



**FORSVARET**  
Forsvarets høgskole

# **The will to defend**

*Exploring Finnish political efforts to influence  
the will to defend the country*

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# Forord

Det å skrive denne masteroppgaven har vært en opplevelse fylt av både oppturer og nedturer. De har ofte kommet om hverandre og i helt tilfeldig rekkefølge. Dette har tidvis skapt tvil om både det ene og andre ved oppgaven. Til slutt har jeg imidlertid valgt å lytte til Billy Joel når han synger “it comes down to fate” i sangen “Only the good die young”.

At jeg beholdt troen har jeg imidlertid flere å takke for. Først vil jeg takke min finske studie-kulling Illka Mäki-Ullakko for samtaler og inspirasjon til å se på forsvarsvilje I en finsk sammenheng. Så er det selvfølgelig mine finske informantene som velvillig har delt kunnskap, tanker og erfaringer, uten dere ville det ikke blitt noen oppgave! I tillegg har jeg fått engasjerte tilbakemeldinger fra min veileder Rolf Hobson som har vist fleksibilitet og velvilje. Samtidig har Betina Slagnes fra Forsvarets Forskningsinstitutt viste et engasjement og en kunnskap som har løftet og utfordret mine egne tanker, takk.

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# Oppsummering

Forsvarsvilje har blitt fremhevet som en av årsakene til at Ukraina har klart seg bedre enn mange ventet i krigen mot Russland. Imidlertid er forsvarevtilje som fenomen noe abstrakt og ytterligere forskning trengs for å skape bedre forståelse for både hva det er, og hvordan det påvirkes. Denne oppgaven bidrar til å utvikle denne forståelsen ved å besvare følgende problemstilling: Hvordan påvirkes den finske forsvarevtiljen fra politisk nivå i Finland?

Gjennom en kvalitativ studie har oppgaven analysert autoritative dokumenter og ekspert intervjuer i den hensikt å identifisere politikkområder som søker å påvirke Finsk forsvarevtilje. Oppgaven skiller mellom politikkområder hvor påvirkning av forsvarevtilje er en uttalt ambisjon fra det utøvende nivået og der hvor den ikke er det. Politikk med en uttalt ambisjon om å påvirke forsvarevtilje er primært identifisert i autoritative dokumenter, mens de ikke-uttalte er primært identifisert gjennom intervjuer. I lys av dette har oppgavene også utforsket hvilke faktorer som setter rammer for den politiske tilnærmingen til å påvirke den Finske forsvarevtiljen.

Oppgaven finner at det utøvende nivået uttalt søker å påvirke forsvarevtilje gjennom å skape interaksjon mellom befolkningen og forsvare- og sikkerhetsrelatert tematikk. Sentralt i denne sammenhengen står verneplikt som institusjon, og det gjøres aktive grep for å utvikle og sikre dens legitimitet i fremtiden fordi den antas å påvirke forsvarevtiljen i positiv forstand.

Det er også en rekke politikkområder som anses å påvirke forsvarevtiljen hvor dette ikke er en uttalt ambisjon hos det utøvende nivået. Spesielt fremheves fokuset på den Finske historien, persepsjon av trussel, tilknyttingen til samfunnet og det å oppleve at nasjonen er verdt å forsvare.

Det er identifisert tre hovedfaktorer som har betydning for hvordan politikere tilnærmer seg Finsk forsvarevtilje. Den første er at den finske historien har skapt en dyp nasjonalfølelse knyttet til forsvare av landet, som igjen har ført til en generelt høy forsvarevtilje over lang tid. Den andre er at det mangler empiriske grunnlag for å kunne si at en vis type politikk faktisk påvirker forsvarevtilje. Det begrenser politikeres mulighetsrom. Det er en medvirkende årsak til siste faktor som er en politisk sensitivitet knyttet til å diskutere og fatte politikk som omhandler påvirkning av befolkningen.

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## Summary

The will to defend has been highlighted as one of the reasons why Ukraine has fared better than many expected in the war against Russia. However, the will to defend as a phenomenon is somewhat abstract and further research is needed to create a better understanding of both what it is and how it is influenced. This thesis contributes to developing this understanding by answering the following problem statement: How is the Finnish will to defend the country influenced from a political level in Finland?

Through a qualitative study, the thesis has analyzed authoritative documents and expert interviews with the aim of identifying policy areas that seek to influence Finnish defense will. The study distinguishes between policy areas where influencing the will to defend is a stated aim by the executive executive and where it is not. Policies with a stated ambition to influence defense will are primarily identified in authoritative documents, while the non-stated ones are primarily identified through the interviews. In light of this, the thesis has also explored which factors affect the political efforts to influence the will to defend the country in Finland today.

The paper finds that the executive branch explicitly seeks to influence the willingness to defend by creating interaction between the population and defense and security-related topics. Central to this is conscription as an institution. Active steps are being taken to develop and secure its legitimacy in the future because it is believed to influence the will to defend in a positive sense.

There are also a number of policy areas that are considered to influence the will to defend where this is not a stated ambition of the executive level. In particular, the focus on Finnish history, perception of threat, the attachment to society and the feeling that the nation is worth defending is highlighted.

Three main factors have been identified that have an effect on how politicians approach Finland's will to defend. The first is that Finnish history has created a deep national feeling linked to the defense of the country, which in turn has led to a generally high will to defend over a long period of time. The second is that there is a lack of empirical evidence proving that a certain type of policy actually affects the will to defend. This limits the political efforts to influence the will to defend. It also contributes to the last factor, which is a political sensitivity linked to discussing policies that deal with influencing the population.

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# 1 Introduction

The Ukrainian people's will to defend their country in the ongoing war with Russia has impressed the international community (European Council, 2023). A study identified this will as a critical component of the Ukrainian defence before the invasion (Polyakov, 2018, p. 92). The Norwegian Chief of Defence has highlighted the importance of the will to defend in a Norwegian context, claiming that "the will to defend is what makes Norway strong" (Kristoffersen, 2020). Using various research designs and samples, researchers have approached the will to defend the country as a social phenomenon that exists among the general population (C. J. Anderson & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2010; Inglehart et al., 2015; Puranen, 2015; Torgler, 2003). However, we know little about how politicians address the phenomenon. This represents a research gap that is both possible and valuable to explore.

When exploring this research gap, it is beneficial to do so in a country where the phenomenon is prominent in society. One such country is Finland, where the will to defend the country is among the highest in Europa (Skjævesland, 2023, p. 74). Annual polls have measured this will for decades, and results in December of 2022 measured all-time high levels (ABDI, 2022). Within Finland, the will to defend the country has been of interest to academics and politicians since the phenomenon was introduced in the early 1950s. Today, the will to defend the country is defined as a foundational component of Finland's defence (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 9).<sup>1</sup> In light of this, Finland provides a suitable context to explore how the phenomenon is addressed politically. I will do this by answering the following problem statement:

***How is the Finnish will to defend the country influenced from a political level in Finland?***

The will to defend the country as a phenomenon will be defined<sup>2</sup> as *a desire within the individual citizen and the citizenry as a whole to defend their own country in peace, crisis, and war. This entails a perception that one's own country is worth defending and a will to contribute to achieving this. In Finland, this includes the attitude and participation related to comprehensive security in general and national defence specifically.* (ABDI, 2022; Hadar & Häkkinen, 2022; Häggblom, 2022; Kosonen et al., 2019a). The political level of interest in this paper is the executive branch, which includes the Prime Minister, the ministers, their ministries, and the President of Finland. This also excludes the

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<sup>1</sup> The will to defend, conscription, a trained reserve and defending the entire country

<sup>2</sup> I have created this definition based on a collection of sources and seeks to provide a comprehensive approach.



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Parliament and the lower level of politics. Although this will hinder a complete presentation of the combined political influence, it increases the focus on the defined level of interest. I have analysed the period from the appointment of Sanna Marin as Prime Minister until the spring of 2023. Marin took office in December 2019, which entails a period of just over three years. This choice limits my ability to analyse a historical perspective. However, the scope provides a clearly defined framework with a contemporary approach.

By addressing the problem statement<sup>3</sup>, I seek to achieve several goals. Firstly, knowledge of an abstract phenomenon with deep historical roots in Finland will be spread to a broader audience. This is particularly valuable, as Finnish defence and security builds on the will to defend and is thus important knowledge to a wide audience as Finland recently entered the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a member. Secondly, knowledge about the will to defend and how this is addressed politically in Finland is valuable for other nations who seek to explore the topic in their national context. Thirdly, expanding knowledge of political efforts to influence popular opinion among citizens is valuable to achieve transparency and discussion. As such, exploring the political influence on the will to defend the country contributes to Finland's ongoing discussions about its relationship with the phenomenon.

## 1.1 Research questions

To address the problem statement, I will answer three research questions. The first research question will explore whether the executive branch of Finland has policies that state that they aim to influence the will to defend the country. This is done through analysis of authoritative documents published by the executive branch. I will call these findings *stated policies*, and they are identified by answering the following:

- *What policies presented in authoritative documents by the executive branch of Finland specifically state that they aim to influence the will to defend the country?*

Here, I view *policies* as a set of rules or ideas about what should be done (Britannica, n.d.-b). This understanding is intentionally broad as I seek to explore the influence of the executive branch from a holistic perspective. The thesis will define *influence* as an attempt to increase or maintain the will to defend the country. This is narrower than a more traditional understanding of the word, which is to change or affect something (Britannica, n.d.-a).

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<sup>3</sup> How is the Finnish will to defend the country influenced from a political level in Finland?

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My second research question will broaden the perspectives gained by answering the first research question. Here I seek to identify policies that may influence the will to defend the country without this being stated specifically by the executive branch. By this, the thesis means policies that are viewed as influencing the will to defend without this being an aim in itself. This research question is primarily explored through the analysis of 10 expert interviews. I will call these findings *non-stated policies*, and they are identified by answering the following:

- *What policies may have an influence on the will to defend the country in Finland today without this being stated explicitly as an aim by the executive branch?*

The third research question will explore different explanations for the current political approach to influencing the will to defend the country in Finland. This seeks to provide added understanding to the policies identified in the previous research question by looking at factors that affect the political approach to the phenomenon. This will be done by answering the following:

- *What factors affect the political efforts to influence the will to defend the country in Finland today?*

In sum, the three research questions can provide interesting and comprehensive answers that make it possible to answer the initial problem statement.

## **1.2 Structure of the thesis**

In Chapter 2, I present Finnish politics and history, a literature review of the academic literature, and a theory on the will to defend the country as a phenomenon. I conclude the chapter with my thoughts on the expected findings of this study. In Chapter 3, I present the methods used, focusing on the research design, the selection of sources, and the process of how these were analysed. Finally, I discuss steps taken to increase reliability and validity. In Chapter 4, I present the findings from the authoritative documents and the interviews separately. The research questions are addressed in Chapter 5. Finally, in chapter 6 I attempt to answer the problem statement by highlighting the key findings of the thesis. Here I will also comment on future research.

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## 2 Literature and theory

While this thesis will not extensively explore the intricacies of Finnish politics or Finnish history nor reference all academic work on the will to defend, the distilled knowledge provided in this chapter is important in order to understand the Finnish context. Therefore, in this chapter, I will first present knowledge related to Finnish politics and Finnish history that are unique to Finland. Then, literature describing the international and Finnish research into the will to defend the country is presented.

### 2.1 Finnish politics

The President and Government, the latter consisting of the prime minister, ministers, and its ministries, have executive power in Finland. The President is the head of state, and the prime minister is the head of government. The executive branch wields significant influence in setting strategic goals, shaping the country's policies, and governing its people (President of the republic of Finland, n.d.). The Government, led by the prime minister, is responsible for managing the country, aided by cabinet ministers who oversee various areas of government policy. The President serves for six-year terms. They are responsible for foreign policy and involved in legislation, decrees, and appointment of public officials. The President also has the power to veto legislation passed by the Parliament and to appoint the Prime Minister. In addition, the President is the commander in chief of the Defence Forces and has the authority to make decisions on basic guidelines for defence and significant changes (President of the republic of Finland, n.d.). In recent years the Finnish political system has moved in a more parliamentary direction, strengthening the Government's and the Parliament's position in relation to the President (Eduskunta, n.d.).

The Eduskunta, or Parliament, has 200 members elected every four years through proportional representation. The Parliament, as Finland's legislative branch, holds the power to pass laws, approve the state budget, and oversee the work of the government. The legislative must have confidence in the government to continue running the country (Eduskunta, n.d.). There is a history of close cooperation and consensus politics between the Parliament as the legislative branch and the government as the executive branch. As with many other states, Finland also has a judicial branch that acts politically independently (Finnish Government, n.d.). The political disposition of a government and parliament naturally influences which policies they seek to promote. Finland has had a certain level of consensus politics over the years. This is especially true for foreign policy and defence-related matters. This does not mean that Finland has been unable to make changes when

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the opportunity arises, such as its independence in 1917, its membership of the EU in 1995 and its application for NATO membership in 2022.

## 2.2 The History of Finland

History plays a vital role in understanding any country. The modern-day population of Finland has a close relationship to its past and its struggles for national independence, including a myriad of occupations and wars, both civil wars and international ones. The following is by no means an exhaustive account of Finland's history. Still, it seeks to provide enough insight to understand the Finnish context relevant to the topic of the thesis. The critical points of emphasis are the events and narratives created over time that give the Finnish population its identity.

Small states are often heavily influenced by the greater powers surrounding them. This is especially true for Finland. Due to its strategic location, it has been the theatre of great political power struggles for centuries. The border with Russia separates vastly different political cultures (Heikka, 2003). This dynamic has greatly affected Finland, which was an eastern province of the Kingdom of Sweden for 600 years and became a grand duchy of Russia in 1809 before becoming an independent nation in 1917 and then balancing major power conflicts into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Heikka, 2003; Parliament of Finland, n.d.). Through much of its history, Finland has found itself navigating shifting alliances and often fighting seemingly alone in brutal conflicts. An example of this is found at Suomenlinna fortress outside Helsingfors, where marble blocks from the 17<sup>th</sup> century have the inscription "Posterity, stand here upon your ground and never rely on outside help." (Suomenlinna Fortress, 2023). This perspective has shaped national identity in many ways and can be summarised in the Finnish grand strategy formulated by former president Mauno Koivisto in one word: "Survive" (Kempas, 2023).

There are several historical explanations for the Finnish identity related to surviving alone. During its time as part of the Kingdom of Sweden, Finland faced extensive efforts from the East on several occasions. In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the threat from Russia started to shape policy in Finland (Heikka, 2003, p. 6). The Finns would fight the Russians on several occasions in the coming centuries, often fighting with a "determined resistance" in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. One could say a strong and independent identity had started to take form in the Finnish culture. The 1500s sparked a rise in Finnish-language culture, and the New Testament was translated into Finnish by 1548 (Zetterberg, 2014). In battles fought at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Russian commanders

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describe the battles against the Finns as some of the hardest they had ever fought (Heikka, 2003, p. 17). At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Britain focused on saving the Swedish heartland when faced with Russian expansionism. This left Finland fighting alone, and once again, the stiff Finnish resistance sent a forceful signal to the East. This would also contribute to shaping political negotiations in Finland's favour when becoming a grand duchy of Russia in 1809 (Heikka, 2003, p. 27).

In light of well-known Finnish resentment, Tsar Alexander I would seek loyalty by giving Finland unprecedented levels of autonomy as a grand-duchy (Parliament of Finland, n.d., p. 28). In the Diet of Porvoo, the Tsar stated that "Finland has been raised to the status of nations among nations" (Parliament of Finland, n.d.). Although not an independent state, key developments were made in Finland at this time, among the most crucial being the creation of its own army under the command of the Finnish Government. Created in 1812, this military force, in contrast to military forces elsewhere in the Russian empire, would be recruited and commanded by Finns with the purpose of defending Finland. At the same time, an identity separate from Sweden was being constructed. Heikka characterises this as a "national awakening" with the Finnish language and political discourse developing (Heikka, 2003, pp. 29–31).

One can present different arguments regarding what constitutes the creation of a state, but several arguments exist for a Finnish national awakening throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1848 the Finnish term for state, "Valtio", was introduced, and in the same year, both the national anthem and Finland's national flag were presented for the first time. In 1863 a national currency was implemented (Parliament of Finland, n.d.), and a Language Decree issued the same year started the path toward making Finnish an official administrative language (Zetterberg, 2014). Additionally, as a result of increased Russian pressure at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Finns responded with strikes, the assassination of the Russian Governor-General, and local militias were established (Heikka, 2003, p. 38).

Many factors contributed to the Finnish independence, which was recognised on December 6, 1917. One is shifting international politics in the aftermath of the first world war and the Russian Revolution; another is the development of national sentiment within Finland. This sentiment is also seen in relation to Finland's unique position as one of the few countries under Russian rule who fought and gained their independence rather than receiving it through the 1918 Brest-Litovsk peace

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treaty (Heikka, 2003, pp. 41–42). However, at the same time, turmoil continued to threaten the Finnish independence.

Between January and May of 1918, a brutal civil war coincided with increased Russian influence at the turn of the 20th century. The Red forces, seeking to overthrow the Finnish government, clashed with the Whites, who supported the Finnish government. Heikka refers to this conflict as the "War of Liberation," arguing that it more accurately describes the effort to free Finland from Russian troops and Finnish communist revolutionaries (Heikka, 2003, p. 39). According to some sources, the total casualties on both sides amounted to approximately 36,000, nearly 10,000 more than the losses suffered during the more known Winter War of the Second World War (YLE, 2018). In the summer of 1919, Finland became a republic and elected its first President (Zetterberg, 2014). Upon acceptance to the League of Nations in 1920, the predecessor to the United Nations, Finnish independence was secured in terms of international law.

As they had done for centuries, the Finns sought alliances to deal with the growing threat of the Soviet Union established in 1922. This included engagement with Germany, Britain, France, the coalition in the Baltics, the League of Nations, Nordic cooperation, and the US (Heikka, 2003, p. 42). Unfortunately, no meaningful results came from these efforts as great power politics again hindered sufficient support for Finland in what would develop into World War II. Once again, Finland would see themselves facing an enemy alone, this time to protect their newly gained independence. What would be called the Winter War (November 1939 – March 1940) and the Continuation War (June 1941 – September 1944) saw Finland fight for their independence. In the Winter War, the Soviets attacked with 45 divisions, totalling five times the artillery, 18 times the bombers, and 80 times the number of tanks compared to the Finnish forces. At the end of the Continuation War, the Soviets launched an attack with 450,000 men amounting to the largest attack in the history of Northern Europe (Heikka, 2003, pp. 52–53). In the Continuation War, Finland allowed German troops to enter the country. Finland had shown clear reservations against German cooperation before the war but now saw their hands forced by the lack of support from the Western allies (Heikka, 2003, p. 51). For this, the Finns were perceived as siding with Germany and were forced to pay reparations and concede land when peace eventually came.

Heikka claims that the experience from the Second World War left scars in Finland, leading to a "never again war" narrative (Heikka, 2003, p. 53). The war left the country fighting alone, without support, leading to heavy losses. However, it also created a sense of cohesion and identity. Historian

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Antero Holmila says the war showed moral values such as patriotism and working for a greater cause (Alderin, 2014). Finland's economic situation after the Second World War left little for weapon procurement. It was, however, essential to establish a doctrine that could provide a realistic chance of deterring enemies from attacking Finland again. The choice fell on a principle of territorial defence based on conscription (Heikka, 2003, p. 55). A key component of this doctrine was the notion that responsibility for defence policy "rested in the hands of half a million men" (Heikka, 2003, p. 57). The efforts of the population are therefore seen as a key component in protecting Finland. Around the same time, in the mid-1950s, the will to defend the country was brought into the Finnish security discussion as both an area of debate and a foundation for defence policy.

It is important to note that the territorial defence doctrine left few other options than continuing to employ a conscription system, first implemented in 1919 (Hadar & Häkkinen, 2022, p. 201). This history has placed conscription at the heart of Finnish defence and security thinking. According to historian Teemu Häkkinen, conscription is viewed as a "national narrative concerning domestic security" (Hadar & Häkkinen, 2022, p. 190). In 2010, the defence minister commissioned an inquiry identifying several important aspects of conscription and its impact on society. The investigation found that conscription can bring Finns together, promote equality, and teach critical social skills while also serving as the backbone of the defence. The report also emphasised the significant link between mandatory service, like conscription, and a country's willingness to defend itself, underscoring that these two are mutually supportive phenomena (Defence Ministry, 2010, pp. 8–23)<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the government has also highlighted the ability to cost-efficiently produce defence forces through conscription (Finnish Government, 2017, p. 28).

Throughout the Cold War, Finland found itself in familiar territory. Its strategic location meant it became the focus of great power politics. The Berlin crisis, the Note crisis, and the Cuban missile crisis reminded Finns of the precarious situation of international politics. They could not take independence for granted nor rely on outside help as they remained militarily non-aligned. Already established of territorial defence doctrine were continuously developed, and by the 1990s, the trained reserve amounted to 700,000 men (Heikka, 2003, p. 61). The Finns built a force which would, at best, deter any attack on Finland or, at worst, be prepared to defend its independence.

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<sup>4</sup> First read in (Hadar & Häkkinen, 2022, pp. 201–202) and then checked using digital translation tools.

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The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 drastically altered the security situation for Finland. Finland made several changes to domestic and foreign policy in light of this, most notably the decision to become a member of the European Union (EU) in 1995. It would also increase its cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) from the 1990s into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nevertheless, it still claimed neutrality for many years until applying for NATO membership in May of 2022. Amid these changes, some areas have seen continuity. This goes especially for defence policy, which today is based on four key factors; defending all of Finland, a large reserve, conscription and the will to defend the country (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 8). And as before, a large part of the nation are reservists, approximately 900,000 (Finnish Defence Forces, n.d.), further relying on the population and their will to defend Finland.

Finnish history provides us with important context for this thesis. The Finns have fought for their independence, often by themselves. They have navigated shifting political climates, often at the receiving end of great power politics, especially Russia and the former Soviet Union. As President Sauli Niinista has said: “We have had hard experiences in history many times. We haven’t forgotten it, it is in our DNA” (Milne, 2022). Although their application for NATO membership certainly influences their defence policy, the will to defend remains a cornerstone of defence strategy. As described by Janne Kuusela, director-general for defence policy at the defence ministry, the core of the Finnish strategy is the willingness of the population to fight and defend Finland (Milne, 2022).

## 2.3 International research on the will to defend

In an international context, addressing and analysing the will to defend has taken several different paths. Much international research centres on analysing which factors influence the will to defend and fight for one’s country<sup>5</sup>. The research is often based on quantitative data from the World Values Surveys (WVS) as well as European Values Surveys (EVS) (Rutkauskas, 2018, p. 54). This research shows that several factors influence the will to defend the country. Utilising WVS data, Torgler analysed the willingness to go to war and found that gender, trust in the army and trust in the government were the most important factors for predicting this willingness (Torgler, 2003). Using the same data, Rutkauskas aimed to find a similar set of predictors for the Baltic states, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. To Estonia and Lithuania, the most important factors were gender and national

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<sup>5</sup> The formulations *will to fight* versus *will to defend* are sometimes used interchangeably (Bērziņa & Zupa, 2021), (Rutkauskas, 2018) and (Andžāns et al., 2021). Whereas other argue that the will to fight is more closely connected to the individual soldier’s motivation in combat, whereas the will to defend is connected to the nation and population as a whole. (Bruøygard, 2020)



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pride, whereas, for Latvia, it was national pride and confidence in the government (Rutkauskas, 2018, pp. 57–59).

Some have claimed this research to be too one-dimensional as it is usually based on simplistic surveys. These often provide binary answers, such as simple yes or no to the question: “Of course, we all hope that there will not be another war, but if it were to come to that, would you be willing to fight for your country?” (Inglehart et al., 2015, p. 421). The research based on the WVS and EVS produces relatively comparable data between countries and over time. Still, some claim that the generalist approach fails to address the national uniqueness of each nation, such as the unique history and culture of each society (Hägglom, 2022, p. 6). Other sources of information are vital to understanding what influences the will to defend. For example, when conducting a qualitative study on Latvia, the importance of national pride and trust in public institutions is identified (Bērziņa & Zupa, 2020). Using nationally collected survey data with a more nuanced perspective, Andžāns and Sprūds found that the will to defend is impacted by gender, age and linguistic profile (Andžāns & Spruds, 2020).

Both Torgler (2003) and Inglehart et al. (2015) identified a general high will to defend in the Nordic countries. Compared to other nations, there was an opposite correlation between increased societal position and the willingness to defend the country. Focusing more on the economic perspective, C. Anderson et. Al (2018) put forward the claim that income inequality has a negative impact on the will to defend the country at a national level. The willingness to defend is also higher in countries where there is an active border dispute (Kim, 2019). This can be connected to the perception of threat. The perspective of willingness to defend the country is also influenced by the presence of foreign troops in a country, lowering the will when the presence is increased (J. Jakobsen & Jakobsen, 2018).

Trying to define the phenomenon of the will to defend the country is an ongoing academic and political process. The Swedish Defence Research Agency has worked extensively on developing and defining it, stating that the will to defend as a concept is ambiguous and can be interpreted differently (Rossbach et al., 2019, p. 28). To the individual, the will to defend the country may mean sacrificing time, money and individual freedom through, for example, military service. For a society, it may mean prioritising resources to defence at the expense of other societal issues (Rossbach et al., 2019, p. 29). There is also a difference between the will to defend before, and during, a conflict, as shown in Figure 1.

	<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>
<i>Activity</i>	Planning	Management
<i>Reality to relate to</i>	Threat scenario What might happen?	Operating picture What is happening?
<i>Will to defend and will to resist</i>	Will to defend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance of prioritising preparedness measures</li> <li>• Participation in voluntary organisations</li> <li>• Build-up of own personal preparedness</li> </ul>	Will to resist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to not surrender</li> <li>• Willingness to personally fight ongoing aggression</li> <li>• Willingness to participate in voluntary rescue and repair efforts</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.** Similarities and differences between total defence before and during an attack.  
**Source:** (Rossbach et al., 2019, p. 29)

## 2.4 The will to defend in Finland

As a result of the experiences of the Second World War in particular, but the Finnish history of survival in general, the 1950s saw the Finns implementing a territorial defence doctrine. Here, mass mobilisation based on conscription was at the core. At the same time, at the start of the 1950s, military Captain Jaakko Valtanen introduced the phenomenon of the citizen's will to defend the country to Finland (Huhtinen & Sinkko, 2004, p. 6)<sup>6</sup>. Valtanen would eventually become Chief of Defence, serving in this position from 1993 to 1990 (Valtanen, 2017, p. 1). The phenomenon of the will to defend became a part of a strategy called spiritual defence. Its implementation was based on the work by committees dedicated to recommending solutions to the Finnish defence and security reality after the Second World War. A situation where Finland continued to be nestled between great powers and having unfavourable measures imposed them.<sup>7</sup>

Today, promoting the will to defend the country is regulated as a task of the defence forces in the Defence Forces Act. "The duties of the Defence Forces are providing military training, guiding voluntary national defence training and promoting the will to defend the nation" (Ministry of Defence, 2007a). Furthermore, maintaining the will to defend the country is also part of the activities

<sup>6</sup> First read in (Häggblom, 2022, p. 12) and then checked using digital translation tools.

<sup>7</sup> The Finns were placed under several restrictions related to national defence as a result of their cooperation with the Germans during the war. These also had implications in regard to structure and development of security related capabilities. This led to a pragmatic approach to their relationship with the Soviet Union and Russia.

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of voluntary national defence organisations through the Act on Voluntary National Defence:

“Voluntary national defence organisations maintain national defence will and skills and also uphold the legacy of the war veterans” (Ministry of Defence, 2007b).

Much of the research in Finland is based on the work of the Advisory Board of Defence Information (ABDI) and the polls they conduct yearly (Kaarkoski et al., 2020, p. 174)<sup>8</sup>. In these polls, both the personal and general will to defend the country is measured by asking, “If Finland were attacked, should Finns, in your opinion, take up arms to defend themselves in all situations, even if the outcome seemed uncertain?” and “If Finland were attacked, would you be prepared to participate in the various tasks of national defence according to your abilities and skills?” (ABDI, 2022). The will to defend has historically been high in Finland compared to other nations. However, some criticise the simplistic nature of the surveys for providing empirically insufficient answers (Sinkko, 2015, p. 7)<sup>9</sup>, and that the answers are inconsistent because the phenomenon lacks a definition commonly agreed upon (Kosonen, 2019). Critical voices have questioned the lack of a holistic approach when limiting the research to these survey questions.

As in the international literature, factors influencing the will to defend have been analysed in Finland. Häggblom found gender and age to be key predictors based on the ABDI survey data. Men and older citizens express a higher willingness to defend the country (Häggblom, 2022, p. 60). In 2017 the ABDI survey also asked its respondents what factors made Finland worth defending. The top answers were independence, territorial integrity, Finnish democracy, Finnish education and welfare system, equality, Finnishness and freedom of religion (ABDI, 2017).

The phenomenon of willingness to defend the country in Finland is often encompassed through the word “Maanpuolustustahto”. Maanpuolustustahto is viewed as the desire of individuals or the citizenry as a whole to defend the nation (Hadar & Häkkinen, 2022, p. 190). Herein lies the notion that positive attitudes towards national defence and conscription are crucial for Finnish society. It is argued that the term Maanpuolustustahto has a clear and commonly understood meaning in Finnish society, to the point where the individual is expected to understand its meaning without further explanation (Sinkko, 2015, p. 6)<sup>10</sup>. One can therefore argue that the phenomenon has characteristics of being both nebulous and intuitive at the same time. (Häggblom, 2022, p. 13). The words

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<sup>8</sup> First read in (Häggblom, 2022, p. 12) and then checked using digital translation tools.

<sup>9</sup> First read in (Häggblom, 2022, p. 13) and then checked using digital translation tools.

<sup>10</sup> First read in (Häggblom, 2022, p. 13) and then checked using digital translation tools.

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“Maanpuolustustahdon” and “Maanpuolustustahtoon” are used interchangeably, the latter meaning “will for national defence” and the former “will to defend the country” (Finnish Government, 2019, pp. 98–101)<sup>11</sup>. Both words are used to describe the same phenomenon, and there are no meaningful differences between the different variations.<sup>12</sup>

Research by Sinkko and Kosonen has created a more empirical and comprehensive alternative to viewing the phenomenon and the will to defend the country (Hägglom, 2022, p. 13). In 2014 Sinkko presented the concept of *National Defence Thought*, and in 2019 Kosonen presented the *Citizen’s defence relation model* (Kosonen et al., 2019a; Sinkko, 2015)<sup>13</sup>. Sinkko argues that national defence thought consists of both a general and personal component. The general component refers to an overall view of the armed forces. The personal component describes the individuals’ will to personally engage in national defence both in a military and civilian capacity (Sinkko, 2015, p. 15)<sup>14</sup>. This represents a broader and more nuanced view of the relationship between the individual and willingness to defend. The model presented by Kosonen in 2019 emphasises the way in which an individual engages with national defence. This can be thought of as a relationship between the individual and national defence, reflecting an attitude or mindset (Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 311)<sup>15</sup>.

Few empirical studies have been conducted on the model presented by Kosonen et al. It is still relatively new and has yet to undergo rigorous academic critique. Research is currently being conducted on specific components of the model, but this has yet to be published at the time of writing (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). However, the model was referred to in a report by a parliamentary committee which looked at the development of conscription in Finland (Finnish Government, 2021a). Its inclusion in the report suggests a developing perception of the phenomenon of the will to defend the country at the political level. Although this is not empirical evidence for the validity of the citizen’s defence relation model, it does provide it with some credibility. More importantly, it suggests that authoritative political levels in Finland view the factors provided in the model as relevant and thus impact their decision-making. The model will therefore be explored in detail in the next section.

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<sup>11</sup> Cross checked with the Finnish version of the Governmental program.

<sup>12</sup> Explained by Teemu Häkkinen through email correspondence.

<sup>13</sup> First read in (Hägglom, 2022, p. 13) and then checked using digital translation tools.

<sup>14</sup> First read in (Hägglom, 2022, p. 14) and then checked using digital translation tools.

<sup>15</sup> First read in (Hägglom, 2022, p. 14) and then checked using digital translation tools.

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## 2.5 Citizen's Defence Relation Model<sup>16</sup>

The Citizen's Defence Relation Model expands the traditional understanding of the Finnish will to defend the country. The original aim of the research was to better understand the motivation and relationship between the individual citizen and national defence (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). It introduces a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to this issue and posits a relationship between the citizen and the will to defend the country (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023; Kosonen, 2019, p. 55; Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 300). In doing so, it provides a more empirical understanding of citizens' views and engagement with matters related to national defence (Hägglom, 2022, p. 17).

The model expands the scope of current research and discussion on the will to defend the country (Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 302). One example is the expanded understanding of the will to defend to also include tasks of unarmed defence (Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 309). It also provides a structured academic framework for further exploration of this issue. The model utilises a qualitative approach that involves conducting interviews with citizens who perform civil service instead of military service, or have resigning from the military reserve, with the intention of identifying their relationship with national defence (Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 300<sup>17</sup>, 2019b, p. 50). These individuals were selected based on the assumption that they had carefully considered their own opinions and emotions regarding national defence (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023).

No English visual presentation of the model has been found in the authoritative document analysed in this thesis or in academic work referencing the model (Hägglom, 2022; Jalkanen, 2019; Kosonen, 2019; Kosonen et al., 2019b). In the original presentation of the phenomenon (Kosonen, 2019; Kosonen et al., 2019a), the model was only presented in Finnish. Moreover, although the model was presented at the ERGOMAS<sup>18</sup> conference in June of 2019, no extensive rounds of presentation of the model have been conducted in English. The graphical depiction presented in this thesis is therefore the first published version in English. To increase validity in its English graphical version and

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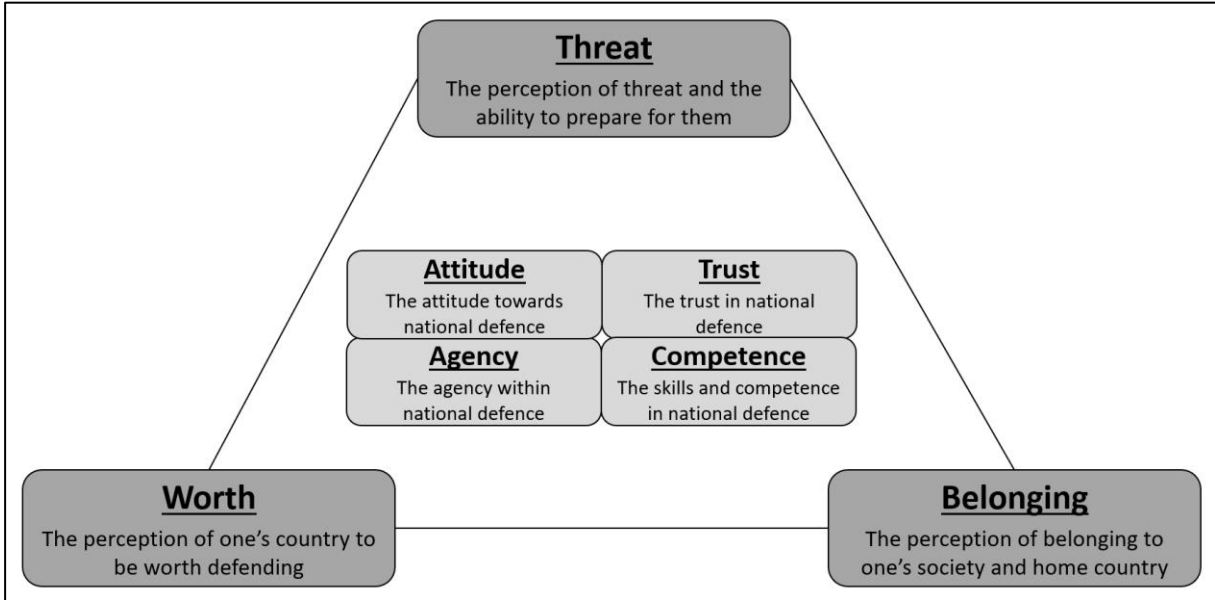
<sup>16</sup> The English description is based on a Finnish version (Kosonen, 2019, p. 61). This English version has been developed through interviews with Jarkko Kosonen and Teemu Tallberg, who both took part in developing the original Finnish model. The English version has been presented and feedback has been incorporated. Digital translations of the original documents (Kosonen, 2019; Kosonen et al., 2019a) have also been used. Additional details on how Finnish documents have been utilized in the thesis are presented in chapter 3.

<sup>17</sup> First read in (Hägglom, 2022, p. 14) and then cross-checked through Google Translate

<sup>18</sup> European Research Group on Military and Society

description, Jarkko Kosonen has been consulted to ensure that the English version is as accurate as possible.<sup>19</sup>

### The Citizens Defence Relations Model



**Figure 2.** Citizen's Defence Relation Model  
**Source:** (Kosonen, 2019, p. 61).

The citizen's defence relation model is comprised of two levels: The factors positioning the individual in relation to national defence and the factors that frame the citizens' relationship to defence. The positioning level consists of four factors that describe the individual's interaction with the defence of the country, either through active involvement with national defence or through the individual's position within national defence (Kosonen, 2019, p. 59; Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 306). The framing level is comprised of three factors and serves as an encompassing structure for understanding the citizen's engagement with the defence of the country.

<sup>19</sup> Both through an interview and dialog when translating the model to English

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## Positioning factors

The positioning level of the citizen's defence relations model encompasses four factors that link the individual with their involvement in national defence:

- The attitude towards national defence
- The trust in national defence
- The agency within national defence
- The skills and competence in national defence

The attitude factor of the citizen's defence relation model characterises an individual's attitudes towards national defence, defence forces, conscription, and the utilisation of military force. It covers various aspects such as whether military service is perceived as mandatory, a socio-normative obligation, or an opportunity for the individual (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023; Kosonen, 2019, p. 60; Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 311).

The trust factor refers to the perception of citizens' confidence in individual or societal capabilities during different crises. At an individual level, it encompasses the belief in one's own personal resilience. At a societal level, it includes trust in the management of areas such as defence policies in general and the nation's ability and resilience to withstand different crises and disruptions (Kosonen, 2019, p. 60; Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 311).

The defence agency factor characterises an individual's activity through their roles and actions, which may be driven by a sense of duty, volunteering, or profession. It also includes the movement of individuals between different positions in defence work (Kosonen, 2019, p. 60; Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 311).

The defence competence describes the knowledge, in the form of skills and information, one might have, related to national defence. The development of national defence competence occurs through various means, including basic education, keeping up to date with security and defence-related news, and even hobbies. Additionally, this motivation involves individuals and groups' capacity to collaborate in peacetime and wartime scenarios (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023; Kosonen, 2019, pp. 60–61).

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## Framing factors

The positioning factors in the citizen's defence relation model are considered in the context of the model's framing factors, which shape citizens' perceptions and actions regarding national defence. These framing factors may also be expressed as a broader sense of civic duty or obligation (Kosonen, 2019, p. 55). The framing factors are highlighted as one of the key factors within the model. They are relevant when looking into the increase or reduction of the will to defend the country in Finland (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). There are three framing factors in the model:

- The perception of belonging to society
- The perception of one's country being worth defending
- The perception of threats and how to deal with them

In the citizen's defence relation model, belonging to society and the perception of one's home country to be worth defending are crucial factors (Kosonen, 2019, p. 61). Belonging refers to a sense of confidence in the state system and its actors, as well as a belief in the fairness of that system and the state's commitment to the well-being of its citizens. Herein lies the individual's feeling and experience of being part of and belonging to society and one's home country (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). This notion of belonging is closely tied to the implementation of social policies within a welfare state, such as the provision of social security and education being free of charge (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023; Kosonen, 2019, p. 61). Such policies contribute to expanding opportunities and enhancing the citizens' position and status within society, thus creating a sense of belonging to it.

The worthiness of defending Finland is closely linked to the attachment factor, but also to a number of other factors, such as Finnish values, language, culture, natural environment, and societal organisation. Within this lies a perception of one's country being both valuable and a good country to live in. It also includes a conceptualisation of an established social order which is worth preserving (Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 307). An important aspect is the recognition and value placed on traditional perceptions (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). This can be related to Finnish legislation at a general level, but also at a more personal level in relation to family (Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 307).

The elements that are associated with attachment and the worthiness of defending Finland are intimately tied to how individuals view threats and how to deal with them.<sup>4</sup> This includes potential



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threats to the state, society, or one's natural surroundings and how to deal with them. Inequality and the erosion of national cohesion constitute internal threats, while external threats come in the shape of terrorist assaults, Russia's hybrid influence, and the impact of climate change (Kosonen et al., 2019a, pp. 307–308). The perception of threat can therefore be seen as wide-ranging, encompassing non-military issues such as ecological and environmental concerns, in addition to the more customary ones associated with military aggression (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). In the 2022 ABDI survey, when asked what “makes you worry about the future”, the Finnish citizens answered: The development in Russia, energy availability, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, inflation, the refugee situation in the world, proliferation of mass destruction, the security situation in the Baltic sea area, political extremism, cyber threats and climate change in their top ten (ABDI, 2022, p. 77).

This encompasses not only the perception of threats an individual feels in their daily life, but also the threats that may arise in the future. It also includes the perception of how threats are dealt with. Which could be in relation to oneself, one's community, village, nation, or even at a global level (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). One could argue that an internal threat, such as cohesion, is influenced by an external, hybrid influence being one example. There is therefore no clear-cut separation between these two. The general perception of national defence is significantly linked to how potential threats are perceived and managed. Experiences of direct engagement with the defence forces, such as through military service, influenced this general perception (Kosonen et al., 2019a, p. 308).

## **2.6 Expected findings**

Since the will to defend the country has such a prominent position in Finnish culture and Finnish national defence, I expect there to be a comprehensive approach to influencing the phenomenon. This includes there being multiple factors that influence the will to defend the country and that efforts are made, across different policy areas, by the executive branch to affect these factors.

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## 2.7 Summary

This chapter has described the function and role of the executive branch as one that sets strategic goals and shapes Finnish policies. A tradition of consensus politics in Finland related to security and defence was also highlighted. The distilled presentation of Finnish history provided an account of Finland's past. Here the struggles for independence and often fighting alone provides an explanation for the Finnish identity which is closely linked to the will to defend.

Furthermore, the academic research into the will to defend was presented highlighting its multifaceted approach. Researching which factors influence the will to defend has been a reoccurring avenue of research, where age, gender, trust, national pride, societal position and security situation are some identified factors. However, research has also been criticized for lacking empirically sufficient basis. In Finland it is claimed that the will to defend the country, as a phenomenon, is commonly understood to the point where the individual is expected to understand its meaning without further explanation. At the same time there lacks a commonly agreed upon definition, limiting research and public discussion about the will to defend the country. There is, however, development being made. A relatively new model establishes a more comprehensive way of understanding relationship between the citizen and national defence in a Finnish context is presented.

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## 3 Methods

In this chapter I will first present the research design, the sources used, and the analysis conducted on these. Additionally, I will comment on the language barriers encountered utilizing Finnish documents, as well as the validity, reliability, and limitations of the thesis. The research project is reported and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS (NSD).<sup>20</sup> I did not require any approvals from Forsvarets Forskningsnemnd as no Norwegian military employees were interviewed.

### 3.1 Design

In order to address the problem statement, an exploratory design is employed using a qualitative approach. In the thesis, I will conduct a case study on the executive branch of Finland and its efforts to influence the will to defend the country. The executive branch was chosen as it is a distinct level of government, that has published several documents in relation to the topic. The documents are a primary source from an authoritative level of Finnish politics, and thus provides insight into the policies of the executive branch.

A case study is deemed suitable as it observes a phenomenon, or unit, during a specific time or over a certain time period (Gerring, 2007, p. 19), and investigates relationships within a given setting (Denscombe, 2017, p. 7). Furthermore, a case study is seen as an intensive approach that examines large amounts of data to create a holistic understanding (Grønmo, 2004, p. 105). The data will be based on academic literature, authoritative documents published by the executive branch, and ten expert interviews. Details on these sources and their selection are explained in the next section.

### 3.2 Sources

Three primary avenues of approach are used to obtain sources for this thesis: The initial literature search, the authoritative documents published by the executive branch, and the interviews conducted during this research project. Additional information about the sources is provided below.

#### Literature search

The literature search was conducted in three steps. In the first step I used [www.elicit.org](http://www.elicit.org) to gain an overview of the academic literature related to the will to defend internationally and in Finland. Here

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<sup>20</sup> The formal approval is provided as an attachment.

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the phrases “willingness to defend”, “will to defend” and “defence will” were used. In the second step, I looked at all relevant references included in the documents identified in the first step. The third and final approach was asking for literature suggestions from the informants during the interviews I conducted. These three steps provided a sufficient overview of the available literature.

### **Authoritative documents**

The documents included in this study were selected based on four main factors. Firstly, they needed to be primary sources, published by the executive branch. Secondly, I wanted the documents to be published within the time frame defined in the scope of the thesis. This was primarily to adhere to the defined operationalization and scope. One could, however, easily argue that also analysing previous reports would have been valuable. Thirdly, I wanted the documents to be published in either English or Swedish. This reduced the need for translation assistance and improved the reliability of the study. Lastly, the documents ideally needed to be of a comprehensive and strategic nature, rather than specific to certain areas of politics. By choosing documents that covered a broad political perspective the findings in this study could be seen in relation to the policy focus of the executive branch as a whole. This was achieved in two of the documents, while the third was related to defence policy. This provided a comprehensive overview of the political agenda at the executive branch level, while also offering a detailed examination of the defence policy area.

While not essential in the selection process, it is advantageous that the chosen documents were released at various points throughout the current administration's term. One was published at the beginning, one at the middle, and one at the end of the term. This provides an overview of the general strategy rather than just a snapshot in time. While it would be ideal to also examine different versions of the same document released at different times, this was not possible within the defined time frame in the scope of the thesis. A description of the selected authoritative documents is presented below.

If the selected authoritative documents referenced other reports that provided substantial insight to the topic discussed, they were also addressed. This was done on two instances and the results chapter presents findings from a Parliamentary Committee Report which looks into defence obligation and a report by the Security Committee of Finnish Parliament which describes the national security strategy. The Parliamentary Committee report was written in Finnish and had to be translated. The translation process is discussed in detail later.

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Both reports are closely connected to the executive branch as the former is published by the executive branch, and the latter receives its mandate from the executive branch. Even though they do not fulfil the inclusion criteria in the selection of documents for this study, both reports address important aspects of the will to defend the country and provide substantial added context.

*Government Program - In English (Finnish Government, 2019)*

- Published in December 2019 the Government Program presented the Marin Government policy aims when she took office. The document provides an overview of the policy focus of the executive branch.

*Government's Defence Report – In English (Finnish Government, 2021b)*

- Published in September of 2021, the Government Defence Report is an account to Parliament published every four years; the document provides guidelines that maintain and develop Finland's defence capability. As the will to defend has a clear connection to national defence and security in Finland the document has a high relevance for the thesis.

*Government's Report on the Future – In Swedish (Finnish Government, 2023)*

- Published in January of 2023, the Government's Report on the Future aims to build a shared understanding of what Finland will look like in the next generations. The report's systematic reflections on the future lay the foundation for proactive governance. It is published at the end of each Governmental term, this being the sixth edition. In the same way as the Governmental Program, the document provides a comprehensive overview of the policy focus of the executive branch.

## **Interviews**

To gain a more nuanced understanding of the literature and the topic within the Finnish context, the findings from the document analysis are examined in conjunction with the expert interviews. The interviews could also serve to corroborate or add nuance to the authoritative documents (Tansey, 2007, p. 4). This was deemed beneficial for two main reasons, the first being my lack of knowledge of the Finnish culture and the Finnish approach to the will to defend the country. The interviews provided me with further insight into Finnish culture and politics. This aids me in obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of the Finnish context in which the phenomenon must be understood. This is due to the informants possibly having a more comprehensive understanding of the matters at hand (Andersen, 2006, p. 281). The second was the language barrier when researching a topic in a

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language I was not familiar with. The authoritative documents were in English and Swedish, but other relevant literature was in Finnish, restricting my ability to obtain these without going through the filter of a translation. The interviews, which were conducted in English, mitigated this restriction.

I used a combination of two sampling methods to select the informants, the first being snowball sampling and the second being purposive sampling. Snowball sampling entails contacting relevant informants, who then provide referrals to additional informants, creating a snowball effect. Purposive sampling is done by letting the study's purpose and population knowledge guide the selection process (Tansey, 2007, pp. 11–12). Ten informants<sup>21</sup> were selected based on their current or prior work concerning the will to defend or Finnish defence and security politics in general. This approach is a non-probability sampling and therefore limits possible generalisations based on the findings in these interviews (Tansey, 2007, p. 10). However, the objective was not to generalise but to establish a diverse pool of interviewees from different academic disciplines, institutions, and areas, including individuals both working within and outside the defence forces. The study seeks to gain a holistic understanding of efforts to influence the will to defend and will therefore include a broad perspective of opinions. This makes the relationship between the interviews selected as samples and the sample population much less important (Tansey, 2007, p. 10).

Through the literature review, I became aware of a research project<sup>22</sup> at the Finnish National Defence University focusing on the will to defend and the citizens' relationship to national defence. I contacted participants in this project and asked if they would be willing to participate in my research and if they had suggestions for other relevant participants. Through this approach, I was able to get an interview with Teemu Tallberg, professor at the National Defence University, Teemu Häkkinen, postdoctoral researcher and Adjunct Professor at the University of Jyväskylä, and Linda Hart, Doctor of Social Sciences at Laura University of Applied Sciences and Jarkko Kosonen who wrote his PhD on the research leading to the Citizen's defence relation model. All have worked academically with research related specifically to the will to defend the country.

I also contacted the Finnish Defence Command as the literature review revealed that the will to defend is closely connected to the Finnish Defence Forces. To access informants from the Finnish Defence Forces, I had to send an application. This was approved, and I was provided two informants. These were from the strategic planning section. This section plans and develops the Finnish defence

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<sup>21</sup> See the attachments for additional details on the informants.

<sup>22</sup> See <https://maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu.fi/en/tahto2-research-project>

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system (Finnish Defence Forces, 2023), and is therefore relevant to this thesis. The two informants were Lieutenant Commander Simon Källman and Major Valtteri Riehungangas. They provided insight into how the Defence Forces view their role in influencing the will to defend the country.

I also contacted two informants not specifically focused on the will to defend the country but rather Finnish security policy in general. These were research fellow Mina Ålander at the Finnish Institute for International Affairs (FIIA) and postdoctoral fellow Iro Särkkä also with the FIIA. They provided insight into the will to defend the country from a more general perspective.

The Advisory Board for Defence Information (ABDI) was also contacted because their reports have a prominent position in the Finnish discussion on the will to defend the country. Their General secretary, Heli Santela, agreed to participate in my research. She also provided suggestions for politicians relevant to my topic. However, I was unsuccessful when seeking to interview politicians from the executive and legislative level. This is not critical as it can also be argued that the lack of political figures in the interviews brings a certain level of objectivity to the topic.

A semi-structured approach was used when conducting the interviews. The semi-structured approach is suitable if the interviewer has limited knowledge about the topic at hand and if the interview seeks to gain additional insight (Leech, 2002, p. 665). An interview guide was written based on my literature search, and shared with all the participants a week before the interviews. The guide contained a definition of the will to defend the country as outlined in the thesis and an explanation of the phrasing used in the questions. This establishes a shared understanding of the phenomenon among the interviewees and clarifies the meaning of important terminology used during the interviews. This was done so that there would be a common platform from which to understand the will to defend the country as a phenomenon. However, it was still a key goal to explore the informants' understanding of the topic to be able to understand informants' answers in light of their frame of reference (Andersen, 2006, p. 282).

There are several ways in which I may have had a direct or indirect influence on the information collected in the interviews. My definitions of the “the will to defend”, “influence” and “policies” may have affected the informants' answers. This can hinder interesting perspectives from appearing. At the same time, it was emphasized both in the interview guide provided a week before the interviews, and during the interviews themselves, that the informants are encouraged to present and discuss details which could nuance my definitions. Additionally, my definitions were intentionally broad,

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leaving room for personal interpretation. The effect of me as a researcher, and my pre-conceptions of expected findings, should also be considered. There is a risk that I consciously or unconsciously adapt the empiric findings from the interviews to match my own assumptions and that I am not open to reassessing my interpretations or expectations (Andersen, 2006, p. 287). This was, however, a known factor during the interviews, and the interviews were conducted in an objective manner with this in mind. The interview structure was designed to ease into more complex questions and follow up on things mentioned by the informants, seeking to gain a good rapport (Leech, 2002, p. 665).

The interviews were conducted in English to minimize the need for translation and increase the information's reliability. The proficiency in English varied among the informants. For some the use of English as a working language is limited, while others are close to native speakers. This variation in the informants and my own proficiency in the English language may have had an impact on the findings in this study. This includes the informants not being able to formulate their responses as precisely as they would have in Finnish and my ability to pick up on this and ask suitable follow up questions. However, the informants were encouraged to backtrack during the interview if they felt something should be clarified and they were also given a last open-ended question where they could reiterate or clarify if needed. All participants were also sent the write-ups of their statements and my interpretations in this thesis, and asked to confirm or clarify. By writing the thesis in English, I also eliminated the need to translate the information into another language. This helped reduce the risk of details or nuances being lost in translation.

The interviews took place between February 1<sup>st</sup> and February 10<sup>th</sup>. Seven were conducted in person in various locations in Helsinki and three digitally over Teams. Physical interviews were preferred as these are better suited to create trust and transparency (D. I. Jakobsen, 2015). However, this was not possible due to availability, and therefore the digital option was deemed sufficient in these cases and viewed as better than not having the interviews at all.

In terms of selecting informants, the scope could have been broader or narrower to obtain a more comprehensive or nuanced understanding. A more general approach could have involved engaging academics from fields beyond those already included or investing more time in gaining access to politicians. On the other hand, a narrower approach might have entailed exploring a specific policy area in more depth.



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## 3.3 Analysis

The authoritative documents and the expert interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis. It should be noted that although identifying the explicitly stated policies mainly relies on the selected authoritative documents as they are primary sources, the interviews are also employed to provide additional insights into the findings. As such, there is an iterative process between the analysis of the documents and the interviews, but the two are analysed and presented separately.

### Thematic analysis

The documents and the interviews were analysed using the Thematic Analysis approach developed by Braun and Clark (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This structured approach to studying qualitative data through a 6-step framework aims at identifying themes of interest. By not basing it on any theoretical or epistemological perspectives, the approach is a method rather than a methodology. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) underline the value of adopting such an approach in order to establish credibility in qualitative research. The thematic analysis provides an “accessible and theoretically flexible approach” to the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77). It is worth noting that the original method was developed in relation to psychological research. It has since become a widely used tool for qualitative data analysis (Terry et al., 2017, p. 17). All six steps included in the method are listed below (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). The subtext describes the approach taken during this thesis for both the documents and the interviews.

#### The six steps of thematic analysis

##### **1. Become familiar with the data**

The data, both documents and interviews, were read repeatedly. Any initial thoughts, interpretations, or patterns that emerged were written down during the readings. This step also entailed transcribing the interviews.

##### **2. Generate initial codes**

Interesting elements of the data were identified, and codes were generated based on this. These could relate to the theory, the problem statement, or general perspectives of the thesis. This entailed structuring the thoughts, interpretations, and patterns from step 1. This process was conducted independently for each document and interview.

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### **3. Search for themes**

The codes were grouped into themes, each representing an overarching topic. At this stage, a code could be assigned to multiple themes.

### **4. Review the themes**

The next step involved critically evaluating the themes to determine if they needed to be further subdivided or if the codes were placed correctly under the appropriate themes. This process helped to establish a thematic overview of the data.

### **5. Define the themes**

The themes were refined and clarified to create a description and name for each theme.

### **6. Write-up**

A write-up was conducted using the defined themes as presented in the results chapter.

## **Analysis of the authoritative documents**

The selection of authoritative documents and the rationale behind their selection have been discussed previously and will not be reiterated here. The sequential process of thematic analysis, as outlined in the previous section, entailed identifying codes and themes in the authoritative documents. An essential element of this process involved identifying all relevant references within the documents. To achieve this, keyword searches were conducted in addition to reading the documents. In the Governmental Program and the Defence Policy, which are in English, they were “defend”, “will to defend”, “willingness to defend”, “national defence”, and “defence will”. In the Future Report, which is in Swedish, the words “försvarsviljan”, “försvarsvilja”, “försvar”, “viljan” and “vilja” were used. Additionally, different variations<sup>23</sup> of the word “Maanpuolustustahto” were searched for in the Finnish versions of all three as these phrases are closely linked to the research topic as described earlier.

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<sup>23</sup> These are “Maanpuolustustahdon”, “Maanpuolustustahtoon”, “Maanpuolustustahdolle”, “Maanpuolustustahtoa” and “Maanpuolustustahtoaan”. All being translated in the published English versions of the documents as variations of “will to defend”, “will to defend the country”, “defence will”, and “will for national defence”.

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## Analysis of the Interviews

The interviews were transcribed in a two-step process. The first step is creating a rough outline, where details such as punctuation and grammar are not essential. This made it possible to become more familiar with the data and identify interesting aspects as described in step one of the thematic analyses. At this stage, the focus was on identifying any information relevant to the problem statement itself, but particularly in relation to the already analysed authoritative documents. However, it was not an aim in itself to confirm or deny any of the findings from the authoritative documents but rather to build on the knowledge obtained.

Following this, a second transcribing round ensured the transcription was verbatim. It also allowed me to dive deeper into the interviews and generate codes as described in step two of the thematic analysis. Each interview was then analyzed separately, searching for themes as described in step three. The themes were then reviewed and defined as described in steps four and five. Here the data from the interviews were combined, and a more comprehensive picture began to form. Finally, the data was written up in relation to the identified themes and is presented as shown in the results chapter.

## 3.4 Language barrier

The thesis incorporates a range of Norwegian, Swedish, English, and Finnish documents. I have been able to use Norwegian and English documents easily due to a working proficiency in both. Since I am familiar with Swedish, which is quite similar to Norwegian, reading text in Swedish has also been without significant issues. Finnish documents are crucial to the research, as the problem statement is set in a Finnish context. Therefore, a considerable amount of relevant academic literature is in Finnish. Since the language is unfamiliar to the author, digital translation tools are utilised.<sup>24</sup> It is important to note that the translations are not used as direct quotes but rather to identify key themes or topics. The translated texts are also cross-checked with a secondary source when possible, which could either be an English document referred to in the Finnish one or by confirming with the original author to ensure that the translation accurately captures the intended meaning. This process

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<sup>24</sup> Through the page <https://translate.google.no/>, complete documents have been feed to the software and complete documents in English have been created. Finnish has been labeled as the input language and English has the output. The software adheres to page chronology from the original document meaning that the translated content on a given page is the same as the content on the original page.

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was particularly important when adapting the Citizen's Defence Relationship Model to English<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, several of the sources I used were recommended to me by experts in the field, which also increased their credibility.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

Critically viewing the validity and reliability of the data is essential as it provides credibility to the analysis and findings presented in the thesis. Validity describes the extent to which the data collected and the methods employed are suitable and extensive enough to answer the problem statement. High reliability indicates that the data has been collected and treated in a way so other researchers may achieve the same results (Grønmo, 2004, pp. 237, 240–241). In this section, I will discuss the steps taken to increase the validity and reliability in this thesis.

#### **Validity**

Validity can be divided into internal and external validity. Internal validity describes whether the design of the thesis, including method, conduct, and results are suitable to answer the problem statement. External validity examines whether the thesis findings can be generalised (Andrade, 2018).

Several steps have been taken to increase the internal validity of this study. The case study includes several sources that approach the topic from different angles. The authoritative documents are primary sources published by the executive branch. They describe policy in general, and policies influencing the will to defend specifically. This has provided sufficient data to answer the problem statement and increases the internal validity of the thesis by examining the phenomenon from different perspectives (Bryman, 2016, s.386). The semi-structured interviews have also been conducted in a way which seeks to provide comprehensive and holistic insight into the topic, further increasing the internal validity. During the interviews the informants were also encouraged to expand or explore specific topics if they viewed them as relevant to the topic at hand. This reduces the risk of biased information collection and therefore increases internal validity. Finally, by travelling to Finland to conduct the majority of the interviews I increased transparency (D. I. Jakobsen, 2015) and therefore reduced the possibility of miscommunications.

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<sup>25</sup> Both through an interview as part of the general data collection, but also through correspondence specifically related to creating an English version of the Defence Relationship Model.

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Achieving external validity can often present a challenge in qualitative case study research, where there can be limited sources (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). By utilising both authoritative documents and expert interviews in this thesis the challenges of limited sources have been reduced. Furthermore, by describing unique aspects of Finnish culture and history in this thesis I seek to establish a clear understanding of the context in which the conclusions are drawn. This improves generalisation by providing information that aids the interpretation of findings in other contexts.

There are several aspects to the defined scope which contributed to reducing external validity. First, the defined time frame reduces generalisation across other time periods in Finland. The executive branch has to deal with unique political and social issues, which vary over time. Policies and political goals will therefore also vary over time. Studying the topic within a specific country also reduces generalisation to other countries. It is important to exercise caution when generalising as significant variations related to historical, social, and cultural factors influence how it is understood in a national context. However, this limitation was necessary to stay within the length constraints of the thesis.

## **Reliability**

To achieve high validity one has to have high reliability (Hellevik, 2002, p. 53). Reliability indicates to which degree the results are replicable. Data collection and processing of the data should be done in such a way that other researchers using the same procedure would find the same results (Grønmo, 2004, pp. 240–241). Achieving high reliability is especially challenging in qualitative studies. Studies like this require a degree of interpretation as there are few absolutes in social sciences (Gerring, 2007, p. 70). Several steps have been taken to increase reliability.

By employing semi-structured interviews, I established a framework for the collection of data. This increases the reliability as the procedure is more replicable compared to non-structured interviews. In addition, the interview guide set the basis for all interviews by presenting the background for the research project and my position as a researcher. This increases reliability by reducing the possibility of miscommunication. The interviews were transcribed based on sound recordings to increase these sources' reliability. This meant that I could analyse the informants based on their exact statements.

Utilising English as the language of the thesis has both positive and negative effects on reliability. There was no need to translate any of the interviews or a majority of the analysed document to Norwegian, increasing reliability. But since English is not my first language, it may impair my understanding compared to that of a native speaker. This could reduce reliability as other

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researchers may interpret findings differently. It may also reduce internal validity if nuances are lost in language barriers. However, this has largely been mitigated due to the good translation and proofreading tools available. When using Finnish documents, these have been translated and interpreted using several methods. Firstly, the relevant sections have been translated using Google Translate. The translation was then cross-checked by either seeing it in conjunction with the original source or verifying my understanding with the author. However, the translated documents have been used cautiously by not directly quoting them but rather presenting topics or perspectives identified in them.

Additionally, using thematic analysis on both the authoritative documents and the interviews provides a clear and structured process that can be replicated. Although this increases reliability, there is a certain amount of interpretation related to identifying codes and themes in this approach. This presents a challenge to the reliability (Gerring, 2007, p. 70). Another aspect which affects reliability is my reflexivity. Through my background and experience, I have developed preconceptions on the topic, and they may influence the results. My limited understanding of Finnish culture and history also affected my preconceptions. This has been especially important to keep in mind when conducting interviews and interpreting findings. However, my lack of understanding of Finnish culture and identity compared to that of a native Finn provides a unique approach. Few researchers have studied the Finnish will to defend without being Finns themselves. This is valuable as the Finnish culture and identity are very closely related to the phenomenon of the will to defend the country.

### **3.6 Limitations**

The thesis does not cover the general political discourse in Finland related to the will to defend. It lacks information from sources other than the executive level, such as discussions in Parliament, in media, or among citizens, resulting in a limited understanding of policies and their implementation. This also limits generalisation. At the same time, limiting the thesis to the executive branch has provided a possibility to explore this perspective in added detail.

I have limited the research period to that of Sanna Marin's government. This provides a confined timeframe to analyse, but is of little importance in itself. Sanna Marin's government is not the main interest, but rather the executive branch of Finland. This limitation is a weakness, as the executive branch may have a particular inclination and is not necessarily representative for previous or future ones. A historical approach could provide a better understanding of the topic because Governments

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often make incremental changes rather than major ones. These changes may be easier to identify in a historical perspective. However, this approach was not chosen, and the findings are therefore confined to the defined time period. This limits generalization. However, if the analysed documents or interviews point to relevant data outside this time period that is of importance to answering the problem statement, this will be addressed.

Whether the attempts to influence the will to defend are found to be effective will not be analysed in this thesis, nor will there be a normative discussion in terms of how the influence should be conducted. Further research should actively assess the effect of influencing the will to defend through different policies. This would create a more robust empirical viewpoint from which to discuss policies and provide decision-makers with knowledge-based policies.

### **3.7 Summary**

In this chapter I first presented the overarching design, explaining why a case study was chosen and the pros and cons of this. The sources used in the thesis were then described, where special focus was placed on the process of selecting these. Then the approach to analysing the authoritative documents and the interviews was presented, explaining the different steps taken in the process. The use of digital tools in the thesis and issues related to language barriers were also addressed, focusing on how this may have impacted the research. Then a short discussion on the validity and reliability of the thesis, and steps taken to increase these are described.

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## 4 Results

This chapter is structured into two principal sections. The first part presents the results from the analysed authoritative documents, followed by the results of the interviews. The results are presented through overarching themes as identified through the thematic analysis. While this division has been established to enhance the chapter's structure, there is some overlap between the two sections. This overlap will be explored in the discussion section when answering the research questions of the thesis and, thus, the problem statement.

### 4.1 Authoritative documents

This section will first present the identified themes from the thematic analysis. When presenting the themes and their references in the authoritative documents, they will not be presented individually but rather as a holistic finding. Before delving into findings related to the identified themes, I will first address the absence of a clear definition of what the will to defend is as a phenomenon. Following this, the importance of defence policy and its connection to the will to defend is presented. Then the connection between the will to defend the country and influence from various factors, including broad-spectrum influence, national unity, resilience, and engagement, is addressed. Engagement will be addressed in additional detail as this is a key policy area closely linked to influencing the will to defend the country. The findings will also reference two sources outside the selected authoritative documents presented earlier. These are *The Security Strategy for Society*, published by the Security Committee, and *Development of Conscription and fulfilling national defence obligation*, published by a Parliamentary Committee.

#### Themes

In line with the Thematic Analysis method, initial codes were identified and further developed into themes. The following six themes were identified: 1) The importance of the will to defend, 2) The function of the will to defend as part of defence capability, 3) The strength of the will to defend, 4) Developing the will to defend, 5) What influences the will to defend, 6) The connection between conscription and the will to defend. The interview references were then structured within the separate themes to create a holistic understanding of each theme. A reference from the interviews could be categorised into more than one theme. The identified themes and their occurrence in terms of references are presented below. The number in parentheses indicates the number of theme occurrences within a given document.



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### **Government Program**

- The importance of the will to defend (1)
- The function of the will to defend as part of defence capability (2)
- The strength of the will to defend (1)
- Developing the will to defend (1)
- What influences the will to defend (3)
- The connection between conscription and the will to defend (1)

### **Government's Defence Report**

- The importance of the will to defend (0)
- The function of the will to defend as part of defence capability (5)
- The strength of the will to defend (3)
- Developing the will to defend (3)
- What influences the will to defend (5)
- The connection between conscription and the will to defend (1)

### **Government's Report on the Future**

- The importance of the will to defend (1)
- The function of the will to defend as part of defence capability (0)
- The strength of the will to defend (0)
- Developing the will to defend (0)
- What influences the will to defend (1)
- The connection between conscription and the will to defend (0)

In relation to the problem statement and the research questions, the most relevant findings are linked to themes four and five, which focus on – “Developing the will to defend” and “What influences the will to defend”, respectively. However, all the themes provide insight and important aspects are presented in the following section.

## **Definition**

None of the authoritative documents provides a distinct definition of the will to defend the country in general or in a Finnish context. There are several perspectives on its function, its high level, its relation to conscription, how it is developed and how it is influenced, but none on what it actually is. There are sections within the documents specifically dedicated to defining concepts like this, such as in the Defence Report, which has a section for “Concept, definitions and explanations” (Finnish

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Government, 2021b, pp. 60–63). However, no definition can be found. It seems they assume there is no need to explain further or define the will to defend as a phenomenon in the documents.

## **Defence policy**

Several of the documents indicate that addressing the will to defend the country as a phenomenon is a policy area of defence and security. This was identified in the second theme: The function of the will to defend as part of defence capability.

Firstly, the Defence Report references the will to defend to a much larger degree than the Government Program and the Future Report, eleven versus four and one, respectively. However, it is important to note that this paper does not adopt a quantitative approach, so this is more of an observation than a finding of considerable importance. In addition, the Government Program and the Future Report can be seen as more strategic and comprehensive documents that do not delve into the specifics of a particular policy area as the Defence Policy does. Secondly, all the references in the Government Program pertaining to the will to defend the country are located in the document's sections related to defence policy. This suggests that within the Government Program, the will to defend is perceived as a defence-related issue. Thirdly, there appears to be a clear connection in the documents between the will to defend the country and conscription. For example, the Defence Report states that "the conscription-based defence solution is built on a strong will to defend the country" (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 26). And the Government Program states that "General conscription will be maintained to meet the needs of national military defence. Conscription contributes to social cohesion and builds a foundation for the will to defend the country." (Finnish Government, 2019, p. 100)

## **Rhetoric**

There is rhetoric in the Government Program and the Defence Report describing the importance and level of the will to defend the country. The Government Program states that the will to defend is "strong" and "high" and that Finland's defence capability is built upon it (Finnish Government, 2019, pp. 98, 100). The Defence Report also describes the will to defend as "strong" and "high, adding that it is foundational to Finland's defence. Furthermore, the Defence Report states that the will to defend is a cornerstone of the Finnish defence, alongside conscription, a trained reserve and defending the entire country (Finnish Government, 2021b, pp. 8, 18, 19, 26). It should be noted that

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the documents do not provide any references to empirical knowledge or statistics when describing the will to defend as high and strong.

### **Broad-spectrum influence<sup>26</sup>**

The Defence Report describes the operational surroundings, with attention given to the connection between broad-spectrum influence and the will to defend the country. However, instead of examining its own ways of influencing the will to defend, the report suggests that the will to defend may be a target of broad-spectrum influence from others by stating that broad-spectrum influence is a threat by “creating uncertainty among the population and by weakening the people’s will to defend the country.” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 18). Here, broad-spectrum influence is viewed as a systematic approach combining multiple methods to exploit society’s vulnerabilities to shake the foundations of a country’s defence capability). This may include “exerting military pressure, draining the resources of the defence system, and those of society as a whole.” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 18)

### **Resilience**

The documents make several connections between the will to defend and resilience. Resilience is highlighted as an important factor in themes four and five: Developing the will to defend and influencing the will to defend. Resilience is defined in the Defence Report as “The ability of individuals and communities to maintain their performance in changing circumstances, the readiness to face disruptions and crises and the ability to recover from them” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 63). The Future Report states that psychological resilience can be influenced through education, services, knowledge, and training (Finnish Government, 2023, p. 265) and emphasises the significance of sustaining mental toughness, determination, and the will to defend the country (Finnish Government, 2023, p. 265). The Security Strategy for Society<sup>27</sup> connects resilience and the

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<sup>26</sup> In the 2021 Defence report, broad-spectrum influencing is described as “a threat perception used in the context of Finnish military planning. It includes hybrid influencing, but it also contains the open use of military force.” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 18) Hybrid influence is described as “In hybrid influencing, a state or other external actor systematically employs a variety of methods, concurrently or sequentially, with an aim to influence the target’s vulnerabilities to reach its own goals. The range of methods is wide, including political, diplomatic, economic and military methods, and informational and cyber.” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 62)

<sup>27</sup> The Security Strategy for Society, published in 2017, was created based on broad cooperation and published by the Security Committee setting agendas for alle administrative branches of the government. (Security Committee, 2017, p. 1)

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will to defend even closer. Psychological resilience is viewed as a vital function of comprehensive security<sup>28</sup>. It states that “Changes in our security environment put the focus on society’s resilience in which the citizens’ will to defend their country is of key importance” (Security Committee, 2017, p. 18) and “Psychological resilience is expressed in the citizens’ will to defend their country’s independence” (Security Committee, 2017, p. 22). In the same document, the importance of influencing resilience is also emphasised: “Creating and maintaining psychological resilience is a long-standing and cross-cutting effort involving different administrative branches.” (Security Committee, 2017, p. 22) and “Every effort is made to ensure that citizens’ will to defend Finland remains high.” (Security Committee, 2017, p. 38). Strengthening psychological resilience is therefore seen as one way to influence the will to defend the country.

To influence resilience, education and training are used “to maintain the nation’s psychological and social cohesion and enhance people’s trust in society as well as a function strengthening citizens’ will to defend Finland.” (Security Committee, 2017, p. 85). The importance of education as a factor that influences resilience is further elaborated: “Participation and active citizenship are incorporated into the curricula of the early childhood education, pre-primary education, basic education and upper secondary education in an all-encompassing manner.” and “Children, young people and adults are provided with information on Finnish values, the safety of the population and society as well as information about responsible behaviour in different life situations.” (Security Committee, 2017, p. 85).

Low resilience is also mentioned as a possible vulnerability in relation to broad-spectrum influence in the Defence Report (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 18). Here it is claimed that the will to defend can strengthen “the crisis resilience of Finnish society” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 19). The Future Report also has several references to influencing psychological resilience. It states that participation, as well as a sense of security, justice and trust in society, its institutions and other citizens, are building blocks for psychological resilience (Finnish Government, 2023, p. 150). It also highlights that a growing number of individual choices, and an uncertain future, cause anxiety. Societal division, where some are left on the outside, influences participation in society. This represents a certain set of values which can be linked to the will to defend. Policies connecting values to the will to defend will be explored in the next section.

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<sup>28</sup> A “Finnish cooperation-based preparedness model, in which the vital functions of society are jointly managed by the authorities, business operators, organisations and citizens.” (Security Committee, 2017, p. 7).

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## Values

When evaluating factors that contribute to the development of, and the influence on, the will to defend (themes four and five) values in society are identified as key in the authoritative documents. Two of the contributing values are a sense of national unity and having something worth defending. According to the Defence Report, fundamental components of the will to defend the country include “national unity” and “the belief that Finland and the Finnish way of life is worth defending” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 26). There are no details about what this unity and Finnish way of life actually is.

Although the Government Program does not make a direct connection between values and the will to defend, the program's title is “Inclusive and Competent Finland” (Finnish Government, 2019). This indicates that the program has an overarching focus on implementing social policies. These policies are meant to offer “a sense of security and hope for a better future” and address “growing tensions between people with different backgrounds.” (Finnish Government, 2019, pp. 4, 8). Furthermore, it is stated that the current system’s “well-functioning health and social services and solid education lay a foundation that guarantees all people equal opportunities to pursue their dreams.” The goal is to create a socially sustainable society where “everyone is on board.” (Finnish Government, 2019, pp. 8–9). As previously mentioned, according to the studied documents, social inclusion and participation in society have an influence on the will to defend.

The Future Report does not directly link values to the will to defend but focuses largely on social issues, such as the increased inequality between different regions and individuals in Finland (Finnish Government, 2023, p. 30). It states that uneven demographic development, divergent regional and urban development, changes in the citizen’s values and attitudes and international migration might pose challenges in the future (Finnish Government, 2023, p. 41). These challenges are seen as issues that decision-makers must deal with through policies and will require special attention to prepare Finland for the future (Finnish Government, 2023, p. 5). Addressing these issues appropriately may enhance the population's belief that Finland is a country worth defending. One can therefore see a clear link between policies addressing these values and their challenges and influencing the will to defend.

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## Engagement

The Government Program and the Defence Report both emphasise the importance of engaging Finnish citizens in defence and security matters. The documents studied link a stronger engagement to a higher will to defend. This engagement includes conscription and military service, but also non-military service and defence obligations in general. Both military and non-military engagement are addressed in the studied documents.

Emphasis is placed on maintaining and developing military service through conscription. This aim can be seen in the Defence Policy report, which states that “The conscription-based defence solution is built on a strong will to defend the country” and that conscription can “strengthen equality and the will to defend the country”. Furthermore, the Government Program states that conscription “contributes to social cohesion and builds a foundation for the will to defend the country.” (Finnish Government, 2019, p. 100). Even though the document does not provide any evidence for causality, it is still emphasised that conscription should remain “the effective and generally accepted foundation of defence” (Finnish Government, 2021b, pp. 26, 39).

According to the Government Program, volunteer training also plays a significant role in ensuring comprehensive security through “maintaining combat readiness and the will to defend the country.” (Finnish Government, 2019, p. 101). The Defence Policy Report emphasises the importance of volunteer training for the entire population by stating that “Increasing the number of women completing voluntary military service is a goal”. It further elaborates that: “By increasing the number of women, we will deepen the societal impact of national defence and improve the will to defend the country.” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 39). These efforts aim to increase equality, reduce discrimination, and increase engagement in the younger Finnish generations (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 39). Knowledge of “comprehensive security, the national defence obligation and general conscription” is highlighted. Through these non-military ways of increasing knowledge of security-related issues, the executive branch seeks to strengthen engagement and thus influence the will to defend the country (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 40).

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## Parliamentary Committee Report<sup>29</sup>

In recent years, Finland also has discussed the development of military and non-military means of service in relation to defence obligations. The Government tasked a Parliamentary committee to “look into ways to develop general conscription and to meet national defence obligations” (Finnish Government, 2019, p. 100). The report, published in 2021, is titled *Development of Conscription and fulfilling National Defence Obligations*. Its mandate was based on “the needs of the military, national defence and must generate additional operational value. The identified options for development must also strengthen equality and the will to defend the country.” (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 39). As mentioned in the methods chapter, this report is not viewed as part of official policy by the executive branch and has, therefore, not been a part of the Thematic Analysis. However, the mandate for the report was given by the Government, and its contents address core aspects of the thesis. Therefore, it is a valuable document to explore.

The Parliamentary Committee Report focuses on developing engagement and support for military and non-military service. Engagement is, as previously mentioned, an important factor, and the report links it to comprehensive security and preparedness of society as a whole (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 5). The key aim is to establish a positive attitude towards participating in and supporting national defence efforts, whether this is through military or non-military efforts. This includes the development of conscription and reserve service in general, making it more attractive, beneficial and equal. This includes increasing the number of people starting military service and reducing the number discontinuing it (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 5). Increasing participation in military service is seen to positively influence the will to defend the country (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 72).

The report also highlights the development of civil service and volunteer service (Finnish Government, 2021c, pp. 7–8). From a non-military perspective, the development and expansion of civil service can increase engagement. This is a more neutral approach to engagement, as personal convictions may prevent individuals from taking part in military service (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 83). The individual’s relationship with national defence is a key component is (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 75). The report recommends improving this relationship through knowledge

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<sup>29</sup> The committee report is in Finnish, creating a language obstacle. Although the English summary presents some crucial findings, additional information was obtained using digital translation tools. As the translation adheres to page numbers, its location in the document is accurate, but direct quotes from the report will not be utilized. A translated version is provided as an attachment to the thesis.

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created in the school system. It also notes that a positive experience of the time served influences the individual's will to defend the country. Development in areas such as the connection with Defence Forces, utilisation during service and personal competency is assessed to positively affect the will to defend the country (Finnish Government, 2021c, pp. 72–73). Maintaining a positive relationship to defence-related matters, also after active military service, indicates increased importance of the time in the reserve forces. Voluntary training, in general, is also emphasised.

The Parliamentary Committee Report claims that increasing participation among women will promote gender equality and strengthen the will to defend the country (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 74). Developing a system of participation and a service experience perceived as equal and positive is therefore highlighted. The perception of equality is highlighted as especially important, being viewed as essential for acceptance of the system as a whole (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 51). In this regard, attention is drawn to the fact that only men are obligated to perform military service today. One possible improvement in this area could be extending the call-up system to include both men and women. The report does not state a best practice in this regard. Still, it emphasises the importance of a system built on widely shared perceptions of rights, responsibilities, and justice in society as a whole. Furthermore, the report claims that alternatives and adjustments to today's system must reflect the values of a good society; democracy, equality, fairness and joint responsibility (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 57). Developing the conscription system to ensure its acceptance in society is vital because conscription is seen as an important component influencing citizens' will to defend.

The report also argues that a more multifaceted debate on defence obligations is needed (Finnish Government, 2021c, p. 52). It claims that a more precise and structured view of the relationship between the population and national defence should be developed. This can be used for more targeted measures to influence the will to defend the country. Here the report references the citizen's defence relation model and its framing and positioning factors. These factors represent a more comprehensive way of addressing the will to defend as a phenomenon. The Model is also used when the report has specific advice (Finnish Government, 2021c, pp. 75, 76, 86) on how defence obligations should be developed.



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## 4.2 Summary of the authoritative documents

The study finds that there is a strong connection between influencing the will to defend the country and defence policy in the authoritative documents. Emphasis is placed on strengthening the relationship between citizens and defence-related matters in general, including military service, through conscription, voluntary training, reserves, and non-military service through civil service. Engaging with young people and encouraging more women to participate in voluntary service is also highlighted. The documents recognise that the will to defend the country can be undermined in different ways, including military pressure and diverting resources away from defence systems and society. This can be countered through policies that increase and promote resilience, cohesion, and national unity, according to the documents included in the study. However, the documents do not provide clear guidance on who is responsible for safeguarding the will to defend or which policies can achieve this goal. In addition, the documents do not define what the will to defend the country entails.

## 4.3 Interviews

This section will present the findings from the interviews before they are discussed in relation to the findings from the authoritative documents in chapter five. First, the themes, as identified through the thematic analysis are presented, and then the findings from each theme are presented.

### Themes

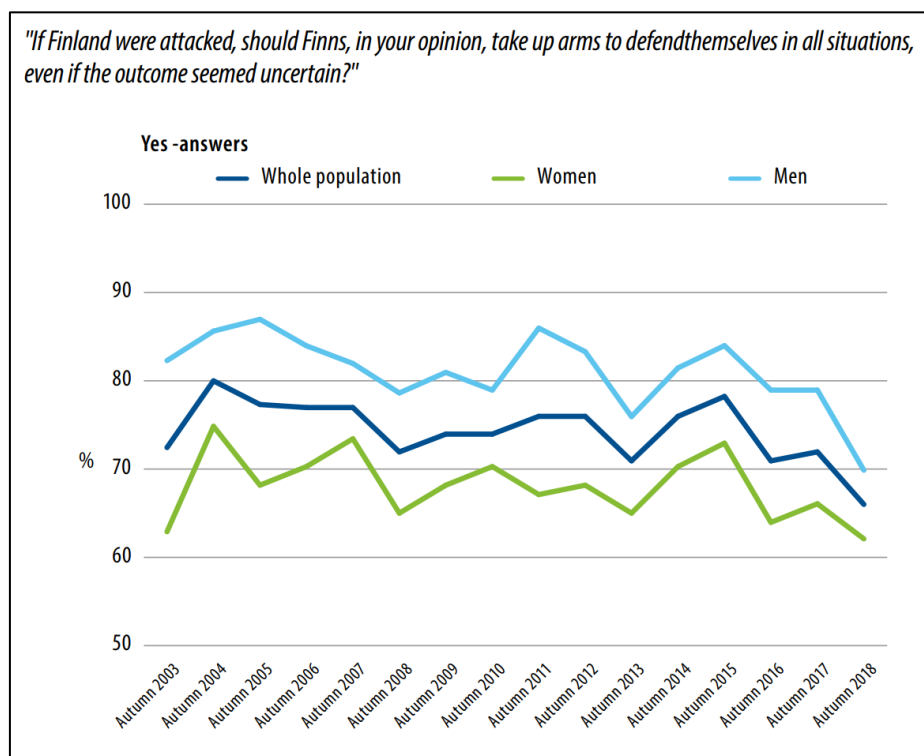
Just over 9 hours and 56 minutes of interviews were recorded, including all ten participants. Since the transcription of the interviews totalled roughly 77,000 words, it has not been possible to present all of the data. Therefore, overarching themes in line with the chosen research questions were created through thematic analysis. These differ slightly from the themes identified in the analysis of the authoritative documents. The themes identified are as follows:

- The relationship between politics and the will to defend the country
- Factors influencing the will to defend the country
- Understanding the will to defend the country
- Challenges related to the will to defend the country

In the following section, key findings are presented in relation to their identified themes.

## The relationship between politics and the will to defend the country

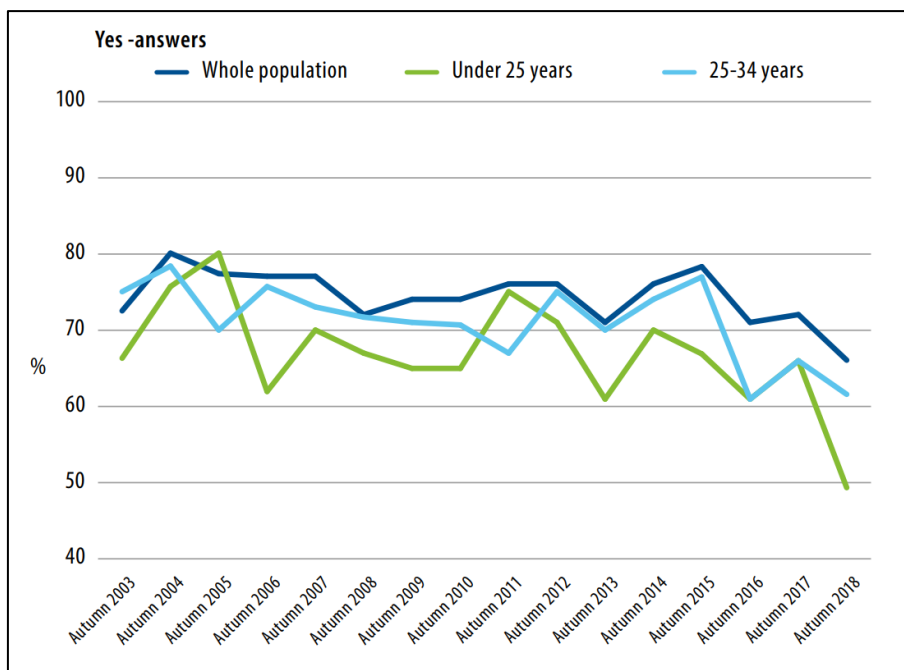
For Teemu Häkkinen, a political historian, influencing the will to defend the country has primarily been a form of discourse rather than an area of active policy-making. The willingness to defend is seen as a political tool used in a rhetorical sense rather than in an active effort to influence it (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023; T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Häkkinen states that remarks are often made concerning the level of the will to defend, its importance and that it is a fundamental cornerstone of Finnish defence policy, but seldom in relation to how it is influenced. He points out two exceptions, the first being in the early 1960s, when concrete political measures such as teaching principles of Finnish defence policy in schools were implemented. This educational route to influencing the will to defend was stalled in 1975 after left-wing criticism. They argued that it should be up to the individual to make up their own mind. The second instance of direct political influence, according to Häkkinen, occurred in 2018, when a decline in the ABDI<sup>30</sup> polls related to the will to defend led to specific discussions about why and how this should be addressed. The declining levels referenced are from the annual ABDI report addressing opinion on foreign and security policy. Figure 3 and 4 are from the 2018 report and shows the will to defend based on gender (figure 3) and age (figure 4). The question for both figures is the same.



**Figure 3.** ABDI report from 2018 indicated a declining will to defend by gender

**Source:** (ABDI, 2018, p. 10)

<sup>30</sup> Advisory Board for Defence Information



**Figure 4.** ABDI report from 2018 indicated a declining will to defend by age

**Source:** (ABDI, 2018, p. 10)

Heli Santela, the General Secretary of the ABDI, also claims there were concerns in Parliament due to the reduced levels of the will to defend (H. Santela, personal communication, February 3, 2023). Following this, the topic of influencing the will to defend was explicitly discussed in Parliament as a thematic debate for the first time (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023). Häkkinen describes this as a result of “moral panic”, leading to a discussion focusing on educating young people about the value and importance of defence and improving the conscription service (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023). This was one of the reasons behind establishing a Parliamentary Committee, which published a report looking into conscription and defence obligation.

Several interviewees highlight influencing the will to defend through defence policy in general. According to Heli Santela, the willingness to defend the country is discussed through defence policy within the political map (H. Santela, personal communication, February 3, 2023). However, for Santela, the notion of actively influencing the will to defend is strange. She states that the phenomenon of the will to defend the country is best described through the word “Maanpuolustustahto”<sup>31</sup>, which has an emotional meaning for Finns. The term is often used by

<sup>31</sup> Explained in chapter 2.4

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politicians, ministers and presidents in different contexts discussing its importance but not how it is influenced. However, she says that around 15 years ago, there was a specific percentage goal in the defence forces related to maintaining the will to defend (H. Santela, personal communication, February 3, 2023). Such a numeric goal was also mentioned by Teemu Tallberg, a professor at the Finnish National Defence University, stating that a representative from the Ministry of Defence claimed there had previously been a performance target related to the will to defend the country (T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023).

Several informants see a certain political sensitivity related to influencing the population in general and the will to defend in particular. For example, Major Valtteri Riehungangas at the Finnish Defence Command believes there to be a fear that fostering the will to defend the country can be seen in a nationalistic light (V. Riehungangas, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Another aspect is the thought that influencing the will to defend can be seen as an infringement of the private sphere of Finnish citizens. Iro Sarkka, a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Finnish Institute for International Affairs (FIIA), comments on the controversy about the duality between complete individual freedom and layers of national security constraining the individual (I. Sarkka, personal communication, February 2, 2023). She also welcomes a discussion on how far the government can go when influencing the population. Linda Hart, a doctorate in social sciences, has a similar point of view. She states that special measures to foster certain sentiments within the population are a touchy subject (L. Hart, personal communication, February 10, 2023). She further elaborates that the will to defend is often addressed by proxy, discussing unity, cohesion and the need for defence rather than talking about patriotism or the love of one's country.

According to Jarkko Kosonen, who is head of research for the Army training and simulators, and who has written his doctorate degree on the will to defend, there is a certain political sensitivity to discussing the will to defend as it can be perceived as a discussion revolving around what makes a good citizen (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). A topic which he views is difficult to approach from a political side as there are many challenging perspectives in relation to this. This includes Finnish values, Finnish traditions, and Finnish history. In relation to values equality, multiculturalism and the fragmentation of society are mentioned as potential challenges. Kosonen further states that the increasing social divisions are key factors that influence the will to defend because the most successful improve their position, and the worst see the opposite happening. He claims that this, over time, could weaken the feeling of attachment to society and, thus, also the will to defend the country (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023).

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Aki Huhtinen, a professor at the Finnish National Defence University, also states that there is a sensitivity within Finland to monitoring society and individuals, including the thought of measuring what people do and how they behave, drawing parallels to religion in Finland, which is seen a private affair. He adds that in the Finnish political context, one rarely speculates about big topics, concentrating instead on presenting and discussing facts (A.-M. Huhtinen, personal communication, February 7, 2023).

### **Factors influencing the will to defend the country**

None of the informants knew of any clearly stated strategy by the executive branch to influence the will to defend the country. However, many comment on political policies that could influence the will to defend the country. One factor which is highlighted in all the interviews is conscription. A fundamental notion here is that interaction between the citizens and the military system influences the will to defend the country, especially the common experience created by the conscription (V. Riehungangas, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Simon Källman, a Lieutenant Colonel at the Finnish Defence Command, describes that this common experience is created regardless of differences such as wealth, ethnicity or education. (S. Källman, personal communication, February 1, 2023; V. Riehungangas, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Källman states that the conscription system is an integral part of society. Tallberg also describes the conscription system as an institutional structure which maintains the will to defend the country, stating further that support for the system and participation in military service is also a show of defence will (T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Professor Huhtinen also emphasises the crucial role of conscription, highlighting that it usually occurs in a formative period where one creates an identity (A.-M. Huhtinen, personal communication, February 7, 2023).

However, Riehungangas states that there is no intentional use of conscription to influence on the will to defend at the unit level in the defence forces. During his ten years working at a unit level with conscripts, he claims that no social tasks, such as actively influencing the will to defend, were given to his unit. Their goal was to make the conscription service as good as possible and seek to make as many as possible complete their service (V. Riehungangas, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Källman also informs that all conscripts complete a questionnaire at the end of their service. If certain aspects are rated negatively, there is a clear will to correct these anomalies (S. Källman, personal communication, February 1, 2023).

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Although there is only obligatory conscription for males and there are possibilities to be exempt due to health and personal beliefs, interviewees emphasise the secondary effects of conscription on society. Mina Ålander, a research fellow at the Finnish Institute for International Affairs, points out that the individuals who complete military service also have other friends, partners, and/or family and may share knowledge and beliefs about security and defence with their private sphere (M. Ålander, personal communication, February 3, 2023). However, some also claim that this positive connection between specific policies and the will to defend is empirically weak. Linda Hart misses data supporting the conception that completing military service is good for both the individual and the nation (L. Hart, personal communication, February 10, 2023). Teemu Häkkinen also alludes to this, stating that within the political discourse, there is a common understanding of a causal connection between different policy areas and the will to defend. However, there is no concrete evidence of this. One example is conscription, which is often argued to influence the will to defend. Still, such arguments are based on general ideas rather than evidence (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023). Furthermore, Häkkinen states that he has recognised uncertainty among personnel in the Finnish Defence Forces about how the task to promote the will to defend the country is to be done.

Another factor which is emphasised in many of the interviews is the important role that history plays concerning the will to defend. Research fellow Mina Ålander claims that the historical experience of Finland is a foundational factor for the will to defend, including the Winter War and the Continuation War (M. Ålander, personal communication, February 3, 2023) described in a previous chapter. She claims that the Winter War is part of Finnish identity, upholding an identity of fighting back and defending what you believe in. Teemu Häkkinen also builds on this thought by stating that a historical narrative centres on a strong unity within the nation and that the Finnish people can withstand difficult circumstances. The Winter War is often used as an example of this spirit (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023). According to Simon Källman, history has created a sound foundation for the will to defend, anchored deeply in the Finnish legacy and strategic culture (S. Källman, personal communication, February 1, 2023). He adds that this has made the will to defend quite insensitive to influence, other than when shocks of a strategic nature occur, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, young people's knowledge of the past is decreasing. Teemu Tallberg describes the development of a generational gap in cultural memory, causing an increasing distance between the citizens of Finland and past wartime experiences (T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023).

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Several interviewees link the perception of threat to influencing the will to defend. Heli Santela believes that the record high levels of willingness to defend after the Russian invasion of Ukraine supports this perception (H. Santela, personal communication, February 3, 2023). Several others also mention the threat from Russia in relation to having an influence on the will to defend the country (M. Ålander, personal communication, February 3, 2023; J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023; I. Sarkka, personal communication, February 2, 2023).

To have something worth defending is also highlighted as an important factor influencing the will to defend. There must be something within society or the state that you live in that you perceive as important enough to defend. This theme of having a country worth defending is repeated in the political discourse, according to Teemu Häkkinen (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023). Several sub-factors are mentioned in relation to influencing this perception of worth. Heli Santela highlights independence and sovereignty as two of these (H. Santela, personal communication, February 3, 2023). Several of the interviewees are even more specific and point to more concrete perspectives, such as having a society which takes care of you through schools, health care and the welfare system (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023; J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023; T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023). A well-functioning Finnish society gives citizens a feeling of ownership, and this creates a notion of wanting to protect it (M. Ålander, personal communication, February 3, 2023). Iro Sarkka draws a parallel to the war in Ukraine, where Finnish politicians have argued for supporting Ukraine as this is part of defending democracy and a Western way of life (I. Sarkka, personal communication, February 2, 2023). This is part of a broader collection of values that are important and which the citizens of a society relate to. Ålander also highlights the influence of seeing the Finnish society in comparison to others, such as seeing their democratic welfare state in comparison to Russia. This comparison can strengthen a sense of wanting to defend Finland from threats (M. Ålander, personal communication, February 3, 2023).

Jarkko Kosonen and Teemu Tallberg refer to the Citizens Defence Relations Model, which they helped create when discussing what influences the will to defend. In line with the model, they emphasise perspectives such as threat perception, feeling of belonging to society and having something worth defending. These factors frame the citizens' relationship with national defence and security (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023; T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023). They also emphasise the importance of engagement as a factor that influences the will to defend, focusing on attitude, trust, agency, and competence. Teemu

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Tallberg explains that the development of the Citizen's Defence Relation Model was done in part by funding from the Ministry of Defence (T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Such research on the will to defend the country is important because increased knowledge of the phenomenon will inform politicians on how the will to defend can be actively influenced. Also, the Ministry of Education has funded research which aims to explore cognitive defence. This might provide further evidence as to what actually influences the will to defend the country (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023).

## **Understanding the will to defend the country**

Among the academics who have researched the will to defend, it is highlighted that there are many things we just do not know about the phenomenon (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023; L. Hart, personal communication, February 10, 2023; J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023; T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023). In Finland, Heli Santela says that no academic definition is used to define the will to defend (H. Santela, personal communication, February 3, 2023).

Teemu Tallberg highlights that the narrow approach to discussing the will to defend was one of the motivations for creating the Citizens Defence Relations Model. He claims that the phenomenon has a political force in Finland through debates and discussion but criticises a lack of academic exploration of the phenomenon (T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023). Linda Hart describes the will to defend as a subjective political and emotive opinion and says that few studies empirically shed light on how this is influenced (L. Hart, personal communication, February 10, 2023). Both Teemu Häkkinen and Jarkko Kosonen say that we don't really know what influences the will to defend and why (T. Häkkinen, personal communication, February 6, 2023; J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023).

## **Challenges related to influencing the will to defend the country**

Several informants point to challenges that limit an active political approach to influencing the will to defend. One of the challenges that were mentioned by a majority of the informants was the fact that there has been no need to influence the will to defend since it has historically been high in polls. As such, the will to defend has largely been taken for granted (I. Sarkka, personal communication, February 2, 2023). Major Riehungangas has a similar claim: That, in some sense, the high level of willingness to defend has been taken for granted over time (V. Riehungangas, personal



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communication, February 1, 2023). Heli Santala points out that after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the polling on the will to defend hit record-high numbers, further reducing the necessity of addressing it (H. Santela, personal communication, February 3, 2023). Also, the fact that security and defence are currently such a prominent part of public discourse in Finland ensures politicians are not motivated to push this agenda (A.-M. Huhtinen, personal communication, February 7, 2023).

The Finnish principle of governmental departments also poses a challenge because each department primarily deals with topics related to its own sector. Jarkko Kosonen explains that issues pertaining to multiple governmental departments, such as the will to defend, are sometimes not dealt with comprehensively (J. Kosonen, personal communication, February 3, 2023). Teemu Tallberg also sees the societal division of security labour as a challenge when developing a comprehensive strategy relating to the will to defend. A key issue is the individual's duties and understanding who does what in different crisis situations (T. Tallberg, personal communication, February 1, 2023). This division of security labour can also be seen in relation to age and gender and to the non-military system such as civil service (L. Hart, personal communication, February 10, 2023). The responsibility for defining and clarifying security labour is shared amongst several departments. This poses a challenge when creating an overarching strategy on the division of security labour, making it difficult to actively influence the will to defend.

## **4.4 Summary of the interviews**

This section has presented the findings from the interview in four themes. The first was how the will to defend the country was addressed politically in Finland. Findings here included that there is no knowledge of a clearly defined aim to influence the will to defend from the executive level among the experts interviewed. The will to defend the country is viewed more as a rhetorical tool than an active approach to influence. It is also within the political landscape viewed as a part of defence policy. The interviews also identified several aspects of political sensitivity in relation to openly discussing and influencing the will to defend the country. In addition, there are several other factors viewed as important by the informants in relation to influencing the will to defend the country. These included commitment to national defence through conscription, the importance of Finnish history, the threat perception, and Finland being a country worth defending. Thirdly, different aspects of understanding the phenomenon were also presented. Here, the empirically insufficient definition and understanding of the concept were highlighted by several of the informants. Finally, challenges related to influencing the will to defend the country was presented, including the phenomenon being

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taken for granted due to the historically high level of support and the fact that the will to defend as a phenomenon touches broad parts of Finnish society and that the executive level to a small degree has mechanisms to deal with cross-sectoral issues.

## **4.5 Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings from the authoritative documents and the interviews. The authoritative documents have provided insight into the policies and perspectives of the executive branch. As such, they have provided a basis for discussing policies which have a stated aim to influence the will to defend. The interviews, on the other hand, gave a broader perspective on the phenomenon, providing both a nuance to the findings from the authoritative documents but also shedding light on perspectives not addressed in the documents.

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## 5 Discussion

This chapter is divided into three parts. The different parts will discuss the three different research questions:

- *What policies presented in authoritative documents by the executive branch of Finland specifically state that they aim to influence the will to defend the country?*
- *What policies may have an influence on the will to defend the country in Finland today without this being stated explicitly as an aim by the executive branch?*
- *What factors affect the political efforts to influence the will to defend the country in Finland today?*

While the first research question identifies what I have called *stated policies*, the second identifies *non-stated policies*. The key difference between the two is whether the executive branch specifically states an aim to influence the will to defend through the identified policies. The third research question will build on the previous discussions. It explores what factors specific to Finland affect the political approach to influencing the will to defend the country.

### 5.1 Stated policies

The first research question<sup>32</sup>, seeks to identify policies where there is a specifically stated aim to influence the will to defend the country by the executive branch. The findings mostly stem from the authoritative documents published by the executive branch. Four key findings will be presented and discussed: 1) That policies aiming to influence the will to defend are primarily related to defence and security, 2) That these policies focus heavily on engaging the citizen, 3) That some policies focusing on Finnish values aim to influence the will to defend, and 4) That the political approach to influencing the will to defend the country seems to be unclear and ambiguous.

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<sup>32</sup> What policies presented in authoritative documents by the executive branch of Finland specifically state that they aim to influence the will to defend the country?

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### 5.1.1 Defence policy

A key finding in this study is that the will to defend the country plays a key factor in Finnish security and defence thinking. The relationship between defence policy and the will to defend is also clearly stated in the analysed authoritative documents. According to the Finnish government, the will to defend is one of four core factors of national defence, along with conscription, a trained reserve and the defence of the entire country (Finnish Government, 2019, p. 98). It is, therefore, not surprising that addressing the will to defend the country and aiming to influence it is addressed as part of defence policy. Promoting the will to defend is also defined as a task through the Defence Forces Act and the Act on Voluntary National Defence. It is also highlighted in several of the interviews that addressing the will to defend “belongs” to defence policy.

### 5.1.2 Engagement

The citizens’ engagement in national defence and security appears to be a key area of policy making. By creating engagement and interaction between the citizens of Finland and national defence, the executive branch seeks to influence the will to defend the country. This study finds that engagement is attempted strengthened in several different ways.

This study finds that maintaining and developing conscription is one of the most important factors when the executive branch attempts to influence the will to defend. This finding is apparent through several documents. The Defence Policy report states that a conscription-based defence solution is built on a strong will to defend the country (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 26) and that further development of conscription should strengthen equality and the will to defend the country. Conscription is seen to contribute to social cohesion and builds a strong foundation for the will to defend the country (Finnish Government, 2019, p. 100). As pointed out in Chapter 2, conscription has been an important factor in Finnish identity and national defence for decades. Conscription has been a part of the national narrative concerning domestic security (Hadar & Häkkinen, 2022, p. 190). It is seen to bring Finns together, promote equality, and teach important social skills while also serving as the backbone of the defence. This follows a historical perception in Finland that mandatory service, like conscription, and a country's willingness to defend itself mutually reinforce one another.

A decline in public support for conscription, as seen in the 2018 ABDI report, can be viewed as a significant concern for a nation that has built its defence strategy on the premise of conscription and a will to defend the country. Decline in support of conscription can negatively influence the population's will to defend. Conscription is therefore seen as both the problem and the solution. The

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problem being its declining popularity, and the solution is to maintain its acceptance. The executive branch, therefore, states a need to ensure that conscription remains a generally accepted foundation of defence (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 39), in order to positively influence the will to defend.

From a non-military perspective, there is a focus on volunteer training, increasing participation of women, and engaging the younger generation. The aim is to foster greater involvement in the general population in matters related to defence and security. This strategy has been found in several of the analysed authoritative documents, stating a specific aim of influencing the will to defend. The efforts to engage a more diverse range of the population, specifically women and younger individuals, can be viewed as a response to a decline in their willingness to defend the country in recent years. As previously shown in Figures 4 and 5 an ABDI survey conducted in 2018 showed a decrease in the overall will to defend. This was particularly evident among women and individuals under the age of 25. Since the Act on Voluntary National Defence states that the Defence Forces shall “maintain national defence will and skills” (Ministry of Defence, 2007b), a loss of engagement must be actively dealt with. Policies therefore actively seek to engage parts of the population through non-military service.

### **5.1.3 Values**

The study finds that the Defence Report makes a connection between the will to defend and certain values in Finnish society. It states that national unity, and the belief that the Finnish way of life is worth defending, are important in this regard (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 26). However, the Defence Report does not provide any additional details as to what this national unity, or what the Finnish way of life, actually entails or how to achieve it. As such, the formulations as they are presented in the document may create more questions than answers. How do they intend to create national unity and how will they make Finland a country worth defending? And even more importantly, who is responsible for achieving this? These are important questions that the document itself does not answer. One could argue that the citizens should be aware of any political efforts seeking to influence the population to be willing to defend their country. If promoting Finnish values is part of influencing the will to defend, this should be clearly stated so that it can be openly discussed. Other authoritative documents also focus heavily on Finnish values but do not explicitly state that policies related to these are ways of influencing the will to defend. They are therefore viewed as non-stated policies and will be discussed in a later section.

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#### 5.1.4 Ambiguity

When analysing the authoritative documents, this study finds that none of them provide a clear definition of the will to defend. As presented in Chapter 2, this is not unique to Finland. Research has shown that the will to defend as a phenomenon lacks a commonly agreed-upon definition. This limits academic and political discourse to imprecise notions. This lack of definition also affects to which degree one can study causal mechanisms related to influencing the will to defend the country. Nowhere in the authoritative documents do they reference empirical evidence when stating specific policies aimed at influencing the will to defend.

One could argue that this is the nature of politics. Politicians must navigate a landscape of few absolutes and need to assess all policies in relation to each other. This leads to policies on the will to defend being developed with a certain amount of vagueness and ambiguity. This, in turn, leads to a non-comprehensive and insufficient political framework to deal with the topic at hand. There can be several possible reasons for this ambiguous political approach to influencing the will to defend the country, and these will be further addressed in the third research question.

The study also finds that none of the informants were aware of any clearly stated policies by the executive branch aiming to influence the will to defend. One possible explanation for this may be that although the executive branch states that there are policies aiming to influence the will to defend, the policies are not perceived this way. Another possible explanation could be that for the Finns, the will to defend, conscription and national defence have, over time, become internalised to such a degree that talking about influencing it becomes a strange notion. After the Second World War the Finnish government implemented a territorial defence doctrine, where the will to defend became an important aspect of defence policy. This idea has since been developed and nurtured but without a comprehensive discussion as to why and how. Due to a small population and limited resources, the only realistic Finnish approach to national defence relied heavily on conscription. This, in turn, was based on a strong will to defend the country. Conscription and the will to defend have over time become intertwined and internalised in the Finnish population. Today, both of these elements remain crucial to Finland's defence policy, as the government acknowledges that "the conscription-based defence solution is built on a strong will to defend the country" (Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 26). This can explain why the informants, to a large degree, do not see the will to defend as an area the executive branch specifically aims to influence.

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## 5.2 Non-stated policies

The first research question focused on policies where there are specifically stated aims by the executive branch to influence the will to defend the country in Finland. The second research question<sup>33</sup> focuses on identifying policies which may influence the will to defend without this being a specifically stated aim by the executive branch. I have called these non-stated policies. Establishing the division between the stated and non-stated policies is not intended to create a comparative discussion but rather an effort to achieve a more holistic understanding. Four key findings will be presented and discussed: 1) That Finnish history and identity influence the will to defend, 2) That Finnish values and social policies influence the will to defend, 3) That the perception of threat influences the will to defend, and 4) That several of the identified non-stated policies are now becoming part of political discourse.

This section will also discuss the report of the Parliamentary Committee on defence obligation. Because this report is not published by the executive branch itself, it falls under non-stated policies.

### 5.2.1 History

This study finds that several of the informants place a heavy emphasis on the historical legacy of Finland in relation to the will to defend. As described in Chapter 2, Finland has fought for their independence on many occasions throughout history and has been a victim of the power struggles of larger nations. The Second World War and Winter War are particularly important to understanding the Finnish identity and national narrative. The interviewees describe an identity of fighting back, defending what you believe in and withstanding difficult circumstances. Policies defining how veterans are treated in general, and on Independence Day, are by many of the informants seen as a way of keeping that narrative alive. Young people are also introduced to Finnish history both in schools and in their homes. This helps internalise the historical Finnish identity. In the minds of several of the informants, this internalisation of Finnish history is a key element in both understanding the will to defend and how it is influenced today.

Educating students in Finnish schools on Finnish defence policy and war history to further a national identity is not without its problems. Left-wing parties have previously criticised efforts to teach principles of Finnish defence policies, arguing that it should be up to the individual to make up their own mind. Therefore, one can argue that the executive branch might be hesitant to clearly state

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<sup>33</sup> What policies may have an influence on the will to defend the country in Finland today without this being stated explicitly as an aim by the executive branch?

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policies linking school curriculum to strengthening the will to defend, as this has previously been interpreted as propaganda. On the other hand, some would claim that these policies are just a continuation of previous traditions in education and not an active attempt to influence the will to defend.

### **5.2.2 Values**

When analysing the interviews, this study found that the informants highlight the importance of values when attempting to influence the will to defend. The Defence Policy makes references to values such as national unity and the Finnish way of life in relation to the will to defend. Although not specifically stated in the other documents, the informants describe a more comprehensive picture of this factor. They claim that policies that create a positive perception of the Finnish society, promote unity and belonging, as well as the overall perception that Finland is worth protecting, have a positive influence on the will to defend the country. In contrast, challenges in society, such as fragmentation, inequality, and general division between those who have and those who do not, can negatively influence the will to defend, according to the informants. Addressing these issues is therefore important to maintain or strengthen the citizens' will to defend the country. Over time negative developments in society can exert pressure on the Finnish will to defend. Though not stated as policies specifically intended to influence the will to defend, both the Government Program and the Future Report place heavy focus on implementing social policies to improve the quality of life in Finland. This is part of creating a nation worth defending, which in turn influences the will to defend.

However, an executive branch working towards a more just society with a high standard of living across social classes is expected in most Nordic countries. These policies are clearly not only designed to influence the will to defend. Influencing the will to defend may therefore be seen as a secondary effect of these policies, rather than a stated aim. However, if the executive branch connects these policy areas with influencing the will to defend without directly stating it, this reduces transparency. By stating its aim to influence, the executive branch would provide the citizens with a possibility to discuss the aim of such policies.

### **5.2.3 Threat**

This study found no official policies by the executive branch that specifically use the perception of threat to influence the will to defend. However, the informants highlight the perception of threats to national security as a non-stated influence on the will to defend. Threats to national security can



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enhance a sense of national unity. The results previously described show that both the authoritative documents and the informants see strengthening national unity as a way of influencing the will to defend. The recently increased threat level due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine may be a possible explanation for the record-high levels of the willingness to defend as measured in the ABDI report. One of the informants also highlights the influence of seeing the Finnish society in comparison to other diverging nations, such as Russia. This can strengthen a sense of wanting to defend Finland from threats.

Threat assessments published by national security agencies have become a regular occurrence in many countries. These publications provide the citizens with a general picture of threats to society and national security. The study of authoritative documents has not found that such publications are specifically aimed at influencing the will to defend. However, they may still have a non-stated influence.

#### **5.2.4 Non-stated policies entering political discourse**

The document analysis shows that in recent years there has been development in how the will to defend is discussed and understood politically. Though not an official document published by the executive branch, both the Government Program and the Defence Policy Report references this document. The Parliamentary Committee Report supports several of the points made by the informants on non-stated influences. These include the importance of engagement, increased participation in military and non-military service and making it more attractive to a wider population. Improving the individual's relationship to national defence through knowledge created in the school system and promoting gender equality are also highlighted. In general, the Parliamentary Committee recommends development which aims to establish a way for the security of Finland to involve as many people as possible, regardless of age, gender, or background.

The report also utilises the Citizens' Defence Relations Model to create a more holistic understanding of what influences the will to defend. In this model, the will to defend is understood in a broader and more comprehensive way, which may provide additional depth and value to the conversation around influencing it. The report discusses both framing and positioning factors, which have been described in detail in Chapter 2, in relation to the will to defend the country.

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## 5.3 Factors affecting the political approach

The third research question<sup>34</sup> explores the factors that affect the current political efforts to influence the will to defend the country. I will argue that three key findings are especially important: 1) That there has been a lack of necessity to actively influence the will to defend, 2) That lack of empirical evidence limits proven causal mechanisms, and 3) That political sensitivity related to the will to defend may limit political discourse and policy-making.

### 5.3.1 Lack of necessity

The findings in this study suggest that there has not been a specific need to actively influence the will to defend in Finland. One reason for this, as highlighted by several informants, is that the will to defend has historically been high and, therefore, may be taken for granted.

History is important to understanding the modern Finnish narrative. The will to defend is strongly embedded in the Finnish identity through several important wars and struggles to become an independent nation. The experience of a nation often fighting alone to maintain its independence has created a lasting legacy in the minds of Finns. The memory of the past has been passed on through generations, creating an insensitivity to external influence on this legacy. The will to defend has been seen as strong, without any perception that it is threatened. As such, policies from the executive branch that are explicitly aimed at influencing the will to defend have not been needed. This may have led to the executive branch not having to address influencing it in a comprehensive manner but rather having a policy of continuity with a heavy emphasis on the established system with conscription at its core.

### 5.3.2 Lack of evidence

The study has revealed a lack of empirical knowledge of the will to defend as a phenomenon, including a lack of a unifying definition. As the document analysis revealed, none of the documents examined provide a precise definition of what the will to defend the country is, even though the Defence Report has a section specifically dedicated to "concepts, definitions, and explanations"(Finnish Government, 2021b, p. 60). An authoritative document should secure a common understanding amongst its readers of this important phenomenon. On the other hand, as shown in Chapter 2, the will to defend seems to have a commonly understood meaning in Finnish

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<sup>34</sup> What factors affect the political efforts to influence the will to defend the country in Finland today?

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society, encompassed in the word “Maanpuolustustahto”. Individuals are expected to comprehend its meaning without further explanation (Sinkko, 2015, p. 6), reinforcing the idea that the phenomenon has a widely accepted understanding in Finnish society and may not need to be further defined. Though this may be sufficient for general public discourse, it is not sufficient as a basis for academic research.

There is also a lack of research on causal mechanisms between policies and influencing the citizens’ will to defend. The literature study showed that some research has been conducted both internationally and in Finland, but these studies have been criticised for being too simplistic in nature to provide solid empirical evidence. Several informants highlight that this has an effect on the political approach to the will to defend. Without this empirical foundation, one can understand why politicians might be hesitant to form policies specifically stated to influence the will to defend. This can result in politicians developing ambiguous policies without clearly stated aims.

### **5.3.3 Political sensitivity**

This study has shown that there is a certain political sensitivity related to discussing the will to defend that might limit political discourse and policy-making. The aforementioned lack of empirical evidence might restrict the discussion because Finnish politicians rarely speak without knowing the facts (A.-M. Huhtinen, personal communication, February 7, 2023). Another important finding is that, according to informants, discussing the will to defend can be associated with negative notions of nationalism and patriotism. Special measures to foster certain sentiments within the population are therefore seen as sensitive subjects. This may deter politicians from voicing opinions or stating policies related to this topic. The will to defend is, therefore, often discussed by proxy rather than in direct terms. A third area of sensitivity is measuring what people do and how they behave. In Finland, this is seen as a strictly private sphere. Several informants describe a Finnish culture of “keeping the private life private” and that the government should not interfere.

In sum, I argue that these sensitivities lead to an imprecise and passive political approach to addressing the will to defend the country. For many nations, this would not necessarily be an issue, but for Finland, where the will to defend is a cornerstone of the defence strategy, this poses a threat to national security. There lies political and public importance in how the phenomenon is discussed and influenced.

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## 6 Conclusions

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, I will attempt to answer the problem statement of the thesis through key findings in the literature review and the analysis of authoritative documents and expert interviews. These have been explored by identifying policies where influencing the will to defend has either been a specifically stated aim by the executive branch, called stated policies, or where the aim is not stated specifically, called non-stated policies. Later I will explore what these findings mean for future research on the topic.

### 6.1 Answering the problem statement

With the discussion from the three research questions in hand, I will now attempt to answer the problem statement of the thesis: *How is the Finnish will to defend the country influenced from a political level in Finland?*

The Finnish will to defend the country is influenced by both political policies that specifically state this aim and policies that do not state the aim specifically. Including both stated and non-stated policies offers a more comprehensive picture of how the will to defend is influenced from a political level. The policies which state this aim directly are primarily related to defence and security. Some of these policies relate to increasing the citizens' engagement in both military and non-military activities, with a special focus on including women and creating engagement within the younger generation. A key mechanism in relation to this is conscription, where efforts are made to keep it as an integral part of society by taking active measures to develop it. This includes ensuring that military service is perceived as fair and justified. Other policies aim to influence the will to defend by highlighting Finnish values and improving the quality of life through social policies, making Finland a country worth defending. This way of influencing the will to defend was stated in the Defence Policy Report, and highlighted as a non-stated influence in the interviews. Other non-stated policies that may influence the will to defend include upholding a strong historical narrative that connects the Finnish identity to a national defence and policies promoting national unity and defending Finnish values from outside threats. Though the non-stated influences are not a part of official policies, they are now becoming part of the political discourse through a Parliamentary Committee Report, mandated by the executive branch, addressing defence obligations.

There are several important limitations to how the Finnish will to defend can be influenced from a political level. There is a lack of empirical evidence related to what actually influences the will to

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defend. The insufficient knowledge on the topic limits political discourse and possible policymaking. In addition, influencing the will to defend is a politically sensitive topic, and it is therefore often discussed by proxy limiting comprehensive discussions and development. There has also been little need to actively influence the will to defend, as it has historically been high and thus taken for granted. These limitations have contributed to a political approach to influencing the will to defend, from the executive branch, that is characterised by ambiguity rather than clearly defined policy.

It is important to note that when discussing how the will to defend is influenced, one has to accept a certain level of uncertainty. This uncertainty is related to a weak empirical understanding of the will to defend the country as a phenomenon and its causal mechanisms. As such, it could be difficult for anyone to claim with great certainty that one specific area of policy has an influence on the will to defend.

The expected findings presented in Chapter 2 have to some degree, been proven wrong. I expected to find a comprehensive and holistic political approach by the executive branch aimed at influencing the will to defend the country. This expectation was created due to the phenomenon's importance in national defence and because the phenomenon has such a prominent role and position in Finnish society, both today and historically. However, this does not appear to be the case. Although some policies state that the aim is to influence the will to defend, these are not comprehensive enough to be seen as a strategy one could expect from an executive level of politics in matters deemed of national importance.

## **6.2 Further research**

Several perspectives could be explored further in relation to the will to defend. Among the most interesting is developing a better empirical understanding of how the will to defend can be influenced. This can then be used to have a normative discussion about what policies should be implemented. Such debates will facilitate a more comprehensive debate on what political influence the will to defend.

Another avenue which could be interesting to explore is comparing the Finnish approach presented in this thesis to that of other countries. Although several aspects of the thesis limit a broad generalisation to other nations, the division between stated and non-stated policies can be used as a conceptual framework. Although there are unique aspects of Finnish history and culture, there are

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still interesting comparative differences and similarities to explore. In light of this, exploring the Citizen's Defence Relation Model presented in this thesis can also be valuable in a context outside Finland. It represents an ongoing development in understating the citizens' relationship to national defence in general and the will to defend specifically.

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# Figures

Figure 1 - Similarities and differences between total defence before and during an attack.

Figure 2 - Citizen's Defence Relation Model

Figure 3 - ABDI report from 2018 indicating declining will to defend the nation by gender

Figure 4 - ABDI report from 2018 indicating declining will to defend the nation by age

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# Appendix 1 - Informants

## **Aki-Mauri Huhtinen**

Lieutenant Colonel Aki-Mauri Huhtinen is a military professor in the Department of Leadership and Military Pedagogy at the Finnish National Defence University. With expertise in military leadership, command and control, information warfare, and the philosophy of science in military organizational research and the philosophy of war. He has led numerous research and development projects within the Finnish Defence Forces

## **Heli Santela**

As the Secretary General of ABDI, Heli Santela is responsible for leading the organization which operates under the Finnish Ministry of Defence. ABDI's mandate includes organizing seminars, conducting research studies, and providing support to authorities on matters of national defense, security policy, public opinion, and citizens' psychological resilience. Santela also holds a Master of Social Science degree.

## **Iro Särkkä**

At the Finnish Institute for International Affairs (FIIA), Dr. Iro Särkkä serves as a Postdoctoral Fellow. Her areas of specialization cover Finnish, Nordic, French, and European foreign policy, multilateral security frameworks, political behavior, as well as the roles of NATO and the EU. Dr. Särkkä has held various positions such as a researcher, special advisor, and visiting lecturer, among others, in institutions like the Finnish Defence Forces and the National Defence University in Finland. She obtained both a master's degree and a PhD in political science from the University of Helsinki.

## **Jarkko Kosonen**

Jarkko Kosonen currently holds the position of within the Finnish Army Command. He has experience within pedagogy, education, training, military applied sciences, and military sociology, which he studied at the Finnish National Defence University. Kosonen has researched the relationships and commitments between citizens, communities, and institutions. His Ph.D. thesis delved into the commitment of conscripts to national defense and its various tasks.



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### **Linda Hart**

Linda Hart is a scholar in the fields of political and legal sociology, holding a doctorate degree in social sciences. Her research experience encompasses war studies and military matters, with a particular focus on gender, conscription, and the management of diversity within the Finnish Defence Forces. In addition, her research has also delved into studying public opinion and citizen preparedness in the context of war studies.

### **Minna Ålander**

Minna Ålander is currently serving as a Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute for International Affairs (FIIA), working on a research project that seeks to examine Finland's evolving role in Euro-Atlantic security. The project has a particular focus on analyzing Finnish security and defense policy, Nordic defense cooperation, and Northern European security issues. In terms of education, she holds a joint master's degree in international relations from the Free University of Berlin, the Humboldt University of Berlin, and the University of Potsdam.

### **Simon Källman**

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Källman is currently serving at the J5 Strategic Planning sector of the Finnish Defence Command, which is responsible for creating plans and developing the Finnish defense system. Prior to this role, he worked in the Finnish Navy, serving as the military assistant to the Commander of the Navy, where his military background is from.

### **Teemu Tallberg**

Teemu Tallberg is a professor in military sociology at the Finnish National Defense University located in Helsinki. His research focuses on a range of areas, including conscription, the relationship between citizens and national defense, national identity and ethnicity, organization studies, and gender and sexuality in the armed forces. Currently, he is serving as a member of the research branch of ABDI, which is responsible for publishing yearly polls that address issues related to security and defense, including the will to defend. Additionally, he was involved in evaluating the suggestions of the conscription committee, referenced in this thesis, from the perspective of willingness to defend.

### **Teemu Häkkinen**

Teemu Häkkinen is an Adjunct Professor in General History and postdoctoral researcher who specializes in the history of political debate. He has researched policy decision-making and has recently been studying public attitudes toward defense. He has co-edited a peer-reviewed volume on

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the topic of willingness to defend in the Finnish context, and has led research groups investigating the political application of willingness to defend. Additionally, he was involved in evaluating the suggestions of the conscription committee, referenced in this thesis, from the perspective of willingness to defend.

**Valterri Riehungangas**

Major Valterri Riehungangas is currently serving at the J5 Strategic Planning sector of the Finnish Defense Command, which is responsible for creating plans and developing the Finnish defense system. He has a military background in the Finnish Army, where he trained and worked with conscripts for 10 years.

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## Appendix 2 - Information to informants

**Are you interested in taking part in the research project**

### ***“Understanding the Finnish will to defend the country”***

#### **Purpose and background**

The interest in *willingness to defend the country* has increased as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Some have claimed it is a key component in the Ukrainian success. However, the topic is not new and some nations have integrated this willingness in their national defence for decades. One such example is Finland. This project seeks to use their approach as a case study and you are invited to participate in order to answer the research question:

*How can we understand the Finnish will to defend the country  
through Finland's efforts to influence it?*

The project aims at providing insight to the concept of *willingness to defend the country* by analysing how Finland from a political level seek to influence it.

#### **Which institution is responsible for the research project?**

*The Norwegian Defence College (data controller).*

#### **Why are you being asked to participate?**

The project seeks to answer the research question by analysing publicly available documents and interviewing a selection of experts with insight into the Finnish will to defend the country. In total the project seeks to interview between 6-10 individuals.

#### **What does participation involve for you?**

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve participating in an interview. It will take approx. 45-50 minutes and your answers will be recorded electronically.

#### **Participation is voluntary**

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

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### **Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data**

We will only use your personal data for the purpose specified here and we will process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation (the GDPR).

It will only be the student and the supervisor who will have direct access to the recorded interviews. The interview will be stored and analysed on devices owned by the Norwegian Defence College.

You will be interviewed based on your background. This means that your education, experience, and occupation will be included in the thesis and be recognizable in the interview. Besides your professional information no other personal information will be utilized.

### **What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?**

The planned end date of the project is mid July 2023. At this point the recorded interviews will be deleted.

### **Your rights**

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

### **What gives us the right to process your personal data?**

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with National Defence College, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

### **Where can I find out more?**

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- **Student/project leader**  
Einar Opedal, master student, eiopedal@mil.no
- **Supervisor at the National Defence College:**  
Rolf Hobson, professor, rhobson@mil.no
- **Data Protection contact:**  
[/SIKTforsvarets.personvernombud@mil.no](mailto:/SIKTforsvarets.personvernombud@mil.no)

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If you have questions about how data protection has been assessed in this project, contact:

- Data Protection Services, by email: ([personverntjenester@sikt.no](mailto:personverntjenester@sikt.no)) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Rolf Hobson  
(Researcher/supervisor)

Einar Ljung Opedal  
(Student)

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## Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project *Understanding the finish will to defend the country* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an interview*
- to allow statements I provide to be used in the thesis*
- for information about me to be published in a way that I can be recognised*
- that a professional resume can be published as an appendix to the thesis*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end of the project.

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## Appendix 3 - Interview guide

### Background information

The *will to defend the country* is a key component in this interview. Different contexts can produce different definitions for the concept. In this interview, I define it in the following way.

- The *will to defend the country* is a desire of an individual citizen and the citizenry as a whole to defend their own country in peace, crisis and war. The desire entails both a perception that one's own country is worth defending, and a willingness to contribute in order to defend the country.

This definition is intentionally broad to encompass the will to defend the country as a national phenomenon. During the interview, I encourage you to discuss details that can nuance this definition. I also use the following definitions.

- Affect - to have an impact on
- Influence - an attempt to affect (increase or maintain) the will to defend the country
- Today - the period from when Sanna Marin was appointed Prime Minister up until today
- The Executive Branch - the Prime Minister, the ministers, and the ministries of Finland as well as the President of Finland

### Questions

1. Considering the background information for this interview, what is your knowledge of the will to defend the country in general and in Finland specifically?
2. How would you in general describe the possibility to influence the will to defend the country in Finland today?
3. How is influencing the Finnish will to defend the country part of political discourse in Finland?
4. Has the Executive Branch of Finland published official documents (e.g., white papers, reports, or policies) in which the documents clearly state the ambition to influence the Finnish will to defend the country today?
5. In your opinion, what are the most important factors that affect the will to defend the country in Finland today?
  - 5A - Do you have any examples of how these factors themselves are affected by the actions of the Executive Branch of Finland?
  - 5B - Can you explore how these actions by the Executive Branch influence the will to defend the country in Finland today?
  - 5C - Has the potential NATO membership had an impact on the Finnish will to defend the country, and if so, in what way?
6. In what way do the citizens of Finland themselves affect the influence asserted on the will to defend the country in Finland today?
7. How would you compare the influence from the Executive Branch on the will to defend the country compared other institutions of society? (e.g. media, academia, or culture)
8. Are there any other perspectives on the topics we have discussed that you think is relevant?

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# Appendix 4 - NSD/SIKT approval

## Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

**Referansenummer**  
663604

**Vurderingstype**  
Standard

**Dato**  
02.12.2022

**Prosjekttittel**  
Finsk forsvarsvilje

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**  
Forsvarets Høgskole / Forsvarets stabsskole

**Prosjektansvarlig**  
Rolf Hobson

**Student**  
Einar Ljung Opedal

**Prosjektperiode**  
01.08.2022 - 31.05.2023

**Kategorier personopplysninger**  
Alminnelige  
Særlige

**Lovlig grunnlag**  
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)  
Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 30.06.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#) 

### Kommentar

OM VURDERINGEN

Personverntjenester har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

Vi har nå vurdert den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at behandlingen er lovlig, hvis den gjennomføres slik den er beskrevet i meldeskjemaet med dialog og vedlegg.

### VIKTIG INFORMASJON TIL DEG

Du må lagre, sende og sikre dataene i tråd med retningslinjene til din institusjon. Dette betyr at du må bruke leverandører for spørreskjema, skylagring, videosamtale o.l. som institusjonen din har avtale med. Vi gir generelle råd rundt dette, men det er institusjonens egne retningslinjer for informasjonssikkerhet som gjelder.

### DEL PROSJEKTET MED PROSJEKTANSVARLIG

Det er obligatorisk for studenter å dele meldeskjemaet med prosjektansvarlig (veileder). Det gjøres ved å trykke på "Del prosjekt" i meldeskjemaet. Om prosjektansvarlig ikke svarer på invitasjonen innen en uke må han/hun inviteres på nytt.

### TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til datoen oppgitt i meldeskjemaet.

### LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a, jf. art. 9, nr. 2 bokstav a.

### DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Personverntjenester vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

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Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

#### FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Vi legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

#### MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: <https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema> Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

#### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson hos oss: Siri Tenden

Lykke til med prosjektet!



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## **Appendix 5 - Parliamentary Committee Report**

The translated Parliamentary Committee report, *Development of conscription and fulfilling national defence obligation*, is provided as a separate attachment to the thesis.