). Then again on March 14th 2023, the Council again decided to increase the EPF ceiling to a total of €7.797 billion (in current prices) until 2027 (European Council, 2023). An increase of €2.287 billion, in comparison to the pre-invasion EPF fund, with an extra €3.5 billion available if need be. It is unclear if these increases are a direct result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but at least it can be said that the EU has been rapidly expanding on their initiatives in promoting EU defence cooperation. Another initiative, or at least a response initiative to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in the words of the European Council itself, has been the reiteration of the development of a EU Hybrid Toolbox (European Council, 2023). The goal of this toolbox is: *‘to bring together all relevant actors, policies and instruments to counter hybrid threats’* (European Council, 2023). However, the statement also states that the responsibility to countering hybrid threats still lies with the Member States (European Council, 2023).

And there still some empirical findings also still indicate that these programmes, while good on paper, might not have had the desired effect or unlocked their full potential. According to Respondent 3, these initiatives still seem to ‘reactive’. When asked if the respondent had noted any interesting initiatives as a result of the invasion, he stated that: *‘You see that the EU has been setting up some development programmes. Especially in regards to weapon deliveries to Ukraine. But it is all too reactive in my opinion’* (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023). The respondent then continued by saying that: *‘We see some movement, but it is all very slow. What is next? What are our goals? Maybe a little expansion of the EU? But all*

of it is not very royal. And that is due too the strucutre of the EU. There always has to be consensus” (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023). However, although sometimes inefficient according to respondents and other research in both the pre- and post-war situation, some steps, at least in terms of development initiatives, seem to have been made.

Military equipment and personnel

In regards to military equipment and personnel, there have been many changes as well since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The most noticeable is that, because of the Russian invasion, the pool of EU military equipment has seen a large decrease. This is mainly due to the EUs aid to Ukraine, which has been increasingly growing since the start of the war. What started with small of the shelf equipment such as body armor, has now turned into heavy artillery and tanks. However, with these increasing demands from Ukraine and the aid the EU is providing, these stocks will eventually need to be replenished to not cause any problems to the EUs own defence capabilities. According to thinktank CSIS, the tremendous flow of military equipment to Ukraine has caused the continent’s stockpiles of military equipment to be running low (CSIS, 2022). And with this, the authors also state that, because of the increasingly expensive equipment that is being send, the increases in defence spending in Europe (see sub-chapter on financial investments) are unlikely to be enough to both modernize the EUs already existing military woes as well as aid Ukraine (CSIS, 2023). And this can be an implication. For example, almost all respondents identified the need for the EU to ‘keep its own pants up’ (Respondents 1,2,3,4, personal communication). Respondent 3 stated that: *‘You need to produce your own equipment and train your own personnel. All according to NATO standards. (...) it’s not rocket science; you have to do that yourself. We have to make a changeover, not only buy of the shelf and start producing ourselves. We have to be able to keep our own pants up. Both for our own security and that of others. Only then can you be a tantamount partner [to NATO]’* (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).

Public value

Achievement of goals + ability to provide more net value

In terms of the EUs ability to achieve its goals, as with the pre-invasion situation, it was found to be difficult to see to what extend the EU is able to achieve its goals, in the form of providing security for its citizens and protecting European values. With such a large number of developments taking place it proofed difficult to pin point exactly what the current balance of net public value and the achievement of EU goals looks like. However, it can be safely said

that these goals might never be met, as they are relative to each EU Member State and its citizens, and it is difficult to indicate when ‘European values’ are protected. There are however other measures that were found, that display the EU citizens appreciation and opinion towards EU defence, as can be seen in the following sub-chapter on public opinion.

Public opinion

In regards to public opinion on EU defence cooperation, there were some interesting findings. The most major of these again comes from the Eurobarometer. In the Eurobarometer from June 2023 a very clear support from EU citizens towards EU defence cooperation was shown. In fact, findings show that 80% of EU citizens find that cooperation in defence matters at the EU level should be increased (*European Commission, 2023*). Looking at the pre-war situation, the percentage of support for a common defence has remained stable at 77% (*European Commission, 2023*). Looking back at the 80% of approval, not only is this an average, but EU defence cooperation is now a top two priority in all 27 Member States according to the barometer (*European Commission, 2023*). The barometer also reveals another interesting detail, showing that 77% of all Member State citizens agree that coordinated purchases of military equipment should be improved (see sub-chapter on military equipment and personnel) (*European Commission, 2023*). Finally, looking at EU citizens opinion towards defence spending, two thirds of EU citizens in the post-war situation agree that more money should be spent on defence in the EU, with a total of 66% (*European Commission, 2023*). Respondent 2 noted during the interview that one of the challenges to European defence could be that EU citizens support for EU defence and aid to Ukraine would eventually dry up (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023). However, looking at the previously mentioned numbers, this does not seem to be the case as of now.

While it is impossible to take the opinion of every EU citizen into account, these numbers do show a very large support on most concepts of the strategic triangle, as well as a large support for more EU defence cooperation.

Perceived sense of security

Just as in the pre-invasion situation, it still proved difficult to indicate how the war has affected the public's perceived sense of security. Looking at the previous sub-chapter on perceived sense of security, one respondent already stated that the war has made us aware that we cannot take our security for granted (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023). However, during

both the desk research and the interviews no definitive findings were made in regards to the publics perceived sense of security and its effect on public value.

Comparative analyses

This chapter will briefly discuss the results from the previous chapter and what this means for the earlier in this research created sub-questions. Mainly, this chapter will provide a short summary of the results and compare the pre- and post invasion situations and how the Russian invasion has impacted the three key concepts: legitimizing environment, operational capabilities and public value.

The results of this thesis show that the Russian invasion has had some far-reaching implications in both positive and negative ways for EU defence cooperation. To give a clear overview of the results and the conclusions that can be drawn for this research, this thesis will first answer the previously mentioned sub-questions, after which the main research question will be answered in the following chapter.

- 1. How has the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted the EU's legitimizing environment and political decision-making towards EU defence cooperation?*

This thesis finds that in the years before the Russian invasion, the EU political landscape and general legitimizing environment was not ideal in order to improve EU defence cooperation. Both respondents and several researchers characterize the pre-war situation by means of a lack of decision-making, and Member States generally looking towards NATO for their defence and security needs. This was mainly due to the perceived threat to Member States as not being of a single cause, with EU Member States often even working against defence cooperation. Not only that, but there seemed to be too wide of a divergence among Member States and their defence needs to cooperate. Research also found that in the years before the war EU defence was not high on the agenda, and in order to break this cycle of non-cooperation a long term and sustained effort would be needed.

The Russian invasion however has brought a large change in this aspect. This thesis found that in comparison to the years before the war, EU defence cooperation is not higher on the agenda than ever. This can also be seen by quotes from leaders such as the Dutch minister of defence and the breaking of several Member States with their opposition to EU defence questions such

as Denmark and Germany, with German chancellor Olaf Scholz even calling this a ‘Zeitenwende’ for European defence. There also seems to be an increase in perceived security threat among Member States, with several respondents claiming that the invasion has definitely put things on its head and has awoken the EU that a threat to their defence is indeed very real. However, both the answers respondents and empirical findings show that they have reservations to the legitimizing environment and state that with political will alone, few things will really change in regards to EU defence cooperation. The underline the need for a clear strategy and the need for the EU to capitalize on this ‘window-of-opportunity’ and state that if the EU does not, we could be going back to the same situation for EU defence as before the war.

2. *How has the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted the EU’s operational capabilities among Member States and their contribution towards the EU?*

In regards to the EU’s operational capabilities this thesis has made some interesting findings. In the years before the war, according to both respondents and empirical findings, money destined for operational capabilities was not being spent efficiently. In fact, according to an article by the EDA, almost 80% of all defence expenditures are still being spent nationally and not on an EU level. And while there certainly seemed to be an increase in financial investments, almost all of it was being spent nationally, which caused defence expenditure to be far away from the EU’s goal of 35% joint Member State procurement. In order to counter this, the EU already had several initiatives and other programmes in place such as PESCO, CARD and the EDF. However, because of differing preferences for operational capabilities among Member States, these States often prioritized their own national interests above those of on an EU-level. Not only that, but Member State preferences for operational capabilities and procurement plans often seemed difficult to align. This in turn resulted in EU Member States joint procurement efforts often resulting in cheaper, low-technological of the shelf equipment purchases from partners such as the US, rather than producing our own or buying more technical equipment. One pre-war article even stated that these problems were so deep rooted, that a ‘hard-trigger’, in the form of an event or shock, would be needed in order overcome these challenges.

So how has the Russian invasion impacted the pre-war situation? First of all, it is clear that many Member States have continued the trend of increasing defence expenditures, but at a much larger scale. With 20 EU Member States, who are also a part of NATO now having

pledged to reach the 2% GDP spending mark, at least on paper, it seems that financial increases have definitely been made from a Member States side. But that is not all, while there were already development programmes for EU defence cooperation in place, these have been expanded upon and new ones have been introduced, with an example being the Toolbox designed to counter the EUs defence fragmentation.

But while these changes seem promising, both respondents and several authors have also expressed mild concerns, stating that financial investments seem mostly reactive and alone will likely not be enough to solve the EUs operational challenges. They stated that a strategy is needed and the EU should also try and move away from the dependence on others and start producing more equipment of their own.

3. How has the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted public value from a defence and security perspective?

In regards to the results on public value, it is hard to say how well the EU is able to achieve its goal of providing security for its EU citizens and protect 'European values'. However, there seems to be a clear consensus in both the pre- and post-war situation in regards to EU citizens demand for more EU defence cooperation. Not only was, leading up to the Russian invasion, 77% of EU citizens in favour of more common defence and security policies at the EU level, but this number remained after more than a year-and-a-half of fighting. Not only that, but documents from 2023 show that 80% of EU citizens are now also in favour for an increase in defence matters on an EU level. And not only is this the case in the EU in general, but in every Member State individually. We can therefore conclude that the public has, and still does value EU defence cooperation in both the pre- and post-invasion world.

Conclusion, reflection and recommendations

This research had the goal of finding out how the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has impacted EU defence cooperation. In order to do so, this research tried to answer the question: *“What are the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the EU’s organizational strategy towards defence cooperation?”*. In order to provide an answer, a qualitative, holistic, longitudinal case study method was used, in which both empirical findings in the form of official statements, news and research papers were used. By seeing how the invasion affected three key concepts around EU defence cooperation: the legitimizing environment, operational capabilities and public value.

This thesis finds that, while public demand for more EU defence cooperation has remained largely the same and has even slightly increased in a response to the Russian invasion, the largest changes and challenges resonate from the EU’s abilities to use its operational capabilities and legitimizing environment in providing public value. With a large amount of EU citizens (80%) in favour of more defence cooperation at the EU-level, this research finds that it is up to the legitimizing environment, and with that mainly the EU Member States to push for more defence cooperation. And while the EU itself has pledged and expanded on its own programmes designed at promoting cooperation, historical challenges, such as Member States prioritizing their own national interests, a lack of threat and different preferences have stood in the way of defence cooperation. However, this research also finds that both respondents and empirical findings indicate that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has indeed impacted the European defence landscape in historical ways. With Member States pledging to increase their operational capabilities, historical political decisions being made on the national level as well as respondents indicating that it has even impacted their personal work. But this research also finds that according to respondents, public opinion and other documents that it is now up to the politicians and Member States to capitalize on this ‘window-of-opportunity’ and finally overcome the hurdles that have hindered EU defence cooperation for so long. And while many Member States have pledged more financial investments towards their militaries and are now more aware about their own security as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, results show that with investments and pledged alone the EU might as easily slide back into its former fragmented defence situation.

To conclude, this thesis finds that, while the Russian invasion of Ukraine has had a resounding effect on the future of EU defence cooperation, it is up to Member States to turn

the political commitments resulting from this invasion into legal ones and create an atmosphere of cooperation, not fragmentation. And while the EU as an institution can provide the tools that assist in providing more defence cooperation and has been improving and expanding on those tools, it is up to the Member States as the legitimizing factor to actually perform the work that is needed and dedicate themselves towards the common goal of providing security to its citizens and protect European values. And this seems to have been the most major challenge historically as well as currently. And while the war has had a profound and historical impact on talks for more EU defence cooperation. With a much better alignment among the three concepts of the strategic triangle, it is up to the Member States to change their organizational strategy and capitalize on this terrible, but historical event for EU defence and create a true ‘Zeitenwende’

Reflection

By seeing how the invasion affected three key concepts around EU defence cooperation: the legitimizing environment, operational capabilities and public value, this thesis has made some interesting findings. After analyzing the results, it seems that not the public’s demand for more EU defence cooperation has been the hurdle towards EU defence cooperation, but mostly the political side. And while the EU has been trying to make major strides towards EU defence cooperation, these incentives have not yet been as effective as they could have been. In general, the results generally match the expectations at the beginning of this research, but this research has provided a far deeper understanding on the EU defence landscape. By using Moore’s (2013) strategic triangle framework for this research, not only was this thesis able to get a better insight into how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has impacted EU defence cooperation, but it also showed that this framework can be applied to the case of EU defence. And while, the results of this research mostly match those of the literature study and previous empirical work, this thesis can offer a more updated view on the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the case of EU defence cooperation, and add to a new array of literature resonating from this war. Finally, in regards to the towards scientific and societal relevance, this research largely achieved that which was stated in the introduction of this research. To provide a better insight in how a large scale war on European soil such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine can impact Member States responses and the EU’s organizational strategy. And while it has shown that conditions are indeed favorable for defence cooperation, with the possibility to create more net public value as a result of that, it has also added to already existing work that underline the need for a clear strategy and political action. Even in a time of historical significance.

Limitations

But while, this research might offer a small step towards more research on EU defence literature, this research also faced some limitations. One of which was the earlier mentioned difficulty in finding both fitting as well as available respondents for this research. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine being such a developing topic, it was hard to find people working in the field who were both knowledgeable about the subject, but also able to participate in a 45-to-60 minute interview. Also, because the case for EU defence and defence cooperation is such a large case with many other variables coming into play, it is impossible for this research to take all of these variables into account. And while for this thesis, the mediating variables that were selected seem to certainly provide a decent insight into the EU defence landscape from a strategic variable perspective, there are more variables at play. As mentioned earlier, since the case of EU defence is such a complex one, being tied in with both national and global politics, taking just the mediating variables of this research into account would certainly not allow in understanding the entire system, history and future of EU defence cooperation. For example, one of the mediating variables that was not taken into account into this research, but which several respondents seemed to point towards to, is the situation in regards to the EUs own military industrial complex. Some stated that the EU should be able to produce their own weaponry and equipment for example, which could result in improved operational capabilities and cooperation. This variable could therefore be of a mediating nature to the concept of operational capabilities for example, but was not taken into account in this thesis. And while this is just an example of a possible mediating variable that the author found during the course of this research, it is very likely that more might exist that influence the strategic triangle framework as used in this research.

Recommendations on policy and further research

Finally, because the Russian invasion of Ukraine is an ongoing conflict, with many rapid developments, some parts of this thesis might not be relevant at the time of publication. It is therefore recommended that other authors interested in the case of EU defence and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, keeping adding to the literature or possibly even produce an updated version of a research such as this one. Also, if possible future research could also dive deeper into what mediating variables might play a role on each of the three concepts as discussed in this research, as mentioned earlier, the case of EU defence is a complex one, with many relevant aspects. As mentioned earlier, this research found that most respondents who participated in

this research found that the role of the European industrial complex can or will play a major part in future defence cooperation. This for example would be an interesting variable to include in possible future research. Also, because this thesis finds that different Member States have different preferences towards EU defence cooperation in the past, with their own national interests sometimes standing in the way of more EU defence cooperation, it might be of interests to looking at the legitimizing environment from the perspective of the EU Member States individually. In other words, it might be of interest for future research to gain a deeper insight in how Member States national interest and size can serve as a mediating variable towards the legitimizing environment or EU defence cooperation as a whole.

Furthermore, this thesis would also like to propose some recommendations for EU policy makers and Member States. The first one being that, looking at the results of this research, it seems wise that the EU, because of the often vagueness of some of its goals, will try and create a strategy with actionable and measurable goals for both EU Member States as well as for itself. In other words, this thesis recommends that the EU improve on its organizational strategy, by deciding how it will allocate the newly available resources (such as financial investments) and position itself in the market of the defence industry. By creating a roadmap for the EU and its Member States, these traditional larger hurdles for EU defence cooperation, might be broken down into smaller steps, leading to smaller success in the short-term, but possible major gains in the long-term. Not only would this allow a piecemeal approach to more defence cooperation, with possible accountability creation among Member States for those who are not able to reach those goals. Finally, it could also create an atmosphere of cooperation if Member States are not tasked with finding out themselves who should do what and contribute to what extent, which would not only improve cooperation, but could also eliminate free-riding behavior among Member State contributions.

To conclude, because of the voluntary nature of participation in most EU defence agreements, EU Member States are not required to participate or cooperate if they don't want to. Looking at the historical impact the Russian invasion of Ukraine has had on EU defence, with more Member States now aware that their security cannot be taken for granted. Its citizens now more than ever asking for more defence cooperation. And the legitimizing environment now more resolute to work towards more defence cooperation since the Cold War, the EU and its Members States should turn their organizational strategy into actionable points and legally binding resolutions, capitalizing on this terrible war and launching EU defence cooperation forward for future generations.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Introduction

- Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.
- I want to please remind you that the interview will be recorded, but that the recording will only be used for the intent of backlogging and coding. You, the respondent will remain fully anonymous.

First of all, I would like to start off with a small introduction of myself, and again indicate the intent of this interview, the theme and goal of this research.

- Name, purpose, institution, point of research.
- Ask you some questions based on the topics and literature, and would like to hear you opinion and expertise on the matter.

First of all,

1. In your opinion, how has the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted EU defence? Are there any notable changes or shifts you have observed?
2. In your opinion, what are the key challenges the Russian invasion of Ukraine has posed to EU defence, and how has this affected the overall security landscape in Europe?
3. Have you observed any specific initiatives or measures taken by the EU in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the past year? Can you elaborate on their effectiveness or limitations?
4. Since the Russian invasion, more countries have pledged to increase their defence spending (so financial resources) and other military capabilities. What is your opinion on this and what impact could this have on EU defence cooperation?
5. Are there any specific areas or aspects of defence cooperation within the EU that have been directly affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in your opinion?

- a. And if so, how have they been impacted, and what are the potential long-term consequences?
6. Do you think there has been a political change, both nationally or internationally, in defence policies or strategies as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine?
 - a. Do you think there has been a change in political will when it comes to defence cooperation within the EU?
7. Do you think that there has been a change when it comes to the support for EU defence cooperation, either from a public or political point of view?
8. How has the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted the EU's relationship with NATO in the realm of defence cooperation? Are there any notable changes in your opinion?
 - a. Do you see more cooperation or friction? Or something else entirely?
9. In your opinion, what role do you think EU defence should play in regards to NATO going forward?
10. Are you familiar with the term strategic autonomy?

If so, what role, if any, has the Russian invasion of Ukraine played in shaping the EU's strategic autonomy agenda? Do you think it accelerated or altered the EU's aspirations for independent defence capabilities?
11. In light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, do you anticipate any significant policy shifts or developments in EU defence cooperation in the future? What factors do you think might drive those changes?
12. Based on your expertise, what recommendations would you offer to enhance EU defence cooperation going forward and are there any specific areas that require immediate attention or improvement?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Quotes by respondents

Quotes respondent 1:

When asked about how they see political changes in EU defence in their work:

- *“What wasn’t normal at all a few months ago, is now completely normal”* (Respondent 1, personal communication, May 2023).

When asked about the impact of the war on defence cooperation:

- *“I do think that it will have great consequences for the way we cooperate on an operational level, because we what can be possible under pressure, that is remarkable in my opinion”* (Respondent 1, personal communication, May 2023).

When asked about if they consider the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a turning point in EU defence cooperation:

- *“I think you can surely say that, also in this moment [the Russian invasion of Ukraine] this will give a further push towards cooperation. What form this will take however remains to be seen”* (Respondent 1, personal communication, May 2023).

When asked about their expectations for EU defence cooperation in the future:

- *“This [the Russian invasion of Ukraine] will definitely lead to more defence cooperation and I can hardly imagine it going back to the situation as it was before. But I do think that, already, you start to see some examples in which the national interests of EU Member States start to show (...) we are taking a step forward, but how big that step will be remains to be seen”* (Respondent 1, personal communication, May 2023).

When asked about their opinion on EU and NATO relations and cooperation:

- *“I think that there is close cooperation between the EU and NATO, but that is has to come from away, and that it is difficult for those two organizations to work together”* (Respondent 1, personal communication, May 2023).
- *“I also think that there are some Member States who have their own national opinions, and that makes it fundamentally difficult to take big steps in there”* (Respondent 1, personal communication, May 2023).

- *“This is really a personal opinion but, what I also find interesting is that during that war, you see somewhat of an informal division of roles between NATO and the EU. So, NATO is really there in the form of a hard security of the alliances’ territories (...) but at the same time, you see that in terms of support towards Ukraine NATO is far more cautious in comparison to the European Union”* (Respondent 1, personal communication, May 2023).

Quotes respondent 2:

When asked about how the EUs look to defence and security has changed, and how this has impacted the public:

- *“We as Europeans now realize that our security is not taken for granted, and that we somehow had to be reminded about that”* (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023).

When asked about how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has impacted political willingness to cooperate on defence:

- *“Definitely, definitely, most countries have been showing huge willingness to cooperate. This [willingness] is undeniably huge within the European Union”* (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023).

When asked about the impact of the war on the EU, the debate on defence and the effects on EU defence policy:

- *“That was the first wake-up call, causing the EU to take a different look at Russia. It didn’t affect our defence, but it did politically. (...) We really became aware that Russia does form a threat to the security on our continent. (...) and while this happened before in The Donbas, Georgia and Abkhazia, the current situation is on such a large scale that it shocked everybody”* (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023).

On the political environment and how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has impacted the political environment for change.

- *“Whatever will be build up will not erode. I think this will remain, because it is not just an immediate realization because of this war. Something definitely changed politically,*

and to some degree amongst the public” (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023).

When asked about how the war could challenge public support for EU defence and what other challenges might be:

- *One of the challenges could be that support could be drying up because there is no longer enough political will in the respective populations to continue that support. And I will give that as one of the biggest challenges: how? How can you ensure that our support for Ukraine is also possible in the long term? Both the support of the population and the practical side of the story” (Respondent 2, personal communication, May 2023).*

Quotes respondent 3:

When asked about their views on the disbalance between the EU defence expenditure and EDA report on procurement:

- *“ That is a very good example, just looking at our own defence, we started to rush for that 2% norm. We really started investing again in our own defence, but on what? And the French for example, they have a more supporting view of the EU, but they of course have their own economy to think about. So that is where something is definitely wrong in my opinion. And I think the US gains from this.” (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).*
- *“Buying low-technology items, from a short-term standpoint seems to be the trend in Europe. This is where the EU is good at, with the US serving as a supplier, because it’s easier, while neglecting our own developments and defence industry” (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).*

When asked about their views on the political debate surrounding the Russian invasion of Ukraine:

- *“ We have been literally scared to death; we are currently even threatening with nuclear weapons. That didn’t even happen during the Cold War (...) this turned the political debate hotter than ever before” (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).*
- *“I’ve been to many parliamentary debates (...) but it is clear that they [the Dutch parliament] the debate has become more serious. And you can see that for example in*

the CDA², who recently proposed to move to the 2% NATO expenditure norm”
(Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).

When asked about their view on how a change in political will could have affected EU defence cooperation since the war:

- *‘There has definitely been an increase in action and political will (...) but how will we organize? What is our strategy? How will we make sure we can fend for ourselves? (...) This is drive by political, will. And I think that especially within Europe, at least in my experience, steps are slow and gradual and for every two steps we go forward, we always step one back’* (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).

When asked about what affect the Russian invasion of Ukraine had on the EU and its relation with NATO:

- *‘Russia, by means of this invasion, really put things on its head. This conflict and everything was of course brewing for a long time, but has pulled everything that was going on, with NATO, EU defence and threats into the light’* (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).

When asked about certain initiatives the respondent saw from the EU in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine:

- *‘We see some movement, but it is all very slow. What is next? What are our goals? Maybe a little expansion of the EU? But all of it is not very royal. And that due too the strucutre of the EU. There always has too consensus’* (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).
- *‘You see that the EU has been setting up some development programmes. Especially in regards to weapon deliveries to Ukraine. But it is all too reactive in my opinion’* (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).

² Christen Democratisch Appèl, one of the larger Dutch political parties.

When asked about how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has affected the EU's defence and operational capabilities:

- *"You need to produce your own equipment and train your own personnel. All according to NATO standards. (...) it's not rocket science; you have to do that yourself. We have to make a changeover; not only buy off the shelf and start producing ourselves. We have to be able to keep our own pants up. Only then can you be a tantamount partner [to NATO]"* (Respondent 3, personal communication, June 2023).

Quotes respondent 4:

When asked about the political will, agenda setting and their view on the future:

- *"Defence is currently high on the agenda, and I think that not only the public, but also on the political level this debate is more active than before"* (Respondent 4, personal communication, June 2023).
- *"In a speech the day before Europe day, [the Dutch minister of Defence] wanted to get the EU defence ministers to meet together more often. That is something we normally wouldn't have heard off before the war"* (Respondent 4, personal communication, June 2023).

When asked about agenda setting and the politics role of agenda setting for public support.

- *"If you look at the financial investments, you need to keep EU defence on the agenda in order to keep the support of the public. So, you need to keep EU defence on the agenda and in order to justify those investments"* (Respondent 4, personal communication, June 2023).

Quotes respondent 5:

When asked about how the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacted EU defence and security in their opinion:

- *"For too long have EU Member States taken their security for granted, and I think that they are now starting to realize that this is not the case"* (Respondent 5, personal communication, June 2023).

When asked about what else they noticed as major changes:

- *“One major shift is that Germany is increasing their defence budget, which is I think, since it is the first time since WW2 that they really have done so. And the same applies for other Member States and their defence budgets”* (Respondent 5, personal communication, June 2023).

Om one of the key challenges to EU defence cooperation:

- *“Member States are very limited in their common security policy (CSDP). Of course, now with authoritarian regimes in Hungary, it shows how one state can limit what is left of any effectiveness of foreign security policy.* (Respondent 5, personal communication, June 2023).
- *“So, the common sense and direction of the Member States is not there, and therefore is limiting the effectiveness it could have.* (Respondent 5, personal communication, June 2023).