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Use of Securitization in Legitimizing *Zeitenwende*: Shift in German Foreign
Policy in Response to the War in Ukraine.

Bachelor's thesis

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ABSTRACT

Three days after the beginning of the fully fledged Russian invasion the German chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a major turning point in its foreign and security policy called *Zeitenwende*. The *Zeitenwende* seeks to reform on five courses of action: foreign aid, sanctions, international military cooperation, investment into national security and energy security.

The aim of this thesis is to test the hypothesis that the German government has used securitization to legitimise the *Zeitenwende*. To test the hypothesis, I analyse how the German government has legitimised the *Zeitenwende* and give my assessment on the suitability of using the securitization mechanism to explain the process.

The paper concludes that the securitization mechanism is suitable to analyse the legitimisation of the *Zeitenwende*. The German chancellor Olaf Scholz has securitized the Russian war in Ukraine to portray the five courses of action, as necessary. Furthermore, I conclude that the securitization has been successful, there has been notable public opinion change concerning the extraordinary measures in the analysed period, and each course of action has at least the support of the relative majority. At least in rhetoric Germany has in fact started the reform of its foreign and security policy. The extent to which the promises have been realised varies across the courses of action.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In February 2022, the German chancellor announced a historic reform in its foreign and defence policy, called the *Zeitenwende*. Meaning a change of times or a turning point in the way in which Germany approaches its foreign policy. Shifting from a policy of so-called *Wandel durch Handel*, which sought to democratise authoritarian regimes through economic growth and integration, to a policy of confrontation and deterrence. This change has been accompanied by a securitization process, whereby the German government has framed the Russian war in Ukraine as a security threat to Germany and Europe in general.

This thesis seeks to test the hypothesis that the German government has used securitization to legitimise the extraordinary measures (the *Zeitenwende*) to the German public. This is done by answering the two research questions of how the German government has legitimised the *Zeitenwende* (1), and whether the process can be described through the securitization theory (2).

The thesis will begin by providing a theoretical framework based on securitization theory, which argues that security threats are not objective facts, but rather constructed through political discourse and power relations. We will also provide an overview of the historical context of German foreign and defence policy, including the *Ostpolitik*, German pacifism, *Wandel durch Handel*, and the close ties between the political and business elites of Germany and Russia, as well as the public opinion concerning these issues.

The methodology section will provide an overview of the methods used for data collection and analysis. The methodological approaches resemble the structure of the securitization theory, with an analysis of the securitizing acts, the audience's acceptance, and the resulting policy changes. This approach will allow us to test the mechanism of securitization on the case study by identifying the key actors, strategies, and factors of the legitimization process.

In the analysis section, I will provide a detailed analysis of the securitizing acts, such as the Chancellor's speeches, used to legitimise the shift in Germany's foreign and defence policy. I will also analyse the audience's acceptance of the securitization attempt, drawing on data from several public opinion polls. Finally, I will analyse the policy changes resulting from the securitization process, comparing the result with the data from the speeches and public opinion polls.

This will provide the answer to the research questions and allow for a conclusion on the correctness of the hypothesis. This thesis contributes to the literature on securitization and foreign policy by assessing the securitization mechanism on the empirical events of the German foreign and defence policy shift. It also sheds light on the complex Russo-German relationship, and the role of securitization in shaping it.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The following section will explain recent historical context of the courses of action proposed in the *Zeitenwende* speech to give an idea of the starting position of the process. Additionally, the theoretical framework, the securitization theory as well as the operational definitions of the study in hand, are introduced.

1.1. Securitization Theory

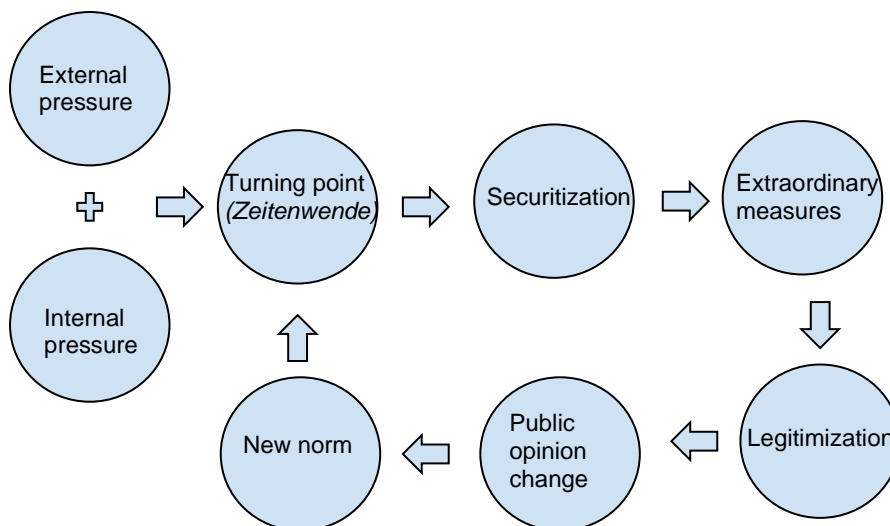
For much of the history of international relations and security studies, the concept of security has been firmly linked to the state. The basic concepts and approaches to security in international theories developed rapidly since the end of the Second World War. This period also marked the rise of the United States as a major power. In his classic article (1950), Hans Morgenthau explained how America was building a new hegemony in international relations, based on its own immediate interests, and having lost the moral principles and ideals of the past. Morgenthau spoke of how political thought and political action were drifting apart (Morgenthau 1950: 844). This gave rise to the strengthening of the school of realism. Realists associate security with the state and power. In this context, the study of security issues implied a focus on the level of strategic relations between states (Booth 2013). Realists have been criticised for being too rigid and positivist in their thinking. The end of the Cold War also brought about a major shift in the approach to security. Barry Buzan and others at the Conflict and Peace Research Institute (COPRI) in Copenhagen in the 1990s had already written on a variety of non-state-centric security issues, but in the second half of the 1990s they formulated securitization as one of the key concepts of a new strand of critical security studies. For example, in an article published in 1997 (Buzan 1997), Buzan relates the need for research on security to constructivist methods and writes of securitization as a more extreme version of politicisation. The constructivist approach brought flexibility and new perspectives to security studies.

This thesis will use securitization theory as its main theoretical framework. Developed first in the 1980's by the Copenhagen research group to counter the traditionalist approach to security studies that is state centred and focused primarily on the military element (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 1). Securitization theory takes a constructivist approach and calls for a more comprehensive

understanding of the concept of security, including non-traditional sectors such as the economic and societal sectors. The theory seeks to explain how the securitizing agent uses speech to construct an idea or understanding of a security threat, security is defined in this case through survival, making the threat existential in nature. This special nature of the security threat legitimises the use of extraordinary measures to the audience (Buzan et al., 1998: 21). An act of securitization is considered successful if it has the following three components: existential threat, emergency action, breaking free of the rules, furthermore, the success of the securitizing act is defined by the acceptance of the emergency measures by the audience (Buzan et al., 1998: 26, 31). Who is considered the referent object can change depending on the sector that is being securitized (Buzan et al. 1998: 21). What is considered extraordinary becomes clear when examining the traditional or historic approach to the topic. Thierry Balzacq, among others, has emphasised the importance of the specific context and audience in the theory of securitization (Balzacq, 2005; Côté, 2016).

Based on the theory described in the chapter above, I propose the following hypothesis: The German government has used securitization to legitimise the extraordinary measures (the *Zeitenwende*) to the German public. The following chapters of the thesis will examine the process through which the German government has legitimised the turning point in the foreign policy to its public, and test whether the process can be described through the theory of securitization.

The graph below (graph 1.) depicts schematically the process on which my analysis is structured.



Graph 1. (Author Inge Maas)

1.1.1. Securitizing Acts

Securitization theory assumes that much of security is created and imposed through words and practices. Thus, the notion of securitizing acts is one of the basic concepts of securitization theory. Balzacq (2005, 2010, 2011) asserts that the speech-act approach to security does not in itself provide a sufficient basis on which to examine the relationship between security practices and 'real situations', it requires a more multifaceted approach and the consideration of different factors. According to security theory (Nyman 2013), political issues are framed as extreme security issues that need to be addressed urgently. This is done by the 'security actor', who has the social and institutional power to move the issue 'beyond politics', into the realm of security (Buzan et al. 1998: 29). Thus, security problems do not simply exist as such, per se, but are identified and formulated as problems by securitising actors. The notion of securitizing actors helps to understand how words actively create the security world, rather than simply describe it. These verbal acts bring about change because the securitising actor gives some issues a more important meaning and clarifies the relationship between the nature of the threat and the nature of the referent object.

1.1.2. Extraordinary Measures

The concept of extraordinary measures is an integral part of the securitization theory and was written about already by the Copenhagen school. The construction of a threat is usually accompanied by a proposal for measures that would help to protect the referent object from the threat. For Buzan and Waever (1998), the specificity of the security context is that the measures proposed are exceptional and may go to extremes (military means, substantial restriction of civil liberties, etc). The same theme is developed by Roe (2011), who argues that exceptional measures are those which, in simplified terms, are not otherwise found in liberal democracies. Whereas traditionally policy change takes place in a relatively routine, deliberate, and time-consuming manner, security-enhanced politics results in extraordinary and rapid solutions. Roe thus highlights the potential negative effects of the securitisation process on democracy and democratic mechanisms.

The issue at stake becomes securitised when there is a notable change in public opinion. Specifically, when the public accepts the nature of the threat and has a positive attitude towards the implementation of emergency measures (Nyman 2018). If this change is not achieved, and the

public disregards what the security actor says in the speech act, then securitization has failed or remains at the level of a single act (Buzan et al. 1998: 25). Achieving the desired change in public opinion usually requires a greater effort than simply formulating a single security problem.

1.1.3. Audience in securitization theory

More recent approaches to security theory, unlike the Copenhagen school, have paid close attention to the audience for security. For example, Balzacq (2005, 2011), one of the pioneers of this direction, reformulates the theory of securitisation by placing the audience in the central role instead of the speech act. According to Balzacq, a prerequisite for the success of securitisation is working with the audience, an audience-centred approach to the process. To reach the audience and persuade them to agree with his arguments, the securitising actor must be able to identify with the audience's thoughts, needs, feelings, and interests. It could even be said that what is conveyed in the speech act must be based primarily on the experience of the audience, giving voice to it (Balzacq 2005: 184).

1.1.4. Limitations of Securitization Theory

It is important to be aware of the limitations of a particular theory, when applying it for analysis. There are several potential shortcomings of securitization theory highlighted by academics, and some stemming from the particularities of the case study itself.

Firstly, as with any model the securitization process too is simplified. Critics argue that securitization theory can be overly simplistic in its emphasis on the role of speech acts and the framing of issues as security threats (e.g. Balzacq 2005, 2011). This can lead to an oversimplification of complex political processes and ignore other factors that may influence security practices. It is hard to prove that it has been the speech act that has effectively “securitized” an issue. Often it is also unclear who the securitizing agent is. People and communities are generally influenced by a wide variety of news and media channels. The process of securitisation is also very context-sensitive, depending a lot on the circumstances of the specific process (Rychnovská, 2014, Balzacq 2005, 2011).

Van Rythoven (2020) critically describes the dilemma of securitisation as a powerful tool for political mobilisation on the one hand, but not a controllable process on the other. Securitisation

can have unexpected and unintended consequences, but these are mostly unexamined. A number of authors (Roe 2011, Nyman 2016) have questioned the benefits of securitisation for democracy, and whether it creates the kind of world we want to live in.

Nyman points out that security studies theory, having emerged as a critique of security studies, is not sufficiently critical and cannot move away from realism and positivist positions to the extent necessary. The development of securitization theory is hampered, according to Nyman, by the fact that it sometimes gets too stuck in the so-called classical concepts. Instead of incorporating them, it should be concerned with creating new concepts (Nyman, 2013: 59-60).

1.2 Pre-*Zeitenwende* Context

1.2.1. *Ostpolitik and Sonderbeziehung*

The norm for German foreign policy, especially its approach towards the East was largely defined by the introduction of the so-called *Ostpolitik* or Eastern policy by Willy Brandt, which set out to use trade and economics instead of force in their relations with the Soviet-bloc countries (Forsberg, 2016:21). A concept known as *Wandel durch Handel*, became one of the central pillars of German foreign policy. When it came to authoritarian regimes such as The Soviet Union, it was believed that economic growth and integration with the West would incentivise positive social and political change (Forsberg, 2016: 21).

Since the end of the cold war Germany and Russia have enjoyed a special relationship or *Sonderbeziehung*, as it is often referred to. The special nature of the relationship can be described by strong political and economic ties between the elites of each country. One of the key areas of cooperation has been in the energy sector, with Germany being a major importer of Russian oil and gas (Yoder, 2015: 54). This has been heavily criticised for putting Germany in danger of economic influence and energy dependence. There have also been numerous examples of strong political connections between German and Russian elites, including business partnerships and personal relationships. For example, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has been criticised for his close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin and his business interests in Russia, particularly in the energy sector. These relationships have also come under plenty of scrutiny, claiming potential for political influence and manipulation.

Due to the close ties between the two countries, Germany has often been seen as a mediator and a driving force behind Europe's wider approach to the East (Kempe, 2003:6). However, not

everyone in Germany has been in favour of such close political, economic and even personal ties. Differing priorities and strategies formed a deep cleavage in the German political debate: dividing those value-motivated, such as the Greens, and pragmatists emphasising “calculated interests” and economic gains. Despite efforts by the German government to nudge Russia in the right direction by means of closer integration with the EU. Germany’s foreign policy towards Russia has still been heavily influenced by the pragmatic wing, often referred to as *Putinverstehher* (Yoder, 2015:54). A term used both by the academic world as well as the popular media, referring to those especially eager to try to understand and sympathise with Putin.

Bilateral relations between Russia and Germany have been on a decline since the turn of the millennium (Yoder, 2015:51). Motivated mainly by Russia’s poor conduct concerning human rights, NGOs and political competition, its imperialist rhetoric and aggressive foreign policy vis-a-vis its neighbours. The German public, media and leadership have grown steadily critical of Russia (Yoder, 2015:51). 2014 saw further deterioration of bilateral relations with Russia, with the annexation of Crimea. Previous German responses vis-a-vis Russian aggression, as seen in Georgia in 2008, were German policy normalised soon after (Adomeit, 2015: 6). However, with the annexation of Crimea, the German policy paradigm can be said to have changed, as during the 50th Munich Security Conference, several important players in the German policy arena supported the stance that Germany should take greater responsibility in international affairs (Adomeit, 2015: 3).

1.2.2. German Pacifism

The success of securitization is defined by the acceptance of the audience, in the case of this study, the German public. Therefore, it is important to determine what the historical stance of the German people has been regarding involvement in foreign conflicts and supplying military aid. What is considered to be the opinion of German people regarding the country’s involvement in foreign conflict has been the subject of some controversy.

Gaskarth and Opperman have written about how regionalism and pacifism are at the heart of German identity. They identify four main traditions, which are regionalism, pacifism, realism, and hegemonism, of these they find regionalism and pacifism to be the most influential. In summary, they write: There are continual intimations of tension between the four traditions, and references to domestic and international calls for more realist or hegemonic approaches to security problems, but these are downplayed in favour of the longstanding pattern of beliefs centred on regionalism and pacifism. Due to these widespread beliefs, it is unlikely that Germany will become a consistent

or reliable provider of military security or subsequently a sturdier pillar of the transatlantic security architecture, in the foreseeable future (Gaskarth, Opperman: 2021).

There are those who say that German public opinion has been strongly opposed to Germany playing a military role to any extent on the international arena (Adomeit, 2015: 29; Gaskarth, Opperman: 2021). The sentiment has been consistent with the Bundestag, which has been relatively hesitant about taking part in peacekeeping operations or providing military aid. These patterns continued past the supposed paradigm shift of 2014 and were observable for some time after the escalation of Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Others have questioned the claim that German public opinion is invariably “pro-Russian” , saying that in reality, the opinions of the German public are much more differentiated and critical, than generally thought (Adomeit, 2015: 8).Corresponding to the deterioration of German-Russian relations on the political level, the public opinion had also been on the path of deterioration already prior to 2014 (Adomeit, 2015: 20).

However, when it comes to the militancy of Germany, the public opinion has been very much against Germany being anything but a civil power (Adomeit, 2015: 29; Gaskarth, Opperman: 2021). The Berlin pulse, an annual study on Germans’ opinion on matters concerning Germany’s foreign policy concluded, that since 2017, The German people have been of the opinion that Germany should continue to practise restraint when it came to foreign conflicts (Körber Stiftung, 2021/22:).

2. METHODOLOGY

In the methodology chapter I will outline the research design of the thesis, and how I intend to answer the research questions and test the hypothesis. I will begin with defining the units of analysis. The following sections will explain the logic behind data collection and the structure for the analysis. The overall research approach resembles the process of securitization: beginning with the securitizing act itself, then examining the audience acceptance, and finally the resulting extraordinary measures.

2.1. Units of Analysis

In his speech on the 27th of February 2022, German chancellor Olaf Scholz, announced five courses of action:

“Firstly, **we must support Ukraine** in this desperate situation.”

“The second course of action that we must take is **to divert Putin from the path of war.**”

“The third major challenge lies in **preventing Putin’s war from spilling over into other countries in Europe.**”

“... To make it possible, **the Bundeswehr needs new, strong capabilities.**

And that is the fourth point that I want to address, ladies and gentlemen.”

“And finally, ladies and gentlemen, we will do more **to guarantee a secure energy supply for our country.**”

(Source: Scholz, 27.02.2022).

The securitization theory uses the term extraordinary or emergency measures as one of its core components. These extraordinary measures are what will be legitimised through the mechanism of securitization. These five goals constitute in effect the promised *Zeitenwende*, therefore acting as the extraordinary measures in this case. The thesis is set out to test the hypothesis that the German government has used securitization to legitimise the *Zeitenwende*. I will use these five courses of action as units of analysis, to find out if they have been portrayed as the necessary solutions to the threat posed to the referent object. Furthermore, if the public has accepted them as legitimate, and if the state has actually utilised five courses of action during the course of the year.

2.2. Research Design

The aim of the thesis is to test the hypothesis that states that the German government has used securitization in order to legitimise the *Zeitenwende* to the German public. To test the hypothesis, I will answer two research questions. I will analyse how the German government has legitimised the reform of the foreign and defence policy collectively called the *Zeitenwende* and see if the mechanism proposed by the securitization theory is appropriate to describe the legitimization. I will use three kinds of data to test the securitization mechanism, each corresponding to a step in the securitization process.

2.2.1. Document Analysis

The first type of data I analyse is the official speeches of the German chancellor Olaf Scholz. This corresponds to the securitizing acts step of the securitization mechanism (see Graph 1). For this I use document analysis. Document analysis is a way of collecting data that explores the meanings and relationships found in documents. Document analysis often involves coding content into themes, in a similar way to the analysis of texts or transcripts of interviews (Bowen 2009). In this study, the sample for document analysis is the speeches made by the German Chancellor over a period of one year.

Official speeches by Scholz are analysed because as the chancellor he is the highest representative of the government to the German people, and therefore an important figure for communicating and legitimising policy to the German people. Furthermore, as Scholz is the chancellor he is representative of a wider array of policy, than for example the foreign minister or defence minister would be. Only official speeches are included, because they are used to communicate the most important policy changes, which would eventually trickle down to popular media. However, at that point the securitizing acts are no longer only produced by the government but also by reporters and journalists, which goes beyond the scope of the current thesis.

The period of one year since the start of the fully fledged war in Ukraine, 24th of February 2022-24th of February 2023. The period of one year, although arbitrary, is chosen because it provides a

reasonable timeframe for policy implementation and change in public opinion. A much longer period is ruled out by the recency and on-going nature of the conflict.

The thesis looks at 14 speeches in total, which were found from the German federal government website's section on speeches and limiting the time scope to match the period of analysis for the thesis. Initially 48 speeches come up, however the rest are translations of the 14 speeches into various languages. No further limitations to the selection of the speeches are made at this point.

The next step is to find the units of analysis meaning the relevant parts of the speeches concerning the topic of interest (Lagerspetz, 2017: 196). The goal is to locate the securitizing speech acts. This has been done by firstly searching the texts for words "Russia", "Ukraine" and "War", using the CTRL-F function. The results are then checked to eliminate any that do not correspond to the Russian war in Ukraine. This will leave us with only the relevant parts of the speeches.

The units of analysis are then coded and categorised. For this I have constructed a coding tree. The coding tree is constructed deductively because the topics of interest have already been determined (Lagerspetz, 2017: 203). The coding tree is included in the appendix 1. Firstly, I look at if the war in Ukraine and Russia in general is portrayed as a security threat to Germany or Europe. Then the coding tree examines the five courses of action, outlined in the *Zeitenwende* speech. However, the subcategories will be defined inductively, as the way in which the topics are discussed, will only become clear after reading the relevant parts of the speeches (Lagerspetz, 2017: 203). To ensure all the texts have been coded according to the same categories and subcategories, the texts will be gone over multiple times. The table is only filled out after the coding tree is final (Lagerspetz, 2017: 207). For the sake of validity, the analysis section will also include examples of the parts of the speeches according to the topic (Lagerspetz, 2017: 211).

Thus, the first part of my empirical study focuses on the securitising acts, that according to the securitization theory are used by the securitizing agent to legitimise the use of extraordinary measures. Speech act analysis has been the main method used for studying securitization (Balzacq, 2005: 171). It alone has, however been deemed insufficient because it does not take into account the effects of the context and audience have on the success of the securitization act (Balzacq, 2005: 171; Balzacq, Léonard & Ruzicka 2016: 501). That is the reason I include the second and third analytical steps in this thesis.

2.2.2. Opinion Poll Analysis

The second type of data I use is secondary opinion polls. This corresponds to the public opinion change step of the securitization mechanism (see graph 1). I look at the change in German public opinion regarding several topics closely related to Russia, Ukraine and German support towards Ukraine.

The idea is to look at how the German public has received the *Zeitenwende*. As legitimization by constructing a sense of threat is the main goal of securitization, it is important to observe to what degree the securitizing acts detected in the last section were actually successful.

I use data from four opinion polls. Firstly, a poll by the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung about German foreign policy following the *Zeitenwende* (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2022). Secondly a poll conducted by the German Federal Defence (*Bundeswehr*) about public opinion on the defence policy following the *Zeitenwende* (Bundeswehr, 2022). Thirdly, a poll by the Statista Research Department about Germany's role in the Ukrainian war (Statista, 2023). Finally, the Berlin Pulse published by the Körber Stiftung, which among other topics covers German public opinion on German foreign policy (Körber Stiftung, 2022).

Firstly, the overall acceptance levels are examined, for this I use trust in government and sense of threat. Then the acceptance specific courses of action are looked at. The poll questions are organised by topic, covering each of the 5 courses of action outlined in the *Zeitenwende* speech. It is to be noted that some of the 5 topics have significantly more poll questions correlated with them. The polls also show how the opinion has changed since 2021. This is essential for understanding how the change of the context and securitizing acts have changed the public opinion. It is not enough to state strict causal mechanisms but allows for a justified interpretation.

2.2.3. Process Tracing

The third kind of data I analyse draws from several reports and seeks to analyse to what extent the five courses of the *Zeitenwende* have been delivered. This allows for an interpretive analysis of the facilitating conditions, which have made the progress possible. For this I combine the results with those of the two previous sections and use the method of process tracing. This step of analysis provides a clearer understanding of how the German case study fits into the parameters of the securitization mechanism. Otherwise said, process tracing adds to the robustness of the conclusion on the hypothesis.

Traditionally process tracing has been associated with neopositivist causal mechanisms and have therefore been neglected as a method by many scholars in the interpretivist school of thought and subsequently in securitization theory (Robinson, 2017:506). The post-Copenhagen have used the interpretivist variety of process tracing to make sense of the securitization process (Balsacq, 2010; Robinson, 2017: 506). Process tracing in securitization studies has been used to study the structuring force of practices (Balzacq, 2010). Securitization is not always a rational, preplanned process. The more elements of practices the process uses, the more systematic the securitization is (Balzacq 2010: 31).

Process tracing works well with multimethod analysis (Robinson, 2017:510). My thesis uses three types of data: speeches, opinion polls and expert reports. Process tracing seeks to answer the question of how was it possible, in this case how was it possible to realise the five courses of action (e.g. Robinson, 2017:509).

Each course of action will be looked at separately as a promise, then analysed to what extent that promise has been realised. As the promises of each of the courses of action differ, they need to be approached differently. Some of the courses of action or practices, to use process tracing vocabulary, can be measured by more quantitative, others with qualitative or dummy variables. How each course of action will be measured is therefore described below.

1. Support for Ukraine

This section will look at to what extent Germany has sent aid to Ukraine since the start of the war. The analysis will differentiate between military aid, financial aid and humanitarian aid. How the amount of aid compares to other contributing countries will also be considered.

2. Sanctions

It is generally deemed possible to end war by means of sanctions but rather to make it as expensive as possible and discourage future invasions. This goal will be measured by a dummy variable of whether sanctions were introduced or not. It is outside the scope of this thesis, but it would also be interesting to research, what role Germany played in the decision-making process of the sanctions and the efficacy of the sanctions.

3. Spill over prevention

The goal was to prevent the Russian invasion from spreading to other countries. In the speech Scholz expressed concern mostly about “NATO’s Eastern Flank”, meaning Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria (NATOa, 2022). Therefore, Germany’s commitment will be measured by any additional military enforcement sent to the aforementioned countries within the period of analysis. The efficacy can be measured by a dummy variable showing whether spill-over happened or not.

4. Investment into national security

The commitment can be measured by additional investment into national security, such as increasing military spending and hiring additional personnel. Efficacy of this course of action can be measured by how much the military spending has changed.

5. Energy security

I will measure this by investments into new energy infrastructure, decisions to postpone shutting down certain energy sources such as nuclear and coal power plants. As the concern about the energy supply mostly stems from the energy dependency from Russia, efficacy of this course of action can be measured by the percentage of Energy Germany gets from Russia.

3. RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1. Content Analysis

Overarching themes

The speech that included the largest amount and most the courses of action was unsurprisingly the *Zeitenwende* speech itself, all the topics we not securitized in a single speech again. There does not appear to be significant variance across times when it comes to the five courses of actions collectively. What becomes clear after analysing the speeches, is that the issue of the war in Ukraine appears in every one of the speeches. This implies that the topic is at the forefront of German foreign policy. Each decision has been framed through the necessity to mitigate the effects of the war or create an environment to minimise risk of such events occurring in the future. For example, in the speech at the German Canadian Business Conference, the need for stronger international trade and cooperation between Germany and Canada was framed as a way to replace Russia as a significant economic partner.

“... Canada has everything Russia has also got. But the much better investment climate. And is a democracy.”

“So, let us seize this unique opportunity to reinvent the partnership between our two countries, expand it, and adapt it to what I’ve called a „Zeitenwende“ – the change of times that we are witnessing. “(Scholz, 23.08.2022).

Similar themes were present in the German African Award speech. Where the issues resulting from the Russian war on Ukraine are used to frame the necessity of closer cooperation.

Differing referent objects

Even though initially in the methodology chapter the referent object was said to be German security in general. In the speeches, the securitizing acts seemed to have two differing referent objects, or what is portrayed to be threatened. The first one would be immediate danger to Germany or the European Union. The threat is more physical in nature, endangering sovereignty and the lives of Europeans. Russia is often said to want to go back in time and redraw European borders. This theme corresponds to the code 6.2 (Physical security).

“Anything else would mean opening up Pandora’s box, as inevitably happens with any forcible redrawing of borders, particularly in Europe. One look at historical maps is enough for us to recognise the danger. That is why we have said very clearly to Moscow, from the beginning of the crisis, that the pillars of the peaceful European order, the inviolability of borders, are non-negotiable!” (Scholz, 17.03.2022).

The other type of referent object concerns European or western values, such as freedom and democracy. This topic corresponds with the code 6.1 (Value).

“Ultimately, it is also our values and our peaceful order that are at stake in Ukraine!” (Scholz, 17.03.2022).

Support for Ukraine

The topic of support for Ukraine was coded as 1, with subcategories representing different types of support such as military, financial and humanitarian aid. This topic was present in all speeches besides two: the German Africa award speech and the 13th Petersberg Climate Dialogue speech. There seems to be no notable change in the relevance of the topic over the course of the year. Scholz also repeatedly vowed to support Ukraine as long as it takes. The mention of military support became more common throughout the year and came to include more mentions of heavy artillery.

“That is why we are continuously supplying Ukraine with large quantities of arms, in close consultation with our partners. This includes air defense systems like IRIS-T or Patriot, artillery, and armored infantry fighting vehicles, marking a profound turning point in German foreign and security policy.” (Scholz, 18.01.2023).

Military support is the most extraordinary form of aid for Germany as well as one of the most controversial topics of the *Zeitenwende* altogether. Military aid is coded with 1.1.1. There are several instances, where Scholz emphasises that the decision was not taken lightly but is necessary.

“We will therefore continue and enhance our political and economic support for Ukraine. And we therefore decided to supply Ukraine with weapons for self defense. This is not a decision that we took lightly. But it was right and necessary.” (Scholz, 17.03.2022).

Sanctions

The topic of sanctions appeared in significantly less speeches, only in 7 out of the 13. Imposing sanctions was always talked about as international cooperation with the European Union or the G7. This could be one of the reasons why the topic was securitized less often, because it was not a decision of Germany alone but collective coordinated action.

“The second course of action that we must take is to divert Putin from the path of war. This war is a catastrophe for Ukraine. However, it will prove to be a catastrophe for Russia, too. Together with the Heads of State and Government of the EU, we have passed a package of sanctions on an unprecedented scale.” (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

It is also apparent that the topic became less relevant in later speeches, probably because sanctions were already in place.

Spill over prevention

Preventing spill over was not a very common theme in the speeches. Only appearing in 5 of the 13 speeches. The topic became less common as the year went on, this could be due to either lessening perceptions of threat as it became apparent that Russia could not take Ukraine in the short time predicted at first or because some NATO reinforcements were already in place by the time of the later speeches. When it did appear, it was always in correlation with NATO and usually also with the following topic of strengthening national security.

“At the same time, we have to ensure that this conflict does not spread to other European countries(...) Putin should not underestimate NATO’s determination to defend. All of its members. That expressly applies to our NATO partners in the Baltic, in Poland, in Romania, in Bulgaria and in Slovakia. It applies unconditionally. Germany and its allies know how to protect themselves.” (Scholz, 24.02.2022).

Investment into national security

The topic of investment into national security does not appear in many speeches. This could be because the topic is seen as a national issue and therefore is not much concern to the international public the speeches are generally directed at. In fact, the topic only appears in speeches held in

Germany except for the speech delivered in the Charles University in Prague. The topic appears in five of the speeches and appears to be slightly more common in the beginning of the year.

“We must therefore ask ourselves: What capabilities does Putin’s Russia possess? And what capabilities do we need in order to counter this threat – today and in the future? It is clear that we must invest much more in the security of our country.” (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

“The 2022 federal budget will provide a one-off sum of 100 billion euro for the fund. We will use this money for necessary investments and armament projects.” (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

It was mentioned multiple times that even though Germany is going to raise its investments into the Bundeswehr, it is done in order to make the dialogue possible. A strong military is necessary to make the enemy listen.

“It is clear that there can only be peace through a ceasefire and negotiations. At the same time, however, we are not naive. Dialogue is not an end in itself. Dialogue – particularly with Russia – requires us to have strength of our own.” (Scholz, 17.03.2022).

Energy security

The speeches imply that energy security is linked to the security of the country. Most importantly Germany set out to become independent from Russian energy and to diversify its energy suppliers in general.

“And we will change course in order to eliminate our dependence on imports from individual energy suppliers.” (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

Different solutions were voiced as Germany was losing its biggest energy supplier. Ranging from extraordinary measures such as temporarily going back to coal and nuclear energy, to viewing the already accepted track for the future in the form of the green transition. One of the issues that was repeatedly securitized was the building of LNG terminals. There were many threats voiced by Scholz, such as the lights going out for people and businesses, economic hardships, a coming cold winter. But extraordinary measures were also legitimised by the possibility of being able to use the LNG infrastructure for green hydrogen in the future. The emergency measures, such as LNG,

coal and nuclear energy were repeatedly supposed to be temporary and essential for the coming green transition.

“This makes it all the more important for us to state in no uncertain terms: this is an emergency measure imposed for a very short, limited period of time, and it does not take away from our climate targets.” (Scholz, 18.07.2022).

The mentioning of energy themes is not very common in the beginning of the year but becomes noticeably more apparent in the second half. One of the reasons for this could be that as the need for and deadlines for implementation of the emergency measures grew more immediate with the approaching fall and winter, there was also an increased need to securitize and address the issue to retain legitimacy.

3.2. Results of the Secondary Opinion Poll Surveys

General themes

When comparing the results of public opinion polls two main themes can be detected. Firstly, polls comparing the public opinion from 2021 and 2022, the support for Ukraine is significantly stronger in every category, the support ranges from +10% to +40%. Which suggests that the German public has accepted the extraordinary measures of the *Zeitenwende*. Especially because trust in the government is high at 73% and has grown +5% since last year (Bundeswehr, 11.10.2023).

Most Germans see Russian aggression in Ukraine as a threat to Germany, with 65% agreeing, growth of 31% (Bundeswehr, 2022). However, looking at how public opinion changed between April and December of 2022, the results are quite different. Support for accepting Ukrainian migrants fell from 82% to 68%, and those who believe Germany should not meddle in Ukraine at all grew from 32% to 43% (Statista, 03.02.2023). This suggests fatigue from the war.

Comparing each course of action separately.

Support for Ukraine.

Most Germans believe that Germany should avoid getting involved in the Ukrainian war militarily, with Statista polls showing results of 77% in April and 75% in December. Majority Germans (52%) believe that Germany should practise overall restraint regarding international crises (Statista, 2023; Körber-Stiftung, 2022). During the course of the year, Germans have also grown more sceptical about sending weapons and air defence systems to the Ukrainian military, with support falling from 55% to 48%. Most Germans prefer diplomatic solutions at 86,7%, while only

21,7% see military interventions as effective. A growing number of Germans 47% to 56% see the ongoing economic crisis as a reason not to support Ukraine financially (Statista, 2023). The support for accepting Ukrainian refugees is still relatively high but has fallen considerably since April from 82% to 68% (Statist, 2023). It seems that during the course of the year the public support for sending aid to Ukraine has fallen slightly, especially for military aid. This could be because as military aid goes against the norm of German pacifism, then it is tolerated less and less as the crisis becomes less imminent. Additionally, as the Statista poll shows, Germans are more hesitant to support Ukraine during economic hardships at home.

Sanctions

The second course of action was to discourage Putin by means of sanctions. A majority of Germans believe sanctions to be an effective tool in foreign policy at 55,2% (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2022). 67% of Germans are in favour of restricting economic relations to Russia, this is one of the categories that support for has grown the most 40 percentage points since last year, with only 14% against the action (Bundeswehr, 2022). Non-military measures such as sanctions are in line with the ideal of pacifism, this is most likely the reason why the majority of Germans prefer them and remain in support even when the economy is struggling. This also shows that the former political belief held by many Germans that Russia can be changed for the better through trading has been disproved.

Spill over Prevention

More Germans are in favour of NATO and Germany increasing military support to Eastern Europe. A relative majority of 49% support a stronger NATO presence in Eastern Europe, this is 13 percentage points more than the previous year, only 22% of people are against this (Bundeswehr, 2022). 48% are in favour of deployment of the German military in the Baltic states, which is 12 percentage points higher than the year before (Bundeswehr, 2022). Opinion that Germany should support the Baltic states military, grew 22 percentage points to 53% (Bundeswehr, 2022).

The additional steps taken since the start of the war, such as controlling the airspace above Poland (51% approval), Slovakia (46% approval) and Romania (43% approval) is received relatively well, as only 22%, 23% and 25% are respectively against these new missions. Germany's role in NATO is tolerated well but it seems that true support barely reaches half of the population. The relative support could be explained on one hand through the military nature of NATO which could make some Germans critical but on the other hand as these missions do not involve active warfare but rather deterrence then the acceptance is still relatively low.

Investment into National Security

Majority of Germans support increases in defence spending and military service, with 59% and 58% in support respectively (Bundeswehr, 2022). This has increased almost 20 percentage points since the previous year (Bundeswehr, 2022). Additionally, now 50% are in support of mandatory military service, with only 23% seeing it as unnecessary (Bundeswehr, 2022). These are historically high numbers; a stronger military is seen as providing Germany with the necessary bargaining power. As Scholz put it, a strong military allows for dialogue and diplomatic solutions (Scholz, 17.03.2022). It could be argued that the support for the military and investments into national security are so high because they are framed through a non-militant perspective.

Energy Security

A large majority of Germans are in favour of reducing dependence on Russian gas at 78% with only 7% being opposed (Bundeswehr, 2022). However, 55% of Germans believe that Germany should not differentiate between democratic and nondemocratic countries in purchasing energy supplies (Körper-Stiftung, 2022). It is noteworthy that opinion on reducing dependence from Russia (and China) is varied according to party affiliation, with 97,8% of *Grüne* supporters in favour but fringe parties both on the left and right are much more sceptical, with Linke supporters at 41,3% and AfD supporters at 24,9% (Friedrich-Erbert-Stiftung, 2022). According to the report by the Körper-Stiftung 60% Germans believe not enough is being done to become independent from Russian energy supplies (Körper-Stiftung, 2022). It seems that Germans are strongly opposed to being dependent on Russian energy but not to energy stemming from non-democratic regimes. According to the Körper Stiftung Germans did not believe that enough was being done to become independent from Russian energy, it is noteworthy that the polling was done in the beginning of August when Germany had not yet reached its goals. The overall high support for the category signals that the issue is important to Germans which should also make making progress in this field easier.

3.3. Results of Process Tracing

Support for Ukraine

Germany has remained one of the biggest supporters of Ukraine according to the Kiel Institute's Ukraine Support Tracker (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 20). Germany has made overall contributions of 7.367billion euros, ranking 3rd overall globally after the US (1st) and the UK (2nd), 6.15 billion

of which was in the form of bilateral aid (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 20). It is noteworthy that when support is measured as percentage of GDP, Germany only ranks as 18th. In the *Zeitenwende* speech Scholz explicitly only mentioned sending weapons to Ukraine, humanitarian aid and financial aid were not manifestly mentioned.

“As you know, we decided yesterday that Germany will supply Ukraine with weapons for the country’s defence” (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

Military aid was the largest part of aid given, a total sum of 3.571 billion euros, ranking at 3rd overall and 19th as percentage of GDP (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 20). According to the Kiel Institute, the real value of German military aid is suspected to be significantly higher because the shipments of old weapons from the German military stocks are valued according to predetermined depreciation rates, generally well below the market price (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 20). In addition to direct bilateral support, Germany has also taken part in several so-called *Ringtausch* or circle exchange schemes which allow countries that send their old military equipment to Ukraine to receive replacement equipment or funds (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 21).

When considering the context of German pacifism these contributions are significant, with Germany ranking among the top 5, even when the ranking notably falls when considering it compared to GDP. The top contributors in percentage of GDP are smaller countries, often in Eastern Europe. Most Germans prefer non-military foreign policy measures and tend to be sceptical about sending arms to conflict zones (Friedrich-Erbert-Stiftung, 2022; Körber-Stiftung, 2022). In these cases, as the circle exchange schemes and misleading military aid valuation could be seen as strategies to conceal real amounts of military aid perhaps in order to seem more legitimate to the public and avoid causing concern among the people. Especially as it is possible to communicate the real value of the aid to Germany’s partner countries, who expect Germany as a major economic power to contribute accordingly, therefore pacifying both sides. German military contributions to Ukraine were opaque during the first few months, transparency improved in June (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 23). Although Germany cited security concerns as a reason for initial opacity, it could also serve an alternative purpose of concealing the type and amount of aid given until more controversial types of support such as supplying arms to Ukraine became normalised due to other countries doing so. It can be seen from the polls, that as the year went on the Germans did become more sceptical of sending military aid to Ukraine, (Statista, 2023).

The working paper by the Kiel Institute also compares military support with historical data of military support in other wars, finding that the military aid given to Kuwait in the Gulf War in the 90' was far more significant than the aid given to Ukraine today (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 46).

Humanitarian aid accounted for 2.496 billion euros, making Germany the 2nd biggest contributor and 5th as percentage of GDP (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 20).

Germany also ranks high as a host for Ukrainian refugees, coming in second after Poland with 1.06 million refugees in total (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 16). This has been possible partly because the support for accepting Ukrainian refugees remains relatively high at 68%. However, it is noteworthy that the support fell considerably when compared to April, when 82% of Germans were in favour (Statista, 2023).

Financial aid accounted for the smallest sum with 1.300 billion euros, with Germany ranking as 5th overall and 16th when measured as percentage of GDP (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 20). However, it is noteworthy that the EU institutions ranked first in terms of financial aid, for which Germany is a major contributor. The financial aid from the EU comes as loans, which need to be paid back after a certain period of time, German contributions also include some loans but predominantly consist of grants, which do not need to be repaid (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 32). It is also noteworthy that when the EU institutions have only disbursed around a third of the commitments, Germany had delivered 100% of their promises (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 33). This is especially significant as the working paper found a general trend of the actual disbursements to be much smaller than the commitments (Trebesch et. al, 2023: 33-34).

As Germany once again ranks high in terms of financial aid given, in the top 5, as well as being a large part of the main contributor (The EU institutions). In combination with the 100% disbursement rate, it can be said that Germany has delivered on their promises and commitments of supporting Ukraine financially. However, as the statist poll shows, Germans are becoming more hesitant about helping Ukraine financially, as Germany itself experiences economic hardships (Statista, 2023).

Sanctions

Germany does not impose unilateral sanctions, but as a member state, applies all sanctions imposed by the European Union. Sanctions imposed against Russia during the course of the year were added onto those already imposed back in 2014 (European Council, 2023). In the course of the year the

EU agreed on 10 sanctions packages, although the first and last fall out of the observational period by one day. Most packages (three) were imposed directly after the war in February. The *Zeitenwende* speech outlined the contents of the first package of sanctions, which was imposed on the 23rd of February. Furthermore, it stated that they have not ruled out further sanctions. During the course of the year the EU passed ten sanction packages.

First package of sanctions was imposed a day before the start of the fully fledged war on the 23rd of February, for the recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (European Council, 2023). On the day the war started EU leaders agreed on more sanctions, and on the 25th of February the second package of sanctions was approved. Third package of sanctions came on the 28th of February.

Spring saw two sanctions packages. Fourth sanctions package was agreed upon on the 15th of March. Fifth package on the 8th of April.

Two more packages were imposed in the summer. Sixth package on the 3rd of June. Seventh package was adopted on the 21st of July.

Only one package was passed in fall. Eighth package on the 6th of October.

Last two sanction packages were passed in the winter. Ninth package of Sanctions on the 16th of December. Tenth Package on the 25th of February 2023.

In total the EU sanctions 1473 individuals, mainly high-level politicians and oligarchs including Yevgeny Prigozhin but also pro-Russia and anti-Ukrainian propagandists (European Council, 2023). The EU has frozen a total of 21.5 billion euros the sanctions on individuals also include a travel ban to the EU. The German people are generally in favour of the sanctions, with around 55% seeing them as an effective measure (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2022). As sanctions are imposed together with the EU and G7 public support is less defining but still important to some extent.

Spill over prevention

What is meant by spill over prevention as a course of action, is mostly sending additional troops and aid to the NATO Eastern flank countries as these are most at risk of the war spreading.

“The third major challenge lies in preventing Putin’s war from spilling over into other countries in Europe. That means that we will stand unconditionally by our collective defence obligation within NATO” (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

Germany has made several promises to increase its presence in these countries, such as sending additional troops to Lithuania and enhancing air policing in Romania. Germany leads the

multinational battlegroup in Lithuania established after 2014, in September 2022 Germany sent around 100 additional troops to Lithuania (NATOa, 2022). In addition to the four original battlegroups in the Eastern flank set up in 2014, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, NATO is setting up four additional battlegroups in Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. Germany is one of the contributing nations to the battlegroup in Slovakia (NATOb, 2022)

As NATO deterrence power and capacity to protect rely heavily on the member states individual military capacity, which is why NATO requires its members to spend a minimum of 2% of the GDP on their defence, which only a few countries meet. The following section will go more into depth into Germany's investment into their national security.

Investment into National Security

The goals set out in the *Zeitenwende* speech in terms of investments into national security were to upgrade equipment and technology and expand the military personnel (Scholz, 27.02.2022). In more concrete terms a special one-off payment of 100 billion euros was promised out of the 2022 federal budget as well as meeting the NATO requirement of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

“The 2022 federal budget will provide a one-off sum of 100 billion euro for the fund. We will use this money for necessary investments and armament projects.

We will now – year after year – invest more than two percent of our gross domestic product in our defence” (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

It is unclear, however, Germany planned to reach the 2% benchmark already by 2023 or 2024 as expressed just a few paragraphs later.

“There is one thing that I would like to add. We have set this goal not only because we have made a promise to our friends and allies to increase our defence expenditure to two percent of our economic output by 2024“ (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

According to a report published by the German Economic Institute (IW), when taking into account the rising inflation rates, the 100 billion special fund would allow Germany to meet the 2% benchmark in 2024 and 2025, from 2026 it remains unclear how the benchmark would be met

(Röhl, Bardt & Engels, 2023: 7-8). The report also states that the prolonged distribution of the funds would significantly reduce the nominal value of the fund due to the inflation (Röhl, Bardt & Engels, 2023: 8). The report concludes that the current financial planning is not sufficient to meet the promises laid out in the *Zeitenwende* speech, especially the one off payment of 100 billion euros will only suffice for a couple of year, therefore in order to maintain the course of action as promised in the speech will require a more stable long term solution (Röhl, Bardt & Engels, 2023: 20-21).

When it comes to expanding the military personnel, the report finds fault with years of underinvestment into the German federal military, which has led to difficulties in attracting the necessary skilled personnel (Röhl, Bardt & Engels, 2023: 20). The report does not see conscription as an adequate solution to the recruitment problem due to their lower skill set (Röhl, Bardt & Engels, 2023: 20).

Energy Security

The goal of Germany has been to eliminate dependence from any single energy supplier, especially Russia, who has been a major provider of gas, oil and coal. In 2021 Russia supplied 52% of Germany's natural gas (Giegerich & Schreer, 2023; Bundesregierung, 2023). Russia also provided Germany with 35% of the country's oil and 50% of its coal (Bundesregierung, 2023).

“And we will change course in order to eliminate our dependence on imports from individual energy suppliers” (Scholz, 27.02.2022).

Russia's role in Germany's energy supply has significantly reduced since the start of the fully fledged war. Germany is now fully independent from Russian oil, coal and gas (Bundesregierung, 2023). Imports of Russian gas fell firstly to 35% in May, to 26% by July and stopped completely as of September (Bundesregierung, 2023). In the beginning of 2023 Germany completely stopped purchasing Russian oil (Bundesregierung, 2023). German consumption of Russian coal already fell around 8% during the first half of the year, and stopped completely once the EU sanctions on Russian coal came into effect in August (Bundesregierung, 2023).

One way of diversifying Germany's energy supply is by rapidly expanding its liquified natural gas (LNG) infrastructure. LNG is 600 times less voluminous than gas and can therefore be transported across much longer distances with ships (Waldholz, Wehrmann, Wettengel, 2023). The first terminal was built in December 2022 (Bundesregierung, 2023). Due to the relatively low carbon emissions of burning gas, LNG is seen as a transitional source of energy on the path of the green

transition (Waldholz, Wehrmann, Wettengel, 2023). Germany has also legitimised building LNG infrastructure by saying that it can later be used for hydrogen in the future (Bundesregierung, 2023; (Waldholz, Wehrmann, Wettengel, 2023). Germany is heading towards overcapacity of LNG, which the government states is in order to secure the energy supply in case of sabotage, accident or unforeseen event as well as securing energy supply to neighbouring states, however some have seen the overcapacity as excessive and a waste of taxpayers money and harmful to the climate(Waldholz, Wehrmann, Wettengel, 2023).

With replacing Russian energy supply, Germany needed to secure its energy supply for the winter. Germany passed the Gas Storage Act that dictates the percentage of storage that needs to be reached by September (75%), October (85%) and November (95%), and still have at least 40% capacity by February, Germany reached the required capacity each time ahead of schedule (Bundesregierung, 2023).

Germany also utilised some emergency energy production methods, such as keeping three nuclear power plants in operation past the original shut down date, additionally in order to save gas Germany replaced some gas-powered power plants with coal powered power plants (Bundesregierung, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

The thesis set out to answer two research questions, firstly to analyse how the German government has legitimised the *Zeitenwende*, and secondly, whether the process can be described through securitization theory. The two research questions helped test the hypothesis: the German government has used securitization in order to legitimise the extraordinary measures (the *Zeitenwende*) to the German public.

As a result of the analysis of chancellor Scholz's speeches, I conclude that Germany has portrayed each of the five categories as extraordinary but necessary measures to face the threat posed to Germany and Europe in general by the Russian aggression in Ukraine. This conclusion was backed up by samples of the speeches. I found two different referent objects in Scholz's speeches, which according to the discourse was threatened by the war in Ukraine - firstly a more material or physical threat to European security, sovereignty and to the lives of Europeans. The second type of referent object was Western and European values such as democracy, peace and freedom.

The extent to which the five courses of action have been portrayed as necessary solutions, it can be said that Olaf Scholz has securitized the Russian war in Ukraine as a threat to Germany in effect legitimising the reform of foreign and defence policy.

As the theory chapter stated, securitization is a mechanism through which the securitizing agent portrays a threat to the referent object to legitimise extraordinary measures. The process through which the German government has legitimised the reform of its foreign and defence policy possesses all of the required components and resembles the mechanism of the securitization theory. Therefore, after the analysis, I conclude that the hypothesis I set in the beginning of the thesis is correct. Meaning the legitimization of the *Zeitenwende* can be described through the process of securitization.

Furthermore, the theory chapter stated that securitization is only be effective when the public opinion changes to accept the extraordinary measures. As discussed in the public opinion section of the analysis, the public has for the most part accepted the changes. Each of the five courses of action have at least relative majority if not full majority support by the public, and there has been notable change in the public opinion when compared to the previous year. To use the language of process tracing, the relatively high public support can be seen as a facilitating condition for the effects of the *Zeitenwende*. This further supports the claim that securitization theory is appropriate for analysing this event, as the German government was able to legitimise the emergency measures.

5. DISCUSSION

There has been ample discussion around whether and to what extent the *Zeitenwende* has taken place, and if the shift in the foreign and defence policy will be sustained or will return to business as usual after a while.

The portrayal of the issues as security threats was sustained throughout the year, as none of the courses of action were abandoned. Therefore, at least in rhetoric the *Zeitenwende* has indeed taken place. It also seems that the public opinion in most parts supports the *Zeitenwende*, especially in the field of energy security. Additionally, the public opinion seems to support the idea that the idea of *Wandel durch Handel* has been proved ineffective, therefore signalling a need for reformed foreign and security policy.

The second question the thesis set out to answer concerned the extent to which Germany has fulfilled its promises. The answer to this question is a lot more varied. Each course of action has been delivered to some extent. For example, in terms of sanctions, Germany does not impose unilateral sanctions, instead imposing sanctions together with the European Union and the G7. This Germany has indeed done. As Scholz indeed himself admitted, sanctions can not be expected to force the war to end, rather to make it as expensive as possible for Russia. As Germany has indeed imposed several sanctions packages throughout the year together with the G7 and EU it can be said that this promise was delivered upon.

Perhaps the biggest strides have been made in the field of energy security, Germany promised to end its dependency on Russian gas, oil and coal. By 2023, Germany has completely stopped the import of these. Additionally, Germany promised to extend the infrastructure of LNG, and has built three floating terminals and according to several reports are even heading for unnecessary overcapacity. Germany also enthusiastically met its gas storage goals before the deadline. Therefore, it can be said that Germany delivered energy security beyond its initial promises.

Supporting Ukraine, investments into national security, and preventing spill over in terms of international military cooperation have been less fruitful. Even though in rhetoric Germany has taken extraordinary steps in sending military aid to Ukraine, even eventually agreeing to send controversial equipment such as Leopard tanks. Due to Germany's size and economic capacities even a relatively moderate sum put Germany to the top of the list of supporters, even when in terms of percentage of GDP, the support is measly. The idea that Germany's support to Ukraine can be described as "too little too late" has been echoed not only by Ukraine but many of Germany's partners. The claim of the unprecedented nature of Germany sending military aid is

easily disputed when comparing Germany's military aid to the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, which was three times larger than the bilateral aid Germany committed to Ukraine in 2022.

Germany has also not met the 2% benchmark of military spending required by NATO. Even though Germany promised a special fund of 100 billion Euros to modernise the German military, which on first glance might seem sizable but when taken into account that it has yet to be utilised and will eventually only be enough to meet the 2% benchmark for two years.

Concluding, if the *Zeitenwende* is to be politically and historically significant, the changes need not only to be sustained but also stepped up in scale.

Due to the historical context and the resulting public opinion, creating a lasting change is a big task, which will most likely take years to cement in society. The initial reaction has been favourable, support for the five courses of action raised compared to the previous year. The trust in the government remained high, and collectively a majority or at least a relative majority were in favour of the measures associated with the *Zeitenwende*, meaning the public see it as legitimate. As the securitization theory sees speech acts as a way to legitimise extraordinary measures, it can be said that the securitization has been successful. This does not imply a strict causal mechanism. However, at the end of the year the public opinion started waning, most likely due to people getting tired of the war and feeling economic hardship at home. This has led more people to become critical of the unusual foreign policy approach, perhaps because people have come to associate it with the hardships. The pre-existing ambivalence has increased in the light of the *Zeitenwende*, giving rise to populist anti-war movements, most notably by the head of the German Linke party. It is plausible that the fringe parties or the opposition are effectively de-securitizing the issue to de-legitimize the *Zeitenwende* and subsequently the coalition.

Whether the change in foreign policy will be lasting or will Germany soon give up on its promises, is hard to tell. Presumably, it will depend on a multitude of factors. For example, on the economic situation at home, if the crisis continues or deepens, public opinion of supporting Ukraine is highly likely to fall significantly. This would make continued support for Ukraine politically difficult. If the war falls into stalemate and Ukraine does not make any progress, this might make supporting Ukraine seem pointless. On the other hand, it is dependent on how the course of the war plays out, for example if Russia continues to commit war crimes, this is likely to legitimise continued support for Ukraine. Same goes for territorial advancements on the Russian side, as this could increase the perception of threat posed to the rest of Europe including Germany.

Future studies should look into *Zeitenwende* in a longer timeframe, changes in public opinion should also be studied in a longer timeframe to determine, if there has been a real change in mindset or if the change is a temporary abnormality. It will also be interesting to see if the special relationship between Germany and Russia will return after the war. Furthermore, it could be interesting to explore alternative securitizing agents such as the media. If the public opinion keeps dropping, the de-securitizing process should also be observed.

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