



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The application of the WPR framework on the 2023 German Defence Policy

Wit, Cas de

Citation

Wit, C. de. (2024). *The application of the WPR framework on the 2023 German Defence Policy*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4172153>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Bachelor – Security Studies

The application of the WPR framework on the 2023 German Defence Policy

Cas de Wit

S3318699

Supervisor: Dr. Malte Riemann

Research area: 9

Word count: 6050

Date: 29-5-2024

Abstract

In this thesis the 2023 German Defence Policy is analysed by using the “What’s the Problem Represented to be?” (WPR) framework developed by Bacchi. The research question that was asked is: “What contexts that make up the *Defence Policy 2023* does the WPR framework reveal?” The application of the WPR framework to a defence policy is something that has never been done before. By using this WPR framework there was made an attempt to uncover the contexts that have led to this shift in policy. This was done by analysing the German Defence Policy by using three questions from the WPR framework. These questions analysed the following: the underlying contexts that shape the policy, presuppositions and assumptions underlying the representation, and the processes through which this representation has emerged. It was found that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was the main turning point for the shift in policy. Other factors that were found are: United States troops being stationed in Germany, the cultural trauma following the Second World War, the lack of effectiveness of their diplomacy, and also the idea of becoming the backbone of European security. The contexts that were found that shaped the new defence policy are historical, geopolitical and also socio-political.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Theoretical framework	6
3. Literature review	8
4. Methodology	9
i. WPR	9
ii. Policy	10
iii. Analysis	10
5. Analysis of the German Defence Policy	12
i. Sub question 1	12
ii. Sub question 2	13
iii. Sub question 3	14
6. Results	17
7. Conclusion	20
8. Reflection	22
9. Bibliography	25

Introduction

Since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, war has returned all-out war has returned in Europe (Nato, 2024). Germany has seen this war as a turning point in their role as the backbone of deterrence and collective defence in Europe (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 6). Based on this turning point or *Zeitenwende*, as it is called by Germany, the German ministry of defence decided to write *Defence Policy 2023*. As described by the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 7), the goal of this policy is for the Bundeswehr (German Army) to be operational, warfighting capable, and also fit for the future. In this thesis there will be taken a look at this policy and using three of the six questions from the What is the Problem Represented to be (WPR) framework, there will be made an attempt to find the underlying contexts that shape this policy. According to Bacchi (2012, p. 21), the WPR framework is a tool or a resource that can be used to critically evaluate policies. This is done through six questions. In this thesis the decision was made to use three of the six questions. The three questions that will be used are as written by Bacchi (2012, p. 21): “What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?, What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the ‘problem’? How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?” The research question that was formulated with the WPR framework and the German defence policy kept in mind is: “What contexts that make up the *Defence Policy 2023* does the WPR framework reveal?” In order to answer this research question, the research question will be split into three sub questions. These sub questions are: “What's the context represented to be that set in the German Defence Policy?”, “What presuppositions and assumptions underpin this representation of the context that made up the German Defence Policy?”, and “How has the representation of the context that shaped the German Defence Policy come about?” This research has societal and academic impact. It has academic impact because it is the first time that the WPR framework will be applied to a

defence policy. This makes it important to academics, because it can be used as a reference for future use of the WPR framework on defence policies. It has societal impact because it has the ability to influence policymakers. It can also alter the view of German people on war. This is especially important since war is such a difficult subject to the Germans since the Second World War (Verbovszky, 2024, p. 283). Some of the answers that were found to the research question, and will be explored later in this thesis are: the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Germany's cultural trauma since the Second World War, United States troops being stationed in Germany, the lack of effectiveness of diplomacy, and also the idea of being the backbone of European security. All these ideas will be explored in the analysis part of this thesis. The rest of the thesis will be structured in the following way: the thesis will start with a theoretical framework and a literature review. In this part the WPR framework will be explored and explained from how it works to how it can be used. In the literature review there will be taken a look at the literature that will be used to answer the research question. This literature will provide a basis for what is to come. After which a methodology section will explain how the research was conducted and how it can be replicated. This part is split into different sections to explain how to use the WPR framework, how the policy was used and also how the analysis can be done. After this part there will be an analysis. In this analysis there will be taken a look at the German Defence Policy and also the literature from the literature review. The analysis will follow the structure from the sub questions. In the results section following the analysis, there will be made an attempt to tie everything together. This will be done by synthesizing the different answers to the sub questions. Following this there will be a conclusion in which the research question will be answered. Lastly, there will be a reflection in which there will be taken a look at potential limitations, the societal and academic impact and also the strengths and weaknesses of this paper. In this part there will also be taken a look at potential future research.

Theoretical framework

In this part of the theoretical framework, the “What’s the problem represented to be?” (WPR) framework will be explained. According to Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 13) the WPR framework can lead to a way of thinking that is different from the commonly accepted governing practices and categories. It is a framework that can be used for all kinds of research, as said by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 14) the WPR framework can be used for “sociology, social work, anthropology, cultural studies, and human geography.” The WPR framework challenges the common view that governments only solve pre-existing problems. Instead, the WPR framework argues that they actively shape and define problems, by creating them as specific kinds of issues (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 14). The underlying goal of the WPR framework is according to Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 14) to make the politics that shape these kinds of problems visible. The most important term of the WPR framework is “problematization” as explained by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 16): “The word can be used in two ways, either to signal a form of critical analysis, putting something into question, or to refer to the products of governmental practices, that is, how issues are problematized.” According to Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, 16) problem-solving is a recurring mantra, they argue that the dominant view is that the government sees a problem and solves it. With the WPR framework, Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 16) try to challenge this view. They argue that policies do not solve problems that currently exist, policies create new problems that exist as particular sorts of problems. It is also argued by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 16) that the way in which these new problems are shaped, influences lives and worlds. It is thus said by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 16) that: “the critical task, therefore, becomes interrogating the particular problematizations within policies.” It is argued by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 16): “that what we propose to do about something indicates what we think needs to change and hence what we think the “problem” is.” When this is applied to policies,

it can mean that policies define specific problems, because policies suggest changes (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 16). An example of this given by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 16-17) is that when mandatory exercise is introduced for children to combat obesity, the problem can be seen as children's inactivity. However, if bans on fast food ads are introduced to combat obesity, the problem can be seen as unethical advertising. The problem here is according to Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 17) how policy problematizes the issue. The WPR framework shows that policies do not solve problems, but policies create problems. The WPR framework tries to do this by asking six questions. According to Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 24) not every question of the WPR framework needs to be used for the analysis. In this thesis, the WPR framework will be applied for the first time to a defence policy. By examining the problems in a policy, certain contexts can be found that are constitutive of the problem representation (Riemann, 2023, p. 151). The framework uses six questions, and in this thesis three questions are used these are: "What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?," "What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?", and "How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?" This framework provides an excellent basis to uncover the contexts that led to the *Defence Policy 2023*. There needs to be a justification for the three questions that were chosen. For question 1, the justification is that it assists in clarifying the implicit problem representation within the policy (Bacchi, 2012, p. 22). For question 2, it gives a reflection on the underlying premises in the representation of this problem (Bacchi, 2012, p. 22). For question 3, it encourages "consideration of the contingent practices and processes through which this understanding of the 'problem' has emerged (Bacchi, 2012, p. 22)."

Literature review

In this literature review there will be taken a look at some of the literature that exists on previous defence policies in Germany and how those policies came to be. There will be also taken a look at literature that discusses the current German Defence Policy. When there is taken a look at the literature that explains how the new defence policy was shaped by looking at historic factors, a few points can be found. The five main findings from Verbovszky (2024, p. 285) are: German security policy wrestles more with its authoritarian past than external threats. Decisions often prioritize symbolic legitimacy over effectiveness, creating a "reverse consensus". Avoidance of war, especially in the context of WWII, is central to German security policy. The Bundeswehr lacks a cohesive reform strategy, with planning and deployment out of sync. Political decision-making drives Bundeswehr actions, necessitating change at the political level. The main finding from Stengel (2020, p. 430) is that Germany has gone from military restraint to actionism, with German participation in multinational military operations. The articles from Giegerich and Schreer (2023), Helferich (2023), and Mello (2023) are also used in this thesis. These articles go more in depth on the Defence Policy. They explain certain promises and decisions that were made and can be found in the Defence Policy. These articles will mostly be used to go more in depth in the analysis of the Defence Policy.

Methodology

WPR

In this part there will be taken a look at the method that was used in order to answer the research questions that was asked in the introduction of this thesis. In this part specifically there will be taken a look at the WPR framework. The first step is finding a policy or proposal so that the implicit problem representation within can be found (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 19). The second step is selecting questions from the WPR framework that were stated in the article by Bacchi (2012). In this thesis the decision was made to use three of the six questions. As explained in the theoretical framework, not all questions from the WPR framework have to be used. The three questions are: “What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?,” “What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the ‘problem’?,” and “How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?” These questions should be transformed into question that directly link with the policy to which the WPR framework is applied. This turned for this thesis the questions into the following ones: “What’s the context represented to be that set in the German Defence Policy?”, “What presuppositions and assumptions underpin this representation of the context that made up the German Defence Policy?”, and “How has the representation of the context that shaped the German Defence Policy come about?” In the theoretical framework of this thesis there was given justification for why these questions were chosen. However, there still remain three other questions. These questions are: “What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently? What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’? How/where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced? (Bacchi, 2012, p. 21). According to Bacchi (2012, p. 22) these questions are focused on the gaps that representation of the

problem leaves, what the impact and relevancy is, and also to encourage awareness surrounding the representation of the problem. These questions are all really interesting. However, these questions will not help answer the research question, because they are focused on other parts of the problematization. After this is done there should be made an attempt to find extra literature that expands on the policy that was used. For this thesis literature was found that expanded on the Defence Policy, and also literature that explained some of the historical influences.

Policy

In this part of the method there will be taken a look at the policy and how it will be analysed. To start with, the parts of the German Defence Policy that will be analysed are the first three chapters. These three chapters are: Defining Germany's Position in Terms of Defence Policy, Strategic Priorities in Defence Policy, and Core Task and Additional Tasks of the Bundeswehr. These three chapters have been chosen, because they explore the contexts that have shaped the German Defence Policy the best. On top of that these chapters also look at the core tasks and strategic priorities of the Bundeswehr (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023). The other chapter go more in-depth on the future of the Bundeswehr and also the requirements that will be needed in order to have a successful Bundeswehr. These chapters simply do not have as much to do with the research question as the other chapters.

Analysis

In this part of the method section there will be taken a look at how the analysis of the German Defence Policy will be conducted. The analysis will start by taking the modified questions from the WPR framework and answering them. The answers will be formulated with the help of the first three chapters of the German Defence Policy, the literature that was named in the literature review, and also additional sources. These sources can from newspapers to articles that provide extra background knowledge to explain and make the answers to the research

question more in-depth. The answers to these questions will be synthesized and key themes and contexts will be highlighted. This all will be done in the results section of this thesis.

With the help of this results section, the research question: “What contexts that make up the *Defence Policy 2023* does the WPR framework reveal?” will be answered in the conclusion of this thesis.

Analysis of German Defence Policy

In this part of the thesis the analysis of the German Defence Policy will be conducted. There will be taken a look at the modified questions from the WPR framework, and these questions will be answered with the literature from the literature review and also additional sources. The answers to these questions will be synthesized in the results part that follows this analysis.

What's the context represented to be that set in the German Defence Policy?

The defence policy proposes that the reason for the new defence policy is the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 6) argues that the international order is being attacked in Europe and around the world, and that this has led to a turning point or *Zeitenwende* as called in Germany. This turning point was seen according to Helferich (2023, p. 86) to many as an attempt to turn Germany's wary defence policy on its head. This turning point has changed the way in which Germany and the Bundeswehr operate. It is said by the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 6) that the Bundeswehr has been neglected for too long and has been focused too much on international crisis management, instead of focusing on national and collective defence. With this policy Germany is trying to reverse this, and Germany is returning the Bundeswehr to its core tasks: modern national and collective defence. However, Germany also wants the Bundeswehr to continue take international responsibility and to maintain their ability to act on the international stage. One such a step that was announced to be taken in order to make this change happen is according to Helferich (2023, p. 86) a 100-billion-euro fund, and also to raise the defence budget to 2% or higher of the GDP budget. This is exceeding of the NATO requirements. It is important to understand the context that led to all these changes within the German Defence Policy. As previously mentioned, the main change is the invasion of

Ukraine by Russia, and war returning on European soil (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 6). Another reason for why the Bundeswehr has been neglected, and why there has been a much-needed change in the German Defence Policy is the presence of over 50.000 United States troops (Knight, 2024). According to Knight (2024) United States troops have been stationed in Germany since the second World War. The reason for the United States troops being deployed in Germany is according to Knight (2024) that it protects the United States by deterring conflict, supporting partnerships such as the NATO, and also by countering transnational threats. According to Glaeser (2023) this has led to Germany neglecting the Bundeswehr, because the United States have been the main guarantor of security in Europe. It is also argued that this is one of the reasons why Germany has not significantly changed its Defence Policy, because the United States have been the backbone of security in Europe. This ties into the fact that in the German Defence Policy it has been written by the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 6) that: “As the most populous nation and a strong economy in the heart of Europe, we have a responsibility. We must be the backbone of deterrence and collective defence in Europe.” This shows some correspondence between the article from Glaeser and also the German Defence Policy. Another point that shows correspondence is that the United States has been focused on supporting the partnerships with NATO, this is also written in the German Defence Policy. It is written by the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 17) that there should be a focus on collective defence. NATO is such a collective defence mechanism.

What presuppositions and assumptions underpin this representation of the context that made up the German Defence Policy?

By answering this second question there will be taken a look at the underlying premises in the representation of the context that made up the German Defence Policy. One of the main reasons that has led to the change of policy is the neglect of the Bundeswehr. Being focused

too much on international operations instead of focusing on the security of its own country has been one of the main problems that has led to negligence of the Bundeswehr. In an article from 2022 it is said by Kinkartz & Werkhäuser (2024) that only 40% of its current special weaponry such as tanks, was combat ready. Another reason for the new policy is that Germany is a nation of pacifists. According to Fine & Carlyon (2024) only 20% of the German people were in favour of deploying military force after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, this was only 2% higher than it was before the war. Another example of this can be found in the article written by Giegerich and Schreer. According to Giegerich and Schreer (2023, p. 39) a poll showed that in 2023 only 11% of German would volunteer to pick up arms in the scenario that war would reach Germany. In contrast, 83% of the Finnish population would according to a 2022 poll pick up arms in the case that Finland would be attacked. The Second World War heavily influenced the pacifist mindset of the Germans. According to Verbovszky (2024, p. 283) this has led to the Germans making defence policies that focus on preventing the last war, instead of preparing for the next war. This is heavily influenced by the cultural trauma caused by the Second World War. As described by Verbovszky (2024, p. 284) German policy making is based on structural pacifism. Structural pacifism includes that military structures in Germany are designed to enhance political control and also to enhance the implementation of political will (Verbovszky, 2024, p. 285). This can also be found in the new German Defence Policy. In the policy Germany is trying to steer away from diplomacy and dialogue and more towards deterrence and defence. Germany is even trying to become the backbone of European security (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 6).

How has the representation of the context that shaped the German Defence Policy come about?

To answer this third question there must be taken a look at the different processes and factors through which the representation of the problem has emerged. From a historical perspective it is argued by Dyson (2019, p. 122) that the German forces have been in a constant process of reform since the Cold War. This was according to Dyson (2019, p. 129) because of a shift in international security environment. This shows that from a historical perspective the problem has come about, because of a constant state of reform. Another part in history that can be looked at is the Second World War and the trauma that it brought with it. This has been previously mentioned in the answer to the second question. However, it is also important to look at how the ending of the war, and especially United States troops being stationed in Germany since the end of the Second World War (Knight, 2024). Another perspective where there can be take a look from is the geopolitical perspective. This is of course the effect of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the *Zeitenwende* that it brought along with it. This can be seen as the most important factor that led to the change in defence policy. This can be seen in the Defence Policy, because Germany takes a more active position in actual physical defence and takes a step back from diplomacy. Following the invasion of Ukraine, Germany and other countries imposed sanctions on Russia in order to increase the costs for Russia to continue their war of aggression (*EU Sanctions Against Russia Following the Invasion of Ukraine*, n.d.). However, this was shown to be not as effective since Russia managed to continue its war because of other suppliers who have not imposed sanctions on Russia, for example China (Aarup et al., 2023). In the new Defence Policy, Germany tries to use defence diplomacy as an instrument of international cooperation and partnership (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 18). This will be done through as said by the Federal Ministry of Defence through “Strengthening security structures of partners and regional organisations, Establishing and continually cultivating bilateral security and military relations, Arms-control, confidence-building, and security-building measures.” This shows that diplomacy will be used more as a

defence mechanism instead of used as an attacking power, which is something that Germany used to do. Another geopolitical influence are the international relationships between Germany and other countries. An example of this is the NATO. In the German Defence Policy it is said by the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 18) that one of the core tasks will be “Stabilising and Building up Resilient Partners as a Contribution to International Crisis Management.” This shows that international relationships still play a big part in the forming of the German Defence Policy. For example, according to the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 18) a way in which they want to implement this is by contributing to more UN peace missions.

Results

In this section of the thesis there will be made an attempt to tie the answers to all three sub questions together. This will be done in order to give a clear answer to the research question in the conclusion. The 2023 German Defence Policy has been shaped by a combination of different contexts. These contexts are historical, geopolitical and also socio-political. The main reason for the policy shift was the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 6). This invasion shifted Germany's Defence Policy away from international crisis management and towards national and collective defence. From a historical perspective, Germany's defence policy has been mainly influenced by the Second World War. The trauma of the war is placed a strong pacifistic mentality within the German people, leading to policies based on preventing the last war instead of preparing for the next war (Verbovszky, 2024, p. 283). As it is explained by Verbovszky (2024, p. 283), this has also led to the Germans preferring political control over military action. This has led to diplomatic actions instead of military ones. An example of this are the sanctions the Germany imposed on Russia (*EU sanctions against Russia following the invasion of Ukraine*. n.d.). This all is called by Verbovszky (2024, p. 283): structural pacifism, which has become a cornerstone of previous German defence policies. And this has led to the neglect and lack of modernization of the Bundeswehr. From a geopolitical perspective, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was a wake-up call for Germany. It showed that an armed conflict on European soil was not something of the past, but now something in the present. In response to this Germany tried to reform its defence policy by enhancing its national and collective defence mechanisms (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 6). The Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 6) also argued that Germany should take their role as the backbone of European security. Another reason for why the Bundeswehr has been neglected by Germany is both historical and geopolitical. Since the end of the Second World War, as said by Knight

(2024), United States troops have been stationed in Germany. This has led according to Glaeser (2023) to Germany neglecting its Bundeswehr by relying too much on the United States for the security of Europe. Since the wake-up call, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, Germany has made an attempt to reorganize the Bundeswehr and thus take the position as the backbone of European security. From a socio-political context, it is shown that Germany's willingness to fight in a war has been significantly lower than the willingness of other countries (Giegerich & Schreer, 2023, p. 39). It is shown by Giegerich and Schreer (2023, p. 39) that only 11% of the Germans would pick up their weapons in the case of a war on German soil. The pacifist nature of German has also led to only 20% of the German being in favour of deploying military force following the invasion of Ukraine (Fine & Carlyon, 2024). With all these contexts kept in mind, the new German Defence Policy marks an enormous strategic shift. As said by the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, 6) the aim of the Defence Policy is to address the neglect of the Bundeswehr by modernizing the military, and to focus more on core defence tasks, such as national and collective defence. This will be done, according to Helferich (2023, p. 86), by establishing a 100-billion-euro fund and also by raising Germany's defence budget to 2% of the GDP or higher. This is in accordance with NATO requirements. With all of this Germany will try to reach its goals stated in the Defence Policy. Despite the focus on national and collective defence, the policy also addresses the importance of international relationships (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 18). According to the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 18), Germany will continue to participate in international peacekeeping operations, highlighting Germany's commitment to global stability. This will be done through UN missions. Another thing that is outlined by the Federal Ministry of Defence (2023, p. 18) is that defence diplomacy can be used for international cooperation and partnership. With this kept in mind the aim is to strengthen security structures of partner countries and regional organizations. This can be seen as

something from Germany's previous defence policies, namely diplomacy action instead of military action.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the introduction of this thesis the following research question was asked:

“What contexts that make up the *Defence Policy 2023* does the WPR framework reveal?” In

order to answer this question, there were made three sub questions. These sub questions are:

“What's the context represented to be that set in the German Defence Policy?”, “What

presuppositions and assumptions underpin this representation of the context that made up the

German Defence Policy?”, and “How has the representation of the context that shaped the

German Defence Policy come about?” These questions were answered in the analysis part of

this thesis, and the answers were tied together in the results part of this thesis. The answer to

the research question is that the contexts are historical, political, and socio-political. The

historical context that was found has mostly to do with the Second World War and the

cultural trauma it induced in German people (Verbovsky, 2024, p. 283). It also led to United

States troops being stationed in Germany. Which eventually led to the Bundeswehr being

neglected (Glaeser, 2023). When there is taken a look at the geopolitical context that shaped

the German Defence Policy, it can be found that the main catalyst is the Russian invasion of

Ukraine (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 6). This led to Germany trying to enhance its

collective and national defence (Federal Ministry of Defence, 2023, p. 6). It was also stated

that Germany should become the backbone of European security. The socio-political context

means that the willingness to actually fight in a war is in Germany way lower than in other

countries (Giegerich & Schreer, 2023, p. 39). All of these points have led to the way in which

the policy was shaped. In summary, this thesis has explored the historical, geopolitical, and

socio-political contexts shaping the German Defence Policy 2023 using the WPR framework.

It reveals the impact of the Second World War, the influence of the Russian invasion of

Ukraine, the effect of United States troops being stationed in Germany and Germany's

cultural reluctance towards military engagement. This thesis offers valuable insights into the

hidden contexts that have shaped the German Defence Policy. The thesis also highlights the importance of hidden contexts that shape policies. It is uncertain if everything will work out as planned, but only time will tell if the implementation of this policy will be a success.

Reflection

In this part of the thesis there will be taken a look at different limitations, strengths and weaknesses, and also the eventual societal and academic relevance that this thesis has. This thesis has different limitations. The first limitation of this thesis is the fact that only three of the six questions from the WPR framework were used. It is not necessary to use all six questions according to Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 24), however it could have made the answer to the research question clearer. The second limitation of this research is the fact that the German Defence Policy is relatively new. This leads to not many documents being written on the subject, which in turn leads to more sources. If there are more sources there is a smaller possibility of bias towards specific views. The last limitation of this research also has to do with the fact that the German Defence Policy is so recent. This leads to not knowing what the eventual effects of the policy actually are, and also if the policy actually managed to work. With this kept in mind, the policy could be more critically evaluated. There were of course also different strengths of this thesis. A strength of this thesis is that it is the first time the WPR framework is applied to a defence policy. This leads to the thesis being relevant to academics, because it is the first of its kind. The usage of the WPR framework is also appropriate a strength of this thesis. This is the case because the WPR framework is perfect for finding underlying contexts that shape a policy. Another strength of this thesis is that it incorporates lots of different perspectives on the contexts that shape the German Defence Policy. The analysis of this paper utilizes perspectives that are historical, geopolitical and also socio-political. The last strength of this paper is the fact that good literature was used. Literature is really important for all research, and it is of utmost importance to use good literature. There were also some weaknesses in this thesis. One of the weaknesses is that not the entire German Defence Policy was subjected to the WPR framework. This has led to the analysis being shorter than what it could have been. Another weakness of this thesis that

could have been improved is the analysis of the German Defence Policy. The decision was made to only do the first three chapters of the German Defence Policy for the analysis. This decision was made for relevancy to the research question and also because of time constraint. If the analysis had also included the analysis of the remaining chapters, the thesis would have been too long. The thesis has societal relevance. This is the case because of the underlying contexts that it has revealed. It could even make the Germans more aware of their cultural trauma following the Second World War. The thesis can also explain their pacifism and what contexts have led from stepping away from this pacifism and towards a new defence policy. For policymakers this thesis can also have an impact. The reason for this is that the policymakers could make the hidden contexts clearer in their policies. This would lead to people and policymakers actually figuring out why they make certain decisions. This thesis also has relevance for academia. This is the case because it is the first time a WPR framework has been applied to a defence policy. It sets a basis for further uses of the WPR framework on defence policies. This means that this thesis can actually be used as a reference for future studies. This thesis can be seen as the pioneer of the use of the WPR framework on defence policies. When there is taken a look at future studies that built on this thesis, there are multiple possibilities. First of all, this thesis can be used as a reference for future applications of the WPR framework on defence policies. For example, there can be taken a look at the defence policies of other countries than Germany. Secondly, to build on this thesis, there can be taken a look if all six questions posed by the WPR framework can be applied to the German Defence Policy. This can further enhance the results that were found using three questions. Thirdly, the entire German Defence Policy can also be used to analyse with the WPR framework. The decision can be made to use the same three questions, or even all six questions from the WPR framework. Another thing that can be done for future research is using the same framework and the same policy, however this time there can be taken a look

at problematizations. As previously mentioned in the theoretical framework, the WPR framework was initially made to find problems that policies create. To summarize this reflection. There were multiple limitations in the research done for this thesis, namely the use of only three questions of the WPR framework, the recency of the policy which led to limiting available sources on the subject, and also the inability of being able to see the results of the policy. The strengths include the first application of the WPR framework on a defence policy, which in turn provided an analysis with many contexts, and also the usage of high-quality literature. The thesis has societal relevance, because of discovering the underlying contexts, it may help Germans discover their cultural trauma, and also their pacifism. It has academic relevance because it is the first time the WPR framework is applied to a defence policy, this sets a basis for further research. Further research could be using all six of the WPR questions, analysing the entire German Defence Policy, and also to focus on problems that this policy created.

Bibliography

- Aarup, S. A., Panov, S., & Busvine, D. (2023, July 27). China secretly sends enough gear to Russia to equip an army. *POLITICO*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/china-firms-russia-body-armor-bullet-proof-drones-thermal-optics-army-equipment-shanghai-h-win/>
- Bacchi, C. (2012). Introducing the ‘What’s the problem represented to be?’ approach. In A. Bletsas & C. Beasley (Eds.), *Engaging with Carol Bacchi: Strategic interventions and exchanges* (pp. 21-24). Adelaide: The University of Adelaide Press.
- Bacchi, C., & Goodwin, S. (2016). Poststructural policy analysis. In *Palgrave Macmillan US eBooks*, 13-26. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-52546-8>
- Dyson, T. (2019). The challenge of creating an adaptive Bundeswehr. *German Politics*, 30(1), 122–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2019.1612369>
- EU sanctions against Russia following the invasion of Ukraine*. (n.d.). EU Solidarity With Ukraine. https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-sanctions-against-russia-following-invasion-ukraine_en
- Federal Ministry of Defence. (2023). *Defence Policy Guidelines 2023*, 6-18. <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/5702190/edabed114d7856c8aa71ad666cbce8b3/download-defence-policy-guidelines-2023-data.pdf>
- Fine, H., & Carlyon, P. (2024, January 17). *Germany’s new plans for transforming its defence and foreign policy are bold. they are also running into familiar problems*. RAND. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2024/01/germanys-new-plans-for-transforming-its-defence-and.html>
- Giegerich, B., & Schreer, B. (2023). Zeitenwende one year on. *Survival*, 65(2), 37–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2023.2193095>

- Glaeser, S. (2023). Why Does Germany Keep Neglecting Its Defense? *RealClearDefense*.
https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2023/01/14/why_does_germany_keep_neglecting_its_defense_875723.html
- Helferich, J. (2023). The (false) promise of Germany's Zeitenwende. *European View*, 22(1), 85–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17816858231157556>
- Kinkartz, S., & Werkhäuser, N. (2022, February 26). NATO: How useful is Germany's Bundeswehr? *dw.com*. <https://www.dw.com/en/nato-how-useful-is-germanys-bundeswehr/a-60917464>
- Knight, B. (2024, February 29). US military in Germany: What you need to know. *dw.com*.
<https://www.dw.com/en/us-military-in-germany-what-you-need-to-know/a-49998340>
- Mello, P. A. (2023). Zeitenwende: German foreign policy change in the wake of Russia's war against Ukraine. *Politics and Governance*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.7346>
- Nato. (2024, March 7). *Relations with Ukraine*. NATO.
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37750.htm?
- Riemann, M. (2023). Studying Problematizations: The Value of Carol Bacchi's 'What's the Problem Represented to be?' (WPR) Methodology for IR. *Alternatives*, 48(2), 151-169.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/03043754231155763>.
- Stengel, F. A. (2020). *The politics of military force*, 430-455
<https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.10154836>
- Verbovszky, J. (2024). *German Structural Pacifism: Cultural Trauma and German Security Policy since Reunification*. Springer VS.