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**NORDIC-BALTIC PERCEPTIONS
OF SHARED SECURITY**

MA Thesis

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Tartu 2018

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

Since 2014, the security environment around the Baltic Sea has gone through an increase of instability and has gained higher military-strategic importance. After Russia's aggressive behaviour towards Ukraine and the following international tensions, the Baltic, but also the Nordic countries have become extensively exposed to a military threat from the East. In managing common threats, cooperative security efforts are of uttermost importance for such a small area. The thesis analyses the Nordic-Baltic countries' perceptions of collective security within the framework of regional security complex theory, looking at the states' strategic relation to NATO and at their interests of cooperation within the Nordic-Baltic area in the changed security environment. The research is conducted by qualitative content analysis and is based on strategic documentation. Through this, contributions are made to literature and theory as well as to research on the Nordic-Baltic area and mapping the policy interests of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. The thesis argues that recent developments in the security situation have motivated the Nordic-Baltic countries to come closer in regional security cooperation, and that all countries of the area are strategically remarkably similar to NATO, regardless of whether they are member or partner states of the Alliance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With these brief words, I would like to first and foremost thank my supervisor, Eva Piirimäe, for her invaluable assistance and optimism in writing this thesis. My further thanks go to the professors I have had the honour to work with during my time at the University of Tartu, University of Aarhus and Sciences Po Paris, in particular to Heiko Pääbo for providing valuable feedback on the earlier versions of this thesis. Last but not least, I want to thank my family and friends, most importantly Liis Massa, Helen Wright and Leslie Gibson for their endless support and encouragement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

3B	Unofficial abbreviation referring to trilateral cooperation of the Baltic countries
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
AU	African Union
BSR	Baltic Sea region
CBSS	Council of Baltic Sea States
CSC	Classical security complex
CSCT	Classical security complex theory
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
eFP	Enhanced Forward Presence
EOP	Enhanced Opportunities Program
EU	European Union
IR	International relations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NB8	Nordic-Baltic Eight
NORDEFCO	Nordic Defence Cooperation
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RSC	Regional security complex
RSCT	Regional security complex theory
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PfP	Partnership for Peace
UN	United Nations

INTRODUCTION

The international security environment has undergone remarkable changes following Russian annexation of Crimea in spring 2014. Due to Russian actions' incompatibility with international law and unacceptability in the Euro-Atlantic value space, relations between the Western countries and Russia have weakened. International sanctions have been imposed, cooperation between the two sides has been largely brought to halt, and unpredictability and instability in Europe have risen to a level that has not been seen since the end of Cold War. While during the post-Cold War period, the Western security focus has in general been shifting more and more towards conflict management activities outside its own borders, the events of Ukraine have brought geopolitical concerns back to Europe. Albeit Russian growing military strength and fearless violation of international norms are distressing the Western society as a whole, the concerns about Russia's aggressive behaviour are more considerable in its close vicinity. Therefore, the Baltic Sea region is greatly influenced by such developments. Russia's behaviour has fractured security and stability in the region, raised the military-strategic importance of the area and given the countries in the region a reason to reconsider aspects of their foreign policy and security and defence behaviour. Because of their Soviet history and location on the Eastern border of the Euro-Atlantic community, the three Baltic countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – are the most exposed to the new security reality. Two Nordic countries, Finland and Norway, also share a border with Russia, thereat Finland a particularly long one. Due to multifarious and extensive integration of the Nordic countries and their location by the Baltic Sea, also Sweden and Denmark would be affected by any incidents in the area. The fifth

Nordic nation, Iceland, is less influenced by the new security circumstances due to its geographical remoteness.

Considering the security and defence of the Nordic-Baltic area, effective cooperation between the countries is of critical importance in terms of dealing with both common security interests and aims as well as with problems and threats. Nordic-Baltic security cooperation dates back nearly three decades. During and immediately after the restoration of the Baltic States' independence in 1991, security and defence cooperation between the Baltic and Nordic countries was rather close and Nordic countries had a significant role in assisting and supporting the process of building up the Baltics' defence capabilities (Archer, 1999). Despite the prosperous start, the countries' individual choices in international relations have been somewhat heterogeneous and there is still no unifying structure which would bring all the Baltic and Nordic countries together in the security field.

Currently, the security and defence policy around the Baltic Sea is developed and shaped within different organisations and frameworks. The most crucial role in ensuring the region's security is carried out by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). Denmark and Norway were amongst the twelve founding members of NATO in 1949, the three Baltic countries joined the alliance no less than 55 years later – in 2004. Sweden and Finland identify themselves as militarily non-aligned countries, and are thus not members of NATO. However, both are considered to be close partners of the alliance as they have been participating in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme since 1994 and are also NATO's Enhanced Opportunities Program (EOP) partners with tailor-made cooperation programmes since 2014. The five Nordic countries have created a common defence framework of their own, NORDEFECO (Nordic Defence Cooperation, formed in 2009), which does not include the Baltic States. The tripartite cooperation of the Baltic States (known as 3B), through which the three countries have been performing joint defence projects since restoring their independence in the end of Cold War, in turn, leaves aside the Nordic countries. The European Union (EU), which most of the countries of the region are members of, has adopted a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and aims to elevate its efforts in the security and defence field. In November 2017, also a new joint security and defence framework, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) was signed

between Member States of the European Union. Yet, similarly as with the EU's CSDP, Denmark has abstained from joining the framework, and Norway does not take part in the framework either as it is not a member of the European Union. However, due to it being so recent, the PESCO framework will not be further considered in the thesis, as it has not been in place long enough to have become a remarkable security player in the region. The only institution that includes all of the states in the region, hence also all of the Nordic-Baltic countries, is the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), and although it coordinates the member states' work on collaborative projects in the region, its security and defence actions have remained limited to certain aspects of societal security at most. There have also been some joint initiatives and political dialogue under the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) cooperation format, however practical cooperation, particularly in security area has remained rather modest. Thus far, besides bilateral projects, for the Nordic and Baltic countries the main frameworks for working towards their security and defence aims have hence been NATO, NORDEFECO and 3B.

Side by side with the joint cooperation, each country has its own idea and consciousness about the security environment, its threats and developments, as well as strategic arrangements, cooperative relations, and policy and action plans on how to keep their populations, territories and independence secure in terms of the current security landscape. These perceptions are most comprehensively represented in national strategic documentation. Such information also reflects on how the states identify themselves within the global and regional security environment and how they grasp security as a shared value and concept through their policy choices – which countries and international structures they consider to be their main partners, with whom they share their values, principles, aims and policy objectives, with whom they wish and plan to carry out practical cooperation, etc. The security landscape has a direct influence on such perceptions. Therefore, evident shifts in the international environment, both of global and regional type, also have the power to make countries reconsider their strategic positions and reshape them accordingly. For the countries of Baltic Sea region, growing unpredictability and aggressive unlawful behaviour of Russia in Ukraine since 2014 has been a serious change of more or less balanced situation and neighbourly developments beforehand.

In academic literature, the question of security in the Baltic Sea region and Nordic-Baltic area is certainly not a new topic. For evident historical reasons, most of it is rather recent and dates back less than three decades. However, due to fast changes in the area's security environment, the literature can be considered quite multifaceted. It is possible to distinguish between several more specific research aspects, whereas the share dealing with the Nordic-Baltic region as an entity on its own makes up a minority of the discussion. More often the research has been limited to security concerns of single states or smaller groups of states such as Baltic countries, Nordic countries, militarily non-aligned countries.

Academic research about the Baltic States' security could be divided into two: studies from the period before and the ones after the countries' accession to NATO in 2004. The earlier research has analysed security concepts, defence postures and main threats and risks in the three states during their first decade of re-established independence (Kundu, 2003; Trapans, 1998), but has been to a greater extent committed to examining the Baltics' possible future in NATO. Numerous articles about NATO enlargement to the three Baltics have been questioning the probability of the Baltic countries' accession (Clemmesen and Kværnø, 2001; Krickus, 1998; Latawski, 1997; Lejinš, 2001; Staar, 1998), suggesting different frameworks and policy recommendations for successful enlargement (Kramer, 2002; Stefanova, 2002), analysing Russian viewpoint on the question and possible future relations between NATO and Russia (Black, 1999; Blank, 1998; Khudoley and Lanko, 2004; Rojansky, 1999), but also between the Baltics and Russia (Mihkelson, 2003), and discussing security-related perceptions about the Baltics in the West (Mälksoo, 2004). With the accession of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to NATO in early spring 2004, several of these research aspects became irrelevant. Post-accession research on the three Baltic States' security and defence has had alternative, more diverse focus points. For example, scholars have looked at Baltic trilateral cooperation initiatives and their future perspectives after NATO accessions (Molis, 2009), changes in Baltic security perceptions (Jakniunaite, 2016), foreign policies after the accessions (Galbreath, Lašas and Lamoreaux, 2008), as well as relations with Russia and hybrid warfare (Nader, 2017). Lamoreaux and Galbreath (2008) have analysed the Baltics as small states within the international system, claiming the three have gained more influence and agenda-

setting power and, contrary to expectations, have also actively engaged in ‘East-West’ negotiations.

Literature about the Nordic countries, on the other hand, has been quite different in its nature. Researchers have often discussed the ‘Nordic model’ or ‘Nordic balance’ of security policy and cooperation (Browning and Joenniemi, 2013; Forsberg, 2013; Rieker, 2004; Steinbock, 2008; Wivel, 2017) and changes in Nordic security after major events such as the end of Cold War, the Afghan war or the Ukraine conflict (Åtland, 2016; Miller, 1990; Nordenman, 2014) as well as the Nordic countries’ contributions to NATO (Hendrickson, 1999; Ørvik, 1966). Within the Nordics, a question of major interest has been the militarily non-aligned status of Finland and Sweden. Authors have been looking for reasons behind Swedish and Finnish choice of abstaining from NATO membership, suggesting it could be due to either path dependency (Cottey, 2013), geopolitics and historical memory (Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, 2001) or evolving continuity (Ferreira-Pereira, 2006), as well as trying to explain Finnish and Swedish otherwise diverging defence policies (Möller and Bjereld, 2010), analysed their impact on Nordic and Nordic-Baltic cooperation (Winnerstig, 2014) and the possibility of NATO membership of both countries in the future (Austin, 1999; Lödén, 2012).

Earlier research focusing on both Baltic and Nordic countries analysed the Nordic-Baltic security relationship of assistance and cooperation. The works of Clive Archer (1998; 1999) concentrate on examining the main security needs and challenges of the Baltic countries during and shortly after restoration of their independence and the Nordic states’ assistance in addressing these problems, which by Archer’s evaluation has been “considerable” (1999: 47), as well as on analysing the Nordics’ different choice of extent and means of assistance and looking for reasons behind the various approaches. Bergman (2006) sees the Nordics’ engagement in the Baltics as adjacent internationalism, which could have given rise to a distinctive Nordic-Baltic sphere of community. Even further on, there has been some discussion on whether the Baltic Sea region or the Nordic-Baltic area could be considered as a security community on its own, or whether it could form one in the future. Bailes (2010) has argued that security-wise the variety between the states in the region is too big to constitute a unitary Nordic bloc, let alone a Nordic-Baltic bloc, and the existing Nordic cooperation is more of a compensation in its nature than a serious move towards convergence. Mouritzen has

estimated the enlargement potential of the Nordic security community towards the Eastern shore of the Baltic Sea to be “modest” (2001: 308). However, in his later work (Mouritzen, 2006), he refers to the region as Nordic-Baltic area and considers the three Baltic countries together with primarily Finland, Sweden and Denmark as one of the “two pillars of parallel action in Northern Europe” (2006: 496), the second one consisting of Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland. Even so, he questions the unity of the countries, referring to them as an area of “divisive geopolitics” (Mouritzen, 2006: 495) based on the countries’ different reactions to the Iraq War operation. Browning and Joenniemi (2004) on the other hand see security as a unifying, not a divisive topic in the region and have questioned sustainability of the future of regional cooperation in terms of the Baltics’ NATO accession “removing security from the frame” (2004: 233). When analysing forms of security cooperation in Europe, Mölder (2006) categorizes NATO and EU as examples of pluralistic security communities, but sees the Baltic Sea region not as a security community, but a regional security complex. Later, he has used the region as an example case for cooperative security dilemmas (Mölder, 2011). Winnerstig (2014) goes a little further and analyses also the concept of the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) in greater detail, but concludes that forming “a true security community” (2014: 162) in the Nordic-Baltic area is impeded by issues related to strategic harmonisation and reluctance of Sweden and Finland to join NATO. The only research matters where the Nordic and Baltic states seem to be treated as a rather consistent entity are debates around the Nordic-Baltic area’s transatlantic relations and US-Nordic-Baltic multilateral security cooperation (Konyshev, Sergunin and Subbotin, 2016; Lundestad, 2017; McNamara, 2017; McNamara, Nordenman and Salonijs-Pasternak, 2015).

Throughout this former research, NATO as the major defence alliance in the region has often been considered as an actor within the system. For some interest areas, such as the cases of Finland, Sweden and the three Baltics’ potential membership of NATO or the region’s transatlantic cooperation, it has been observed in somewhat greater detail, but a large share of the mentioned works have had their centre of attention elsewhere. The interaction between NATO and its member and partner countries has overall received rather little discussion (Cottey, 2013: 468-469). Timothy Edmunds (2003) has analysed NATO’s influence on its new members who joined in

1999 and 2004, however, as he did his research before the actual accession of seven out of ten new member states had happened, the focus is rather on how NATO ‘prepares’ its candidate states, arguing that the impact on the countries’ civil-military and military reforms have been major. Some research trying to determine the role and impact of NATO has been carried out for the cases Poland and the Czech Republic (Frank, 2010), but similarly to Edmunds’ work, the analysis does not go much further from the accession period. Hence, understanding the interaction between NATO and its member and partner countries can be considered a gap in literature, to filling of which this thesis aims to contribute.

Therefore, while scholars have in the past analysed security and defence cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries from many focus points and in terms of several theoretical approaches, it has mainly been considered, at least regarding the period after the Baltics’ accession to NATO, as rather weak and not extensively collective – by any means not enough to qualify as a unified community. However, as the previous research concerning this matter dates back to earlier than 2014, it is now well justified to analyse the relations in the region once again, primarily to see whether an escalated security threat in the close vicinity has changed the Nordic-Baltic perspectives on regional cooperation. In addition, despite literature on NATO being extensive, determining the strategic impact of NATO on its member and partner countries can be considered as a gap in literature in general. While the Nordic-Baltic region with its heterogeneous choice of security alignment, but closely related national securities and security concerns could well work as an example region for comparative analysis, the thesis will seek to contribute to filling this research gap by looking at how NATO’s objectives have been integrated into the member and partner states’ national defence policies. Altogether, analysing the two aspects would allow drawing conclusions on countries’ perceptions of cooperative security. Results of the work could prove useful in several ways: firstly, in better understanding the dynamics of Baltic Sea region’s defence environment and NATO’s role in it as well as providing comparative knowledge on Nordic-Baltic countries; secondly, in general understanding of member states’ and partners’ relating to NATO through national level; thirdly, in evaluating the potential perspectives of security and defence cooperation’s future in the Nordic-Baltic area; furthermore, in contributing to theoretical comprehension of regional cooperative

security through a case study; and finally, in providing background knowledge that could help to develop well-informed policy decisions in the future, likewise in terms of national context as well as of bi- or multilateral cooperation projects both in the Nordic-Baltic area and elsewhere.

The main aim of this thesis is to examine the Nordic and Baltic countries' perceptions of shared security. This will be done from two perspectives. Firstly, regarding the countries' affiliation to NATO – the broader security structure influencing and participating in the region's security policies. The objective is to analyse the intersection between NATO's strategic aims and the ones of the seven countries in question, and how the countries strategically identify with NATO's objectives on national level. Secondly, the thesis will consider the Nordic-Baltic regional cooperation, to analyse the countries' aims regarding regional security and defence cooperation in the changed security environment. The thesis seeks to respond to two main research questions:

- 1) How do Nordic and Baltic countries relate to NATO's strategic aims and objectives?
- 2) What are Nordic and Baltic countries' regional cooperation interests in the changed security environment?

To answer the two questions, the thesis will place the current security situation of Baltic and Nordic countries and NATO into the theory of regional security complexes, relying on the discourse of the Copenhagen School of international relations. The empirical analysis will be carried out using qualitative content analysis, based on the strategic concept of NATO, adopted in 2010, and the most recent official national strategic documents on security and defence adopted in each of the seven countries of Nordic-Baltic area – Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Since Iceland, the eighth country related to the Nordic community and the Nordic-Baltic Eight, is quite a distinctive phenomenon in terms of security, being located in a remote area and having no standing army, it will not be included in the research as doing so would not add any extra value.

The thesis is structured into four main chapters. The first chapter begins with introducing the research field and relevant theoretical frameworks regarding security cooperation. It then outlines the primary principles of the Copenhagen School of security studies and discusses the theory of regional security complexes (RSCT), explaining the central concept and relevant theoretical aspects, as well as outlining the theoretical assumptions of the thesis. The second chapter will introduce the methodological aspects of the thesis, clarifying the choice of methods and the sources of empirical data. The section continues with operationalization and finally outlines limitations of the research project. The third chapter focuses on the first research question: it begins with giving an overview of emergence and development of NATO's strategic concept, and proceeds to discuss the ways in which the Nordic-Baltic countries relate to NATO through their strategic aims based on an empirical analysis of their security and defence concepts. The fourth chapter, dedicated to the second research question, concentrates on the cooperative security connections between the seven states, presenting the empirical results and discussing the countries' perceptions of a Nordic-Baltic security community in the post-2014 security landscape. The final section of the thesis draws conclusions and sums up the research.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The first chapter deals with the theoretical aspects of the thesis, which is necessary for placing and understanding the research puzzle within the wider discussions of international relations and security studies. The first section of the chapter introduces the research field and relevant theoretical frameworks regarding security cooperation. The second section then outlines the primary principles of the Copenhagen School of security studies and further discusses the central theoretical framework of the thesis, the theory of regional security complexes (RSCT), explaining the central concept and relevant theoretical aspects. Then, based on the first two subchapters, the third section outlines theoretical assumptions of the current thesis.

1.1. Theorising Security and Security Cooperation

Before moving to discussion on different approaches to security cooperation, a reasonable starting point would be to first clarify the understanding of the concept of security. Since the emergence of international relations (IR) as a research field – and security studies as a sub-discipline of it – nearly a century ago, many authors have suggested ways of defining security. According to Collins (2016: 1-3, 446, 451), there has been a consensus on the matter that security studies have to do with threats; yet determining what ‘threats’ entails has not been this simple – in addition to traditional, geopolitical aspects like war and use of force in general, dangers can also range further, emerging in non-military forms such as environmental issues, pandemics and similar health-related threats, or as terrorism or inter-state armed conflicts. With the growing importance of information technology solutions in everyday lives as well as state

matters, cyber security and energy security, but also psychological security, have grown to be of higher priority than ever before, and defending against all methods of hybrid warfare has attained a crucial position in defence matters. Such emergence and development of new types of threats makes grasping the concept of security more and more difficult. Taking account of these developments, Collins provides a particularly wide definition, coining security as “the assurance people have that they will continue to enjoy those things that are most important to their survival and well-being” (2016: 450).

Approaches and theories of security studies largely follow the traditional international relations disciplines, such as realism and liberalism, and their central ideas; yet, the field also allows for some alternative approaches. Several of the theoretical branches also entail a way of investigating and explaining security cooperation. Drawing on state- and power-centred realist idea, Kenneth Waltz has within structural realism introduced the concept of balancing. He argues that states, in order to pursue policies of their interest in competitive international system, are looking to increase their ability to defend themselves. They can do it either through internal or external balancing – either by increasing the state’s own economic and military capabilities, or in case there are three or more major powers in the system, by forming alliances with other states and through that gaining the opportunity to additionally rely on other states’ resources. In a balancing alliance, weaker states join their forces in order to balance or offset the prevailing power of the stronger actor. (Glaser, 2016: 17-19) Power balancing might also be executed in order to reduce political marginalisation and by spreading dependency (Mouritzen, 2006: 499). Alternatively, motivational realism emphasises variation in states’ aims and goals instead of primarily seeking security, and motivational realists argue that competition in international system is caused by greedy states. Greedy states are more likely to form alliances via bandwagoning, i.e. joining the stronger side in order to more potentially gain from the alliance. (Glaser, 2016: 25-26) Yet, as realist approaches are based on a strictly materialist idea, they would not be sufficient for understanding perceptions of security sharing.

As the central focus point of the thesis is on perceptions of security, security cannot be understood as rigidly material, but also as a social notion. This leads further to constructivist understanding of international relations and security studies.

Constructivist approach focuses on interactions in international system through ideas and identity, stating that the world is a social construction, created through actions of the actors – either states or non-states – within the system, contradicting some other international relations’ theories’ belief of them being given or inevitable (Agius, 2016: 70-71). Alexander Wendt, one of the main authors of constructivism, summarises the basic principles of constructivist thought as “(1) that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and (2) that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature” (1999: 1). In constructivist view of inter-actor relations there is, hence, no objective reality, brute facts or certain, prescribed way of the world, but instead everything depends on how the actors within the system socially construct it. Understanding the international system centres around ideas and normative structures, actors’ identities are the source of their interests, values, beliefs and norms, and are constituted through interaction, whereas agents and structures are constituted mutually (Agius, 2016: 71). Yet, decades before Wendt wrote his works and constructivism started developing as a theoretical approach of international relations, an explanation of cooperation between states, bearing the constructivist idea, was presented by Karl Deutsch. The theoretical concept of a ‘security community’ was first introduced by Deutsch in 1957, and has been complemented and enhanced by several authors since. The central idea of security communities is that certain states have, on the basis of a ‘sense of community’, become integrated enough that they can not see war or other large-scale violent action as a thinkable option for dealing with their differences. Instead, issues are solved with the help of peaceful change processes, which eventually results in creating a stable peace between the countries. (Tusicsny, 2007: 426) Key to this underlying of ‘sense of community’ lies in complex interdependence, especially economic interdependence, shared (liberal democratic) values and common identity (Mölder, 2006: 11). The approach distinguishes between amalgamated and pluralistic security communities. Deutsch (1957: 6) characterises amalgamated security community as a larger formally merged unit that has been made up of previously independent units, for example the United States, and pluralistic security community as one in which the integrating units retain legal independence and in which there are therefore several decision-making centres, such as territories of the US and Canada

combined. In European case, NATO and the European Union have been considered as preeminent security communities, whereas Scandinavia or the 'Norden' region has been considered as "the standard example" of a security community (Waever, 1998: 72, 91-92). Adler and Barnett (1998) have further worked on the evolution of security communities, identifying three stages of the process: nascent, ascendant and mature; and differentiated them by level of integration into tightly and loosely coupled security communities.

Furthermore, besides security communities, three other models within post-modern security architecture have been observed according to Mölder (2006): cooperative security arrangements, collective security arrangements and security complexes (see Table 1 for comprehensive comparison). He describes cooperative security arrangements as security formations around security communities, where security and defence cooperation is promoted and the participating countries are therefore interdependent. Cooperative security arrangements can be both institutionalised or non-institutionalised, and do not necessarily base themselves on value sharing but rather on working towards peace and security through cooperative security measures. Collective security arrangements aim to broaden interests to a regional or global level and attract everyone without any dividing lines. The mechanism of such arrangement is inward, built on the members' agreement not to use force against each other, and the notion that any such aggression would be opposed by other members (Cohen, 2001: 6). The concept of security complex follows the idea of a group of states whose security concerns are interconnected to the extent that considering their national securities as separate is not be reasonable (Mölder, 2006: 15); this approach will be discussed further in the following subchapter.

	<i>Security community</i>	<i>Cooperative security arrangement</i>	<i>Collective security arrangement</i>	<i>Security complex</i>
<i>Method of communication</i>	Complex interdependence	Cooperation	Institutionalised cooperation	Regionalisation
<i>Value sharing</i>	Yes	No	No	No
<i>Existence of security dilemma</i>	No	Cooperative	Traditional and/or cooperative	Traditional and/or cooperative
<i>Security regimes</i>	Collective defence and/or collective security	Collective security	Collective security	Promoting stability
<i>Contemporary example cases</i>	NATO; EU	PfP; Mediterranean Dialogue; Istanbul Cooperation Initiative; EU Neighbourhood Policy, etc.	United Nations; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe	Baltic Sea; Black Sea; Balkans, etc.

Table 1. Security models and post-modern security architecture in Europe. Based on Mölder (2006, pp.14-15).

When aiming to locate the geographic focus area of this thesis within the proposed models, part of it according to the discussion above could qualify as a security community (see Waever's 'Norden' claim above). Yet it is more limited than what Mölder argues to be the security complex of Baltic Sea, as the Baltic Sea region also comprises (at least parts of) Russia, Germany and Poland. In earlier research, scholars have generally neglected the Nordic-Baltic area as a security community of its own (Bailes, 2010: 14-15; Mölder, 2006: 25; Mouritzen, 2008: 301; Winnerstig, 2014: 216). On the other hand, Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998: 14) have argued that there is no separate Nordic security complex, because there is no territorial pattern of security interdependence of the Nordic states only that would be distinctive enough, and the Nordic countries are a part of European security complex instead. However, relying on the security models' characteristics presented in Table 1, the Nordic-Baltic area is most compatible with the model of security complex, as their cooperation does not follow a

collective security regime. Furthermore, reflecting back to the conceptualisation of security discussed in the beginning of this chapter, present-day security field is about much more than just military security. In order to grasp these different aspects of security in the empirical part, e.g. also deal with modern security challenges such as cyber security and information warfare, a broader approach appears necessary. These notions direct the discussion towards regional security complex theory and the wider discourse of the Copenhagen School, which will be further discussed in the following subchapter.

1.2. Regional Security Complex Theory

1.2.1. The Copenhagen School

The term ‘Copenhagen School in security studies’ refers first and foremost to works of scholars from Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) – most importantly Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, who are also the authors of the key texts of the approach, “*Security: A New Framework for Analysis*” (1997), and Buzan additionally of the cornerstone work, “*People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*” (1983). In 1980s, after finding the traditional security approaches too limited, they introduced a broader approach, which distinguishes five general security categories. The categorisation is based on different sources of threat – military, political, economic, environmental, and societal. The division is said to serve mainly analytical purposes and the categories are hence not exclusive from each other. (Persaud, 2016: 147) The Copenhagen Schools combines traditional understanding of security with non-traditional in a way, as it still stresses security being about survival in general and threats to security being of existential nature; yet, the mentioned categories broaden the concept of security with referent objects other than state, and enhance the survival logic further off beyond the boundaries of military security (Emmers, 2016: 168-169). As its main contribution to

security studies, the Copenhagen School has developed the model and analytical framework of securitization.

1.2.2. Securitization

Understanding the fundamentals of securitization is of crucial importance for further discussions within the approach of the Copenhagen School. In simple terms, securitization means framing a public concern as a security issue. Buzan, Waever and de Wilde refrain from defining the concept of securitization in itself as they indicate that “the concept lies in its usage” (1998: 24), but do note that securitization could be understood as a more extreme version of politicization, i.e. “the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (1998: 23-24). Securitization process does not necessarily have to happen through the state but could be done by any other actor who is able to raise a concern as much that it becomes an issue of general concern; furthermore, any public issue can be securitized as long as it can be argued to be of uttermost priority and that not handling it can make everything else irrelevant (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 24).

Securitization model allows classifying the concerns along securitization spectrum (see Figure 1). The spectrum depicts the two-stage process where every matter can be non-politicized, politicized or securitized. A non-politicized matter is an issue that is not on the state agenda and not involved in the public debate. The issue has become politicized, if it has become a matter of standard political system and decisions on the matter are made on government level as a part of public policy. When it is further moved towards the end of the spectrum and becomes securitized, and is presented as a case of existential threat requiring emergency measures of action. (Emmers, 2016: 169-170) The placement of issues on the spectrum depends of circumstances of each, but is, in principle, open; in practice it varies considerably from state to state, e.g. in cases of securitizing religion or culture (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 24). The process of securitization can be also carried out in reverse, as desecuritization – from securitized

matter to politicized one, that is, from the level of existential threat back to the stage where it is managed within regular political procedures (Emmers, 2016: 170).

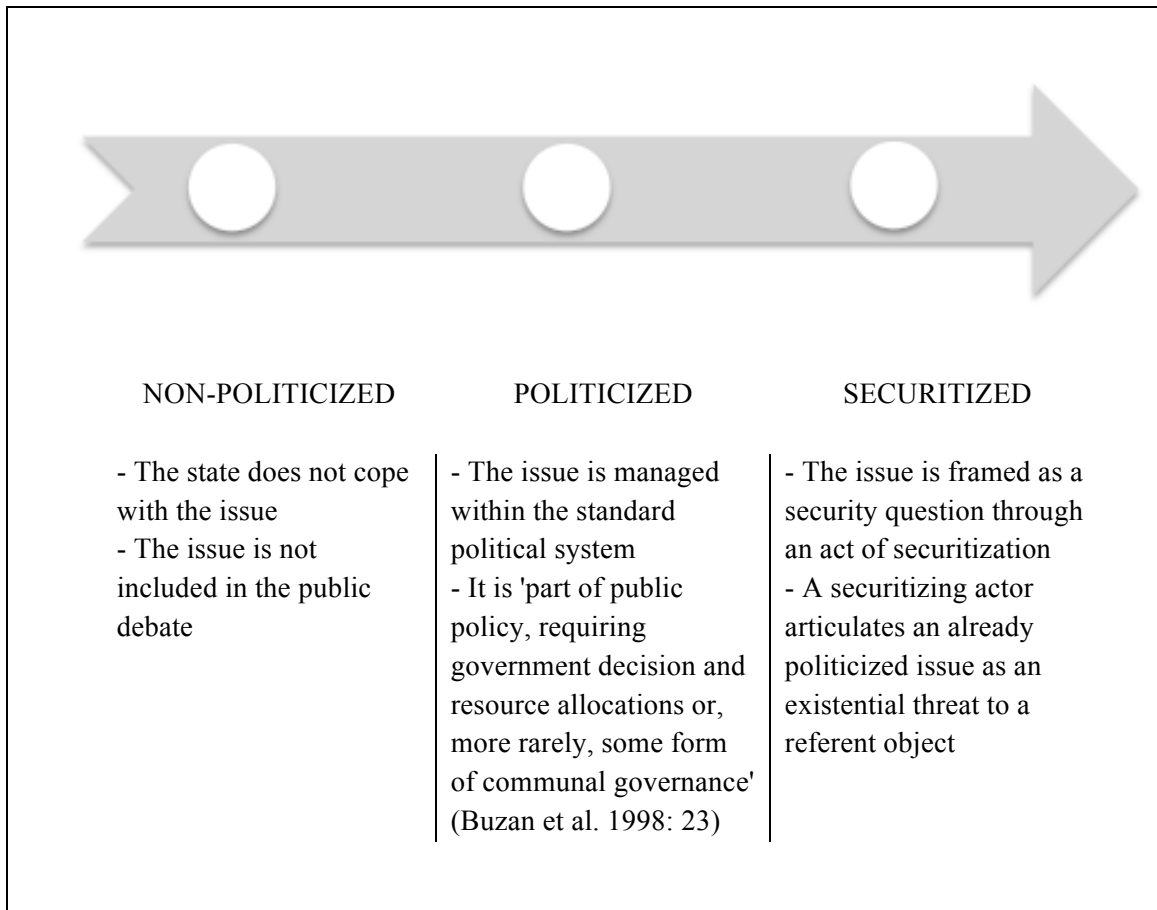


Figure 1. Securitization spectrum. (Emmers, 2016: 170)

Following Emmers (2016: 170-173), the key aspect within the securitization spectrum is the speech act, which is considered to be the starting point of securitization process. If an issue is articulated as an existential threat in the speech act, it can be securitized regardless of whether it actually represents one or is even a question of security. A crucial point in the securitizing action is convincing the relevant audience about a referent object being threatened, typically using security language. The objects could be individuals, groups or issue areas that “possess a legitimate claim to survival and whose existence is ostensibly threatened” (2016: 171), and the audience most often political elites, public opinion, military officers, or other elites. The speech act is considered successful in case it provides the securitizing actors (political elite, military, civil society) with the right to use exceptional means. A crucial part of securitization is

emphasising the existential nature of the threat, which also helps to avoid the conceptualisation of security broadening too much and does not allow it to lose its coherence around the core notion of survival. On the other hand, the power of speech act confirms that security is a socially constructed, “self-referential practice” (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 24).

1.2.2. Regional Security Complex Theory

As mentioned above, to the Copenhagen School scholars, security is a relational matter – it depends on how actors relate to each other in terms of threats. The Copenhagen School explains cooperation between states through security complex theory, as they claim regional level is the arena where “the extremes of national and global level interplay” (Buzan and Waever, 2003: 43). They further justify stronger placement of the central focus of security studies on regions with the collapse of bipolarity, stating that in the post-Cold War world, international relations will be more regionalized as global great powers no longer have the ideology-based interest to interfere and regions will be “left to sort out their own affairs” (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 9). Scholars of the Copenhagen School have presented two levels of the theory: first, the classical security complex theory (CSCT) in Barry Buzan’s *“People, States and Fear”* (first presented in 1983, updated and revised in the edition of 1991), and second, the regional security complex theory (RSCT), presented in *“Security: A New Framework for Analysis”* (1997) by Buzan, Waever and de Wilde. Later on, Buzan and Waever have applied the RSCT on case studies worldwide in their book *“Regions and Powers”* (2003). This section will begin with clarifying the concept of security complex and outlining the main points of the classical version of the approach, and thereafter focuses on discussing regional security complex theory.

The classical security complex theory stems from the belief that security analysis cannot be sufficient around isolated objects, but the latter must be studied in a broader context so as to make it possible to understand the interdependence the object is embedded in. Therefore, the objects of analysis are regional subsystems. However, classical security complexes follow traditional security approaches with having state as

the key unit and political-military sector as their focus. The purpose of the framework is to “highlight the relative autonomy of regional security relations and to set those relations within the context of the unit (state) and system levels” (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 11). It is argued that international security is integrated insufficiently and political and military threats do not travel well over long distances. As a result, security interdependence leads to regional clusters in which the interdependence between the states included is remarkably higher than with states outside – security complexes. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 10-11) Buzan and associates define security complex as “a group of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another” (1998: 12). They further state that internal dynamics of such complexes can be driven by either enmity or amity: interdependence can take a form of conflict formation in the negative end to pluralistic security community in the positive end, or between the two, take shape of a security regime where states see each other as potential threats, but diminish the dilemma with joint reassurance agreements. With this, security complex theory makes itself also compatible with other approaches, e.g. Deutsch’s security communities or Jervis’ security regimes. The CSCT framework allows, by analysing essential structure (arrangement and differentiation of units; amity and enmity patterns; power distribution) in a classical security complex, to assess change in the complex: the result could be either maintenance of the status quo, internal transformation, external transformation, or overlay. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 12-14) However, the classical security complex theory started losing its initial relevance in the light of the Copenhagen School’s general broadening of security as a concept.

Regional security complex theory opens the analysis for other sectors beyond political-military one, and other actors besides states. The approach offers two ways for this: homogeneous complexes and heterogeneous complexes. The former continues with the assumption that complexes are made up within sectors and between similar actors (e.g. states within military complexes, identity-based actors in societal complexes, etc.), while the latter allows integration of different types of actors as well as several sectors. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 16) According to this broadening, also the definition of security complexes was revised: a regional security

complex is claimed to be “a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 201). Compared to CSCT, the complexes according to RSCT have some changes in characteristics. Essential structure of a regional security complex (RSC) entails four variables: 1) boundary (differentiation from neighbours), 2) anarchic structure (composition of at least two autonomous units), 3) polarity (power distribution among units), and 4) social construction (internal patterns of amity and enmity). Evolutions of RSCs exclude the option of overlay – external involvement to the extent that local security patterns cease to exist – and this is considered as an absence of a regional security complex instead. (Buzan and Waever, 2003: 53)

RSCT further develops a typology of regional security complexes, differentiating between standard and centred RSCs and various forms of these (Buzan and Waever, 2003: 53-61). However as categorizing security complexes is not of substantial importance in the current research, this part of the theory will not be introduced in greater detail. Yet, it is worthy studying one more concept within RSCT, which is subcomplex. Buzan and Waever describe subcomplex as “a ‘half-level’ within the regional one”, which “represent distinctive patterns of security interdependence that are nonetheless caught up in a wider pattern that defines the RSC as a whole” (2003: 51). Moreover, they note that a subcomplex essentially does not differ from an RSC in ways other than being embedded within a larger RSC (2003: 51).

Regional security complex theory offers a framework for empirical studies of regional security – descriptive RSCT, providing four levels of analysis to work with. The aim of the framework is to present a possibility to systematically link the different levels within a regional security complex, and to provide a way to generate reference points which can be used to identify and determine change on the regional level. (Buzan and Waever, 2003: 51-53) The levels are presented in Table 2. Based on the descriptive framework, Buzan and Waever have also developed a predictive RSCT framework, which can be used to generate predictive scenarios in regions (2003: 65).

	<i>Level</i>	<i>Clarification</i>
1	Domestic in the states of the region	In particular the states' domestically generated vulnerabilities, to analyse strength of the state based on domestic order, the kind of its security fears, etc.
2	State-to-state relations	Relations which generate the region as such
3	The region's interaction with neighbouring regions	Relatively limited aspect; considerable in case of major changes in the patterns that define complexes and in situations of gross asymmetries
4	The role of global powers in the region	Interplay between the global and regional security structures

Table 2. Descriptive RSCT analytical framework. Based on Buzan and Waever. (2003: 51)

1.3. Theoretical Assumptions

On the theoretical ground, the research to be conducted will be mainly working with three of the four levels presented in Table 2: domestic (level one), state-to-state (level two) and global powers (level four). The analysis classifies as of a heterogeneous complex, as it does not necessarily limit security to military-political sector, although key units of security are states.

The first research interest of the thesis engages the domestic and global power levels, focusing mainly on the actions regarding the fourth level, a global player, yet does that through lens of the domestic level – the primary interest is on the intersection of the two. The first assumption of the thesis posits the strategic intersection between the two levels, relying in part on the concept of bandwagoning, in part on security communities:

H1: States that identify with the global power more closely are also more eager to relate to the global power strategically.

Within the regional security complex theory, the case study of Nordic-Baltic area could in empirical analysis be handled as a subcomplex. According to Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998: 12), regional security complexes cannot be formed at random, but by following a “distinctive territorial pattern of security interdependence”. The Copenhagen School scholars treat Europe as one RSC and deny Nordic countries forming a separate one. Based on this logic, this thesis will treat Nordic-Baltic area as a potential subcomplex. Therefore, the second half of the empirical part to follow will deal with analysis within level two and examine patterns of amity and enmity in the subcomplex. In addition, level three cannot be implicitly excluded from this analysis as the main influential developments are coming for outside the subcomplex. However, as the influential developments in themselves (in this case, strengthening of a common proximate threat) are not examined in the research, but rather taken as an established reality, the focus is on relations within the subcomplex. The thesis will posit the idea that the countries of the subcomplex, being already closely interdependent in security, would in their actions follow tendencies of power balancing rather than bandwagoning, and that it could thus be assumed that their interests of becoming even firmer in their cooperation and degree of amity in the subcomplex would grow. The second assumption is stated as follows:

H2: Strengthening of a common proximate threat makes states enhance cooperation and move towards higher amity.

Operationalization and specification of the assumptions on the level of the case study will be carried out in the methodological chapter (section 2.2.).

2. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The second chapter will introduce the methodological aspects of the thesis and describe the research design. Its first subchapter clarifies the choice of method, sources of empirical data, and the process of data collection and analysis. The section continues with the operationalization, defining the research questions and assumptions in further detail, while the third subchapter will outline the limitations of the research project.

2.1. Choice of Method and Sources of Empirical Data

Based on the qualitative nature of the research puzzle and research questions as well as of the empirical data sources, the methodology of the thesis is accordingly also qualitative. The empirical research in the thesis will be carried out according to the methodological practices of qualitative content analysis. With seven countries and one organisation as research objects, it qualifies as a small-n study.

Source of the empirical data used for analysis is strategic documentation, as this is supposedly the most relevant and comprehensive source where a country's or organisation's standpoints and future aims are represented. In order to find answers to the research questions posed, the source documents must be timely, accurate and comparable. Therefore, when choosing the appropriate documentation for each country, two criteria were applied: 1) time – the documents should be as recent as possible and adopted not before the year 2014, in order to reflect the most accurate positions in the current security environment; and 2) content – the documents should cover security and defence sectors. All documents used are official public strategic documents published by government sources. As text is the key element of qualitative analysis, consideration

was given to language aspect as well. In the interest of maximum coherence over the analysis, documents in English were preferred. However, as it was not possible in each case to fill the time relevance criteria by using English language documents, also sources in Estonian, Swedish and Norwegian were used. Where possible, the documents in English were also compared to the original documents in the official language to verify their conformity. In cases where a citation from any of the Swedish, Norwegian or Estonian language documents is used in the empirical part, it should be considered as the author's translation, unless noted otherwise specifically. Regarding the time criteria, an exception is the strategic concept of NATO, which was adopted in 2010, but has not been reviewed since; hence there is no updated alternative that could be used for determining the strategic position of NATO. Regarding some countries' strategies, two separate documents were used in order to by large cover the main security and defence topics. The full list of documents used for collecting empirical data is presented in Appendix 1.

Work with data sources was conducted in three steps. First, the security concept of NATO was analysed and categorised following the pattern of the concept – the aims described by NATO were categorised in three groups, by three main topics or core tasks of the concept. These are defence and deterrence, crisis management, and promoting international security through cooperation. Each core task includes a number of smaller aims that are set to achieve the key objectives; all these were included in the analysis as each forming a category (see Appendix 2 for full list of objectives). Next, all national documents were analysed and relevant information in these coded according to the categories. The results of this step form the basis of chapter three of the thesis, in which the countries' viewpoints regarding these categories are compared and analysed. The structure of the chapter follows the pattern of the categories within core tasks, and in the final part the overall trends are discussed. In the final step, the national documents were gone through once more to determine statements regarding Nordic-Baltic cooperation. In order to do this, keywords 'Nordic', 'Baltic' and names of all the Nordic-Baltic countries were applied to the countries' strategic documents. The results then were used as the basis of analysis in chapter four, for discussing the Nordic and Baltic countries' interests and plans regarding cooperation with each other.

2.2. Research Questions and Operationalization

The research project aims to understand the Nordic and Baltic countries' perceptions of security cooperation on two levels: within the framework of NATO, and regionally between the countries of the area. The analysis is conducted through two central research questions:

1) How do Nordic and Baltic countries relate to NATO's strategic aims and objectives?

2) What are Nordic and Baltic countries' regional cooperation interests in the changed security environment?

These questions are sought to be answered through the theoretical framework of regional security complexes, and national strategic documentation is implemented as a source of security perceptions.

The thesis has two theoretical assumptions:

H1: States that identify with the global power more closely are also more eager to relate to the global power strategically.

H2: Strengthening of a common proximate threat makes states enhance cooperation and move towards higher amity.

These will be tested in the case study of Nordic-Baltic area. As the Nordic-Baltic area on its own does not fully comply with the theoretical prerequisites of a regional security complex, it will be treated as a subcomplex within a larger RSC of Europe. NATO as a major Euro-Atlantic organization that engages in military-political and other security-related matters represents a global power. Observable implications in empirical data would be 1) a high degree of common strategic aims

for relating to the global power strategically, i.e. strategic intersections between strategic concept of NATO and national documents; 2) distinction between membership and partnership for identifying with the global power, i.e. closeness to NATO regarding whether the country is a member state or a partner state of NATO; and 3) expressing a will and aim of cooperative security efforts in the area for enhancing cooperation and moving towards higher amity. Strengthening of a common proximate threat is not separately examined in the research, but rather taken as an established reality, which for the case study is interpreted as military strengthening and aggressive behaviour of Russia. Therefore, the assumptions if applied on the case study level are the following:

h1: Member states of NATO have higher strategic intersections with NATO compared to partner states of NATO in the Nordic-Baltic area.

h2: Military strengthening and aggressive behaviour of Russia makes the countries of Nordic-Baltic area aim towards enhanced cooperative security efforts in the area.

2.3. Limitations

As any research project, the thesis also has its flaws, which should be clarified before proceeding to the chapters of empirical data and analysis.

Firstly, possible weaknesses of material should be noted. Empirical data used in the study will be limited to official sources with open access to anyone. This may set some limitations of accuracy while determining the countries' or NATO's security views and strategic aims, as there is no access to additional classified information such as diplomatic notes, confidential documents, etc. which could also contain relevant information. What is more, it should also be kept in mind that the strategic documents of each country essentially follow their own norms and therefore may not be all-inclusive. Therefore, data should not be over-interpreted – e.g. the lack of positions and aims regarding nuclear weapons in the strategic documentation of Denmark does not

necessarily mean that Denmark lacks an overall standpoint about nuclear weapons in its national policy as a whole.

Another shortcoming might be related to subjectivity. The process of qualitative analysis is built up in a way that always leaves space for interpretations, allowing some subjective perceptions of the person conducting the research play a role in coding and categorizing the data to some extent. In some cases, lines between categories or codes can be unclear or the data could be presented in a way that allows it to be interpreted in slightly different ways. However, as in the current case the entire research is conducted by one author, the interpretations ought to be consistent as much as possible.

3. PERCEPTIONS OF NATO COOPERATION

The following section of the thesis aims to answer the first research question – how do Nordic and Baltic countries relate to NATO’s strategic aims and objectives? In this chapter, the data gathered from national security and defence strategy documents and NATO’s strategic concept will be analysed comparatively. The first section will give a brief overview of strategic concepts of NATO in general and of the current version adopted in 2010. The second, third and fourth section are devoted to analysis between strategies, each addressing one of the three essential core aims presented in NATO’s concept. The final section will discuss the overall findings.

3.1. Strategic Concept of NATO

The first strategic concept of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was adopted shortly after its foundation: dated 1 December 1949 and named The Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Area. The main function of NATO was in this concept declared to be deterring aggression, and additionally, that a case where this function failed and an attack was launched, was the only situation where NATO forces would engage. In 1950, a strategic guidance for regional planning and a medium term plan were added to the initial concept. Renewals to documents were done in 1952, and by 1957, these were all merged into Overall Strategic Concept for the Defence of the NATO Area. Since then, the concepts have been adopted as single documents – in 1968, 1991, 1999, and 2010. The concept issued in 1991 was the first unclassified strategic concept of NATO, and as such the first one that was released to the public. Since 1954, the strategic concepts have been accompanied by implementation documents. (NATO,

2017; see Figure 2) In line with the evolution of strategic concepts, NATO distinguishes three periods in its strategic thinking: 1) the Cold War period, 2) the immediate post-Cold War period, and 3) the post-9/11 environment. During the first period, NATO's strategic focus was mainly on defence and deterrence. Towards the end of the Cold War, more consideration was given to dialogue, and since 1991 the concept was broadened to additionally include notions of cooperation. The terrorist attacks of 2001 brought fight against terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction into greater focus. In the light of new emerging threats, e.g. cyber crime and energy security, a new concept was issued in 2010. (NATO, 2017)

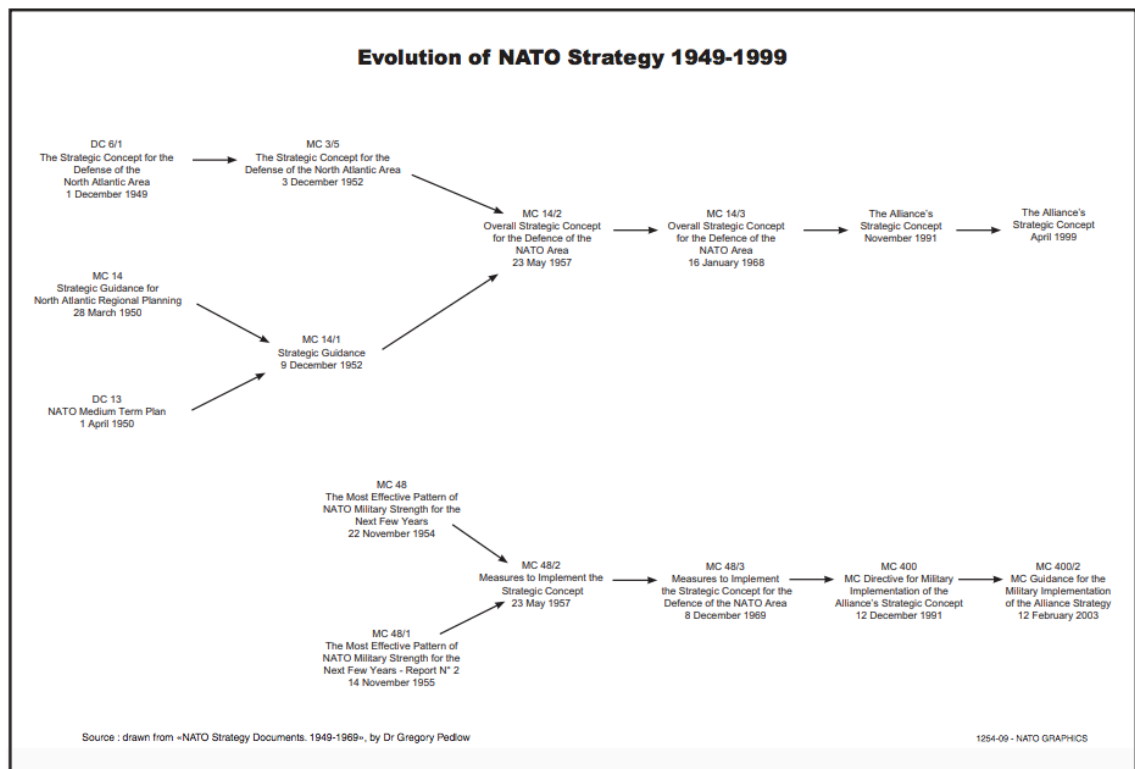


Figure 2. Evolution of NATO Strategy 1949-1999. (NATO, 2017)

The most recent and currently effective strategic concept was adopted at the NATO summit in Lisbon in November 2010 with the upcoming decade in mind, and is by subheading called “*Active Engagement, Modern Defence*”. The concept is accompanied by the Military Committee Guidance MC 400/3 from March 2012. Compared to earlier strategic documents, the 2010 concept is considered to be outstanding due to broadened reflections, consultations, drafting and debates between

Allies in the producing process, with contributions from experts and interested public; additionally, the debate was for the first time initiated and steered by a NATO Secretary General. (NATO, 2017) The concept consists of seven chapters. The first one indicates NATO's core tasks and principles: most importantly "safeguarding the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means" (Strategic ..., 2010: 6). Furthermore, it emphasizes NATO member states' value commitments, strength of the transatlantic link, commitment to NATO's role as a forum for consultations, engagement in reform and modernisation, and reassures engagement in fulfilling the three core tasks: collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security (Strategic ..., 2010: 6-9). The second chapter describes NATO's standpoints regarding the state of affairs in global security environment. Further on, there are three chapters dedicated to each of the three core tasks noted above, and the last two sections sum up NATO's goals regarding reform and modernisation in order to stay abreast of the 21st century security challenges. (Strategic ..., 2010) Within the following sections, the three chapters concerning the core tasks will be discussed in greater detail. All of the statements ascribed to NATO below originate from the 2010 strategic concept, unless specifically noted otherwise.

3.2. Defence and Deterrence

The objective of collective defence and deterrence is one of the cornerstones of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As the central principle of the defence and deterrence core task, the 2010 strategic concept states the following: "NATO members will always assist each other against attack, in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. That commitment remains firm and binding. NATO will deter and defend against any threat of aggression, and against emerging security challenges where they threaten the fundamental security of individual Allies or the Alliance as a whole." (Strategic ..., 2010: 7) The strategic chapter on the core task embodies a comprehensive overview of NATO's aims regarding capabilities it intends to maintain, further develop and obtain in order to fulfil the core task of defence and deterrence against both existing and emerging threats (NATO, 2017).

Closely associated with Article 5, protection and defence of the Alliance's territory and populations against attack is a primary interest of NATO. As sovereignty, territorial integrity and well-being of the population are also fundamentals of the security of a state, coinciding principles are represented in all of the Nordic-Baltic countries' security strategies. In addition, the main referent objects of national security include human rights, political freedom, democratic values, constitutional order, the rule of law, and internal security of the state. Norway (Setting ..., 2017: 11) and Estonia (Eesti ..., 2017: 3, 9) stress NATO's and Article 5's fundamental importance in fulfilling these tasks. Denmark (Defence ..., 2018: 3) also mentions the importance of NATO's collective defence principle, however states that "first and last", the Danish defence is to protect Denmark. This statement acquires a larger meaning considering that Denmark has opted out of all security and defence frameworks within the European Union. Sweden takes a similar stance, noting that the defence capability of Sweden is ultimately aimed at the protection of its own territory (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 1), which however reasonably lines up with Sweden's abstention from military alignment. Estonia's security concept takes a strong position specifically regarding territorial integrity, stating that its land and sea territories as well as air and cyber space will be defended "by any means and against any, no matter how overwhelming, opponent" (Eesti ..., 2017: 10). As Estonia shares a land border with Russia and its eastern areas are in a large share populated with ethnic Russians, based on analogies with Eastern Ukraine, such statement could be interpreted as making an implicit reference to Russia.

NATO claims deterrence to be its core strategic element, and strategic nuclear forces to be a supreme guarantee of security. Therefore, it aims to maintain an "appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces" (Strategic ..., 2010: 15). In national documentation, the element of deterrence and its centrality clearly follows the distinction line between member and partner states of NATO. Whereas all member states emphasize the crucial position of deterrence in their defence strategies – e.g. Norway lists providing deterrence as the primary task of its defence sector (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 6), Lithuania indicates ensuring credible deterrence as "[t]he foundation of defence of the Republic of Lithuania" (National ..., 2017: 8), etc. – Finland remains modest with noting that defence cooperation strengthens deterrence (Government's ..., 2017: 16), and Sweden refrains from using the concept in general (Försvarspolitisk ...,

2015). On the nuclear guarantee argument, national positions are more conservative, but outline another notable pattern. None of the four Nordic countries has included the statements regarding nuclear forces in their strategies, yet the points are represented in all three Baltic countries' documents. Lithuanian concept briefly mentions the conventional and nuclear balance (National ..., 2017: 8), while Estonia and Latvia also emphasize their interest in retaining the nuclear forces' current placement in Europe, and maintenance of the nuclear-conventional balance (Eesti ..., 2017: 11-12; The National ..., 2016: 8). NATO also seeks for Allies' broadest possible participation in planning of nuclear roles, however this aim not a focus point in any of the countries' objectives. With the abovementioned notion of Estonia and Latvia about maintaining nuclear forces in Europe, they display some interest in nuclear planning. Norway has stated that it does not allow nuclear weapons to be stationed on Norwegian territory or foreign military vessels with nuclear weapons on board to call in Norwegian ports in peacetime (Setting ..., 2017: 31). Other than these statements, the interest to take part in ensuring, basing and planning the nuclear forces in the Nordic-Baltic area seems notably low.

Another objective of NATO regarding nuclear power is aiming to further develop the capacity to defend against nuclear, but also chemical, biological and radiological weapons of mass destruction. This aim is supported by Sweden (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 75) and Norway (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 50), the latter also providing a number of efforts that have already been or will be made to contribute to these developments, such as agreements, investigations and working groups. Similarly, NATO has proposed a goal to develop the capability to defend the Allies' populations and territories against ballistic missile attack. In this objective, cooperation is sought with Russia and other Euro-Atlantic partners. As Latvia (The National ..., 2016: 8) and Finland (Government's ..., 2017: 10) mention the importance of this aim on international level, the other three Nordic nations aim to contribute more. While Sweden aims to develop their own long range precision combat ability (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 8) and Norway notes that their "work on identifying possible Norwegian contributions to NATO's missile defence continues" (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 34), Denmark (Defence ..., 2018: 5) has within the NATO Wales Summit declaration in 2014 taken the responsibility to contribute to the Alliance's defence efforts against

ballistic missiles with a sensor capacity. In addition, further studies are in progress to identify alternative, flexible options, such as a land-based contribution, and furthermore, an investigation of potential future acquirement of long-range precision guided missiles is planned. Such patterns within the two specific capacity development objectives can in part be substantiated with the countries' capabilities, both in military means and research wise. The Baltics as small countries with small defence forces cannot afford contributing largely to building such capacities on national level, whereas the Nordic countries have better opportunities and resources to do this. Notably, both Norway's and Denmark's capacity development plans are immediately connected to NATO's overall implementations in the regard.

In terms of capabilities of conventional defence forces, NATO's strategy outlines two points. First, it stresses development and maintenance of "robust, mobile and deployable" (Strategic ..., 2010: 15) conventional forces that could be used for both responsibilities deriving from Article 5, as well as for carrying out expeditionary operations; and in addition, it commits to maintaining the ability to sustain several concurrent operations. Development of national armed forces' conventional capabilities makes up a remarkable part of the security documents in general and is strongly represented in all of the countries' strategies. The level of precision in the aims presented, however, varies a lot between countries, as the strategic documents differ in their volume and character. Therefore it is not reasonable to go into more detailed comparison on how the countries plan to achieve the mentioned robustness, mobility and deployability, but rather whether they aim to do so at all. It could be said that in this objective, there is a uniform consensus between the countries, as all put remarkable priority on aiming the mentioned qualities within their armed forces. For example, Norway states that the Government will ensure that the defence forces are robust and flexible (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 7), Finland sets forth that the demanding operating environment requires "an effective and rapidly deployable military capability" to *inter alia* ensure stability in the Baltic Sea region (Government's ..., 2017: 14), and Lithuania claims that only "modern, motivated, well-trained and educated armed forces, consisting of manoeuvrable, easily deployable and sustainable regular military units" could provide defence of the country (The Military ..., 2016: 8-9). Regarding the second point, ability to sustain concurrent operations, joint efforts on the other hand are

low. The only country that clearly states an aligning task in its strategy is Norway, demanding that the Norwegian armed forces would be able to at the same time devote independent force contributions to up to three operations or three geographically separated operating areas (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 25). Denmark does not make such commitment, but notes that a brigade's composite units should also be individually deployable for participating more in international missions (Defence ..., 2018: 3).

Further on, NATO has said it would "carry out the necessary training, exercises, contingency planning and information exchange for assuring our defence against the full range of conventional and emerging security challenges, and provide appropriate visible assurance and reinforcement for all Allies" (Strategic ..., 2010: 15). As the objective is quite broad and comprehensive, yet very relative at the same time, there are also many ways countries can correspond to this goal on national level. More or less aligning content can be found in all states' concepts and the variations lie mostly in the extent to which they describe the goals regarding exercises, contingency planning, etc. A partly coinciding aim in NATO's strategy is to maintain deterring and defending against full range of threats even in the changing security environment by continuing to review the overall posture of the Alliance. Looking at the goal on national level, most countries also see this as a necessary point in their concepts and are expressing their concerns regarding their ability to keep up with the full range of threats., e.g. Finland states that besides traditional military threats, it is also preparing to respond to "increasingly complex challenges which amalgamate both military and non-military means" (Government's ..., 2017: 15-16), and adds that respective implementation will go hand in hand with the concept of comprehensive security, and will include reviewing legislation. Distinctively from others, the aspect is not handled in concepts of Estonia and Lithuania. Another technology-related aim of NATO within the defence and deterrence core task is keeping step with emerging technologies and assessing their security impact, and furthermore taking potential threats of these into account when conducting military planning. To this aim, the Nordic and Baltic countries relate almost homogeneously. The only country that has not included an analogous objective in its strategy is Denmark. Majority of the concepts state the objective as a general statement, e.g. Lithuania states that the country must be prepared to address the new risk factors, dangers and threats that emerge in the security environment in order to protect its

national interests (National ..., 2017: 16), and Sweden emphasizes the importance of research and development in understanding the future challenges, threats and developments, including the opponents' strengths and weaknesses, and ability to adapt military defence to these (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 102). Norway and Estonia go into greater detail, elaborating also on what some of the future challenges might be, and list, for example, precision-controlled long-range missiles, ammunition and rocket engines, unmanned and autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, genetics, bio- and nanotechnological applications, and the increasing ability to use solar energy and magnetic fusion energy (Eesti ..., 2017: 20-21; Kampkraft ..., 2016: 35).

In order to deal with a new security issue that is already widely in use, NATO aims to further develop its ability to prevent, detect, defend against and recover from cyber attacks. In this matter, all seven countries stand in strong unity with NATO. Each state's strategic documentation presents long paragraphs with rather specific goals within cyber sphere that they aim to accomplish in order to advance the country's cyber defence capabilities. Several countries mention specialized cyber security strategies or policies, which had recently been developed or were in progress during adoptions of the security concepts: Sweden adopted its information- and cyber security strategy in 2015 (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 111), Norway planned to launch an international strategy for cyberspace in spring 2017 (Setting ..., 2017: 42), the same applies for Denmark (Foreign ..., 2017: 16), and Latvia has adopted several cyber and information security policy documents (The National ..., 2015: 27); Finland further notes that in accordance with the national Cyber Security Strategy, its defence forces' cyber defence capability development will be continued (Government's ..., 2017: 25). These notions imply that cyber security has acquired an important role amongst more traditional sectors of security. Sweden, Estonia and Norway stand out with their strategies for the cyber security aspect being more integrated into the whole range of security – cyber aspects have been included also in development of conventional armed forces, crisis management capabilities, etc. instead of the cyber sphere being treated as a separate or detached entity of security. This could presumably reflect the situation in 'off paper' security as well and indicate higher integration of digital and cyber means into other security sectors and structures.

As discussed earlier, since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, NATO has paid significant attention to global fight against terrorism. In the strategic concept, this aspiration is represented with an aim to enhance the Alliance's capabilities to detect and defend against international terrorism. As some of the prospective measures, the concept lists improved analysis of the terrorist threat, consultations with partners, and development of appropriate military capabilities. Similarly to cyber threats, this aim is represented in all of the seven Nordic and Baltic countries' security concepts and all intend to contribute to international efforts against terrorism, mainly through NATO and the European Union. However, two countries – Denmark and Norway – stand out with the extent and precision of their planned efforts, which are remarkably higher and more comprehensive compared to the other five. Norway emphasises the importance joint efforts and concrete actions in cooperation with the EU, Europol, within the European Arrest Warrant, Prüm convention, and other international structures, aiming to deepen cross-border cooperation (Setting ..., 2017: 26). Denmark, on the other hand, is focused on dealing with the 'roots' of terrorism and radicalisation in the Middle East and North Africa. The efforts are organised through the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund and bilateral partnership programmes, and aim to tackle key security issues and challenges of the region, which "directly or indirectly impact stability, irregular migration flows, violent extremism and the maritime security of Denmark and Europe" (Foreign ..., 2017: 12). Denmark also points out its contributions to the military campaign against Da'esh (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and NATO's efforts in Afghanistan, which fulfill the task "of putting military pressure on the terrorist movements". (Foreign ..., 2017: 11-12) Such pattern of counter-terrorism efforts is an interesting development. Some aligning lines could be drawn to the countries' experiences with terrorist attacks and violent radicalism on their own territory, as both Norway and Denmark had within a few years preceding the adoption of current strategies been sites of violent acts of radicalism themselves – Norway in 2011 during the attacks of Anders Breivik, and Denmark in 2015 during shootings in Copenhagen. This suggestion does not, however, explain the pattern in whole, because the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund was created and developed as a part of 2010-2014 Danish Defence Agreement. All in all, the countries' alignment with the Alliance's intentions in this matter is collective.

Furthermore, proceeding with the non-traditional security issues, NATO aims to develop its capacity to contribute to energy security. The Alliance is working towards, among other objectives, the ability to protect critical energy infrastructure, transit areas and lines, and emphasises cooperation with partners and consultations among NATO members in this matter. As could have easily been predicted, here the boundary line of alignment with NATO runs between the Baltic and Nordic countries. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with their highly dependent energy sectors have outlined strategic plans to deal with the issue, whereas Sweden and Denmark do not mention any energy concerns. Finland briefly acknowledges existence of such problem (Government ..., 2016: 18) and Norway plans contributions to energy security, but in a fundamentally different way compared to the Baltics – Norway aims to provide bilateral assistance to Ukraine, and among other means, intends to contribute to reforming the Ukrainian energy sector and increasing energy efficiency in Ukraine (Setting ..., 2017: 27).

Lastly, NATO also touches upon the issue of resources and sets a goal to sustain the levels of defence spending necessary for keeping the armed forces sufficiently resourced. Meeting the national goal levels of defence spending (2% of the GDP) and the share of defence investments in it (20% of overall defence spending) as well as burden-sharing between Allies in general has been an issue for longer, and has become a widely discussed issue especially after President Trump took office in the US. The necessity to meet the 2% national goal was also reinforced during the Wales summit in 2014. In the national security concepts, all countries aim to increase overall defence spending, while all of the NATO member states also mention the importance of meeting the 2% goal set by the Alliance. Some set specific goals for that such as Latvia and Lithuania, both planning to meet increase their contributions to 2% of GDP by 2018 (National ..., 2017: 8; The National ..., 2016: 15;), and Norway, who aims to reach the 2% line within a decade (Setting ..., 2017: 31), while Denmark simply recognizes the importance of meeting the goal amount (Foreign ..., 2017: 14). The only country among the five NATO members, who has already crossed the 2% line and aims on sustaining the share of contributions is Estonia (Eesti ..., 2017: 11). Both partner countries, Sweden and Finland, refrain from presenting their defence expenditure as a share of GDP, but outline significant increase plans for their defence budgets (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 9-10; Government's ..., 2017: 31).

3.3. Crisis Management

As its second core task, NATO presents crisis management. To explain the nature of the task, the strategic concept states the following: “NATO has a unique and robust set of political and military capabilities to address the full spectrum of crises – before, during and after conflicts. NATO will actively employ an appropriate mix of those political and military tools to help manage developing crises that have the potential to affect Alliance security, before they escalate into conflicts; to stop ongoing conflicts where they affect Alliance security; and to help consolidate stability in post-conflict situations where that contributes to Euro-Atlantic security.” (Strategic ..., 2010: 7-8) Therefore, the centre of the goal is to manage emerging and on-going conflicts and crises elsewhere in order to prevent them from growing and hence becoming a threat to the Alliance’s security.

To start with, NATO sets its aims on preventing and managing crises, and supporting post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction beyond its borders “where possible and when necessary” (Strategic ..., 2010: 19). Similar objectives are represented in all the seven countries’ documentation, however some differences can be noted. For most country cases (in particular Estonia, Lithuania, Finland and Norway), the emphasis is on crisis prevention and pre-emptive work, whereas Denmark has set its focus on stabilisation efforts in “key conflicts and security challenges that directly or indirectly impact stability, irregular migration flows, violent extremism and the maritime security of Denmark and Europe” (Foreign ..., 2017: 12). All countries except for Denmark and Finland stress the cooperative nature of crisis management efforts and NATO’s role and importance in their contributions, while Finland mentions development of crisis management within EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy instead (Government ..., 2016: 21). Therefore, Denmark is a diverging case in two aspects. To some extent, Danish stabilisation efforts seem to go hand in hand with its counterterrorism work through the Peace and Stabilisation Fund, which may have directed such focus. Denmark’s policy aims also mention another framework, the Danish Arab Partnership Programme, but do not specify any other crisis management

cooperation or international effort – and is therefore also skipping NATO’s next aim, engagement with other international actors before, during and after crises to maximise coherence and effectiveness. Similarly, Latvia does not mention any such intention. Other states do note the need to do so – Estonia, Lithuania and Finland remaining rather laconic, and Norway and Sweden going into greater detail by also naming the main partners and explaining their reasoning behind the international engagement efforts. This tendency could be in part related to the countries’ experience and history of engagement in development cooperation or other international cooperation projects, yet has to be connected to other variables as Denmark and Finland, which similarly have significant traditions of international development contribution, have chosen not to emphasise international engagement as much or at all in crisis management.

Going more into detail with the crisis prevention stage, NATO aims to be continually monitoring and analysing international environment in order to anticipate crises and take preventive steps if appropriate. This goal is represented in three Nordic countries’ strategy documents: in those of Finland, Sweden, and Norway. While the first two seem to be mainly interested in doing so to keep their own surroundings safe – with Finland clearly stating the preventive actions being “for the sake of its security” (Government ..., 2016: 14) and Sweden aiming to protect “Swedish, Nordic, and European security” (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 7) – Norway targets its intentions more widely, by not mentioning any specific geographic aims, but emphasising its resources, experience in peace and reconciliation diplomacy, and aim to strengthen relevant abilities of the United Nations and the African Union instead (Setting ..., 2017: 37). Moving on to the aim of preparedness and capability to manage on-going hostilities by NATO, the involvement of states is significantly higher. Each of the seven countries aims to be ready to participate in international operations of crisis management with its forces, and to develop the forces accordingly to be competent for such contributions. By and large, the national intentions are similar in this regard. As a point of interest, it shall be noted that unlike others, Lithuania specifically emphasises contributing to the strength of NATO crisis management capabilities (National ..., 2017: 9), and Norway indicates UN and NATO as the most important actors, while also noting the need to be able to contribute to EU and coalition operations (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 25). Thirdly, NATO sets as its goal to be prepared to and capable of contributing to post-conflict

stabilisation and reconstruction. As could be expected based on the previously discussed points, Denmark is a strong promoter of stabilisation efforts. It emphasises the necessity to further develop the Danish Defence Forces' ability to stabilise the areas of their deployment and carry out capacity building, and aims to nearly double the Ministry of Defence's financial contribution to these efforts by 2023. (Defence ..., 2018: 5) However, Denmark is not the only one supporting the aim of NATO. While Estonia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden indicate the necessity of post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction efforts, and emphasise their readiness to contribute to these, Norway has more detailed plans. It targets its contributions to fragile states, in particular in Middle East, North Africa and Sahel region, increasing support and aid targeted to the states in need, and creating greater presence in the region by opening new embassies in Mali and Tunisia (Setting ..., 2017: 38). Norway does not indicate NATO's role in carrying out these stabilisation efforts.

Furthermore, NATO intends to enhance intelligence sharing within the Alliance in order to develop its ability to predict and prevent crises. Similar goals have been set by Norway, Estonia and Latvia. While Estonia aims to contribute to information exchange "with partners" (Eesti ..., 2017: 14), Latvia and Norway particularly stress doing so within NATO (The National ..., 2016: 6; Setting ..., 2017: 31). Sweden and Finland's refrainment from this goal can be explained simply with the fact that the clause "within the Alliance" already excludes them, as they are only partner states of NATO. Lithuania and Denmark, on the other hand, have not included this as a goal on national level despite being members of NATO. Similar pattern can be identified regarding another aim of NATO, namely broadening and intensifying political consultations among allies and with partners on a regular basis and in dealing with all stages of a crisis. Neither Lithuania nor Denmark sees this as a national strategic aim, with the same applying for Latvia. Estonia and Norway emphasise the importance of dialogue in crisis prevention (Eesti ..., 2017: 14; Setting ..., 2017: 31-32), and both Sweden and Finland point out the importance of consultation and dialogue in their partnerships with NATO (Försvarspolitik ..., 2015: 38; Government ..., 2016: 24).

Lastly, NATO has included five more specific objectives of capability building in the crisis management core task, which include both military and civilian aims. To start with, NATO aims to further develop doctrine and military capabilities for

expeditionary operations. Whereas the need of developing military capabilities in general was not left out by any of the states, only two intend to do so also while keeping an eye on suitability for expeditionary operations – Denmark and Norway. The former claims it wishes to strengthen “The Armed Forces’ ability and capacity for international operations and international stabilisation efforts” (Defence ..., 2018: 2), and the latter notes that its Armed Forces must have strong capabilities for international operations available for deployment at short notice, and furthermore have sufficient stamina to stand together with allies and partners in an operational area over time (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 24). The second aim related to military capabilities is to establish necessary capability for training and developing local forces in crisis zones. Similarly to the previous one, it is not widely shared by the countries, but is represented in the national documentation. Finland emphasises the importance of training activities and security sector reforms (Government ..., 2016: 28) and Denmark of capacity building (Foreign ..., 2017: 12), whereas Lithuania also adds a geographical factor, noting its focus in such actions to be on Eastern neighbourhood (The Military ..., 2016: 8). From the civilian side, NATO intends to, firstly, form a civilian crisis management capability to interface more effectively with civilian partners, and secondly, to identify and train civilian specialists for rapid deployment for selected missions. Both find very little representation in the national strategies, with Finland and Sweden briefly mentioning the former, of which Sweden does so in the context of the EU (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 35; Government ..., 2016: 27-28), and no country dealing with the latter. Finally, the Alliance aims for enhancement of integrated civilian-military planning throughout the whole crisis spectrum. Contrary to the civilian-related objectives, the countries in question mostly find civilian-military integration important and aim to further develop it. The Baltics, Norway and Sweden all essentially intend to strengthen interoperability between the two, and profit from their common efficiency this way. Finland and Denmark do not note having such aims in their strategic documents.

3.4. Promoting International Security Through Cooperation

NATO's third and final core task is to promote international security through cooperation. The task has three subsections, which represent the central means of practising cooperative security: 1) arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation; 2) open door; and 3) partnerships. The strategic concept summarizes the task as follows: "The Alliance is affected by, and can affect, political and security developments beyond its borders. The Alliance will engage actively to enhance international security, through partnership with relevant countries and other international organisations; by contributing actively to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament; and by keeping the door to membership in the Alliance open to all European democracies that meet NATO's standards." (Strategic ..., 2010: 8) Important aspects of the task are taking aim at achieving security with the lowest possible level of forces and recommitting to enlargement of the Alliance. As partners, NATO considers non-NATO countries, international organisations, and other international actors. (NATO, 2017)

The objectives of the core task begin with the general aim to reinforce arms control, promote of disarmament of both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and non-proliferation. This aim is mostly also represented in the national strategies, however comes with two countries that have not mentioned this goal – Denmark and Sweden. The same pattern for these two further continues regarding all points that fall under the arms control subsection. While both have generally been supporters and participants of disarmament and non-proliferation actions through recent history, e.g. both have ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), there is no reason to infer that Denmark and Sweden are in principle against arms control efforts; however, the topic is not represented in their security and defence strategies. Apart from these two, all countries claim working towards disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation to be their security aim and a part of the international effort towards a more secure world. Next, NATO moves further to intentions related to nuclear weapons. Essentially, the Alliance seeks to create a safer world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the NPT. All of the countries discussed have adopted the NPT themselves, yet only few of them mention working towards such goal in their national strategies – Finland and Norway. Finland states that

it supports NPT in nuclear disarmament (Government ..., 2016: 29), and Norway claims to have adopted a parliament decision in 2016 to “work actively towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and to promote the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)” (Setting ..., 2017: 35). None of the Baltic states has endorsed such aim in their strategic documentation. With its next goal, NATO plans to further reduce the amount of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe. This objective finds no support on national strategic level in the Nordic-Baltic countries. On the contrary, Estonia even takes a statement somewhat against it, declaring that the part of NATO’s nuclear deterrence in Europe must be preserved and maintained as credible, due to it being the ultimate guarantee of the Alliance’s security (Eesti ..., 2017: 11-12). As the smallest of the countries in question and therefore possibly most exposed to security threats, this statement displays how important Estonia considers NATO’s deterrence capabilities in its safe-being. Furthermore, NATO intends to seek Russian agreement in increasing transparency on its nuclear weapons in Europe, and in relocating these away from the borders Russia shares with NATO members. Lithuania’s strategy similarly sets its aim on seeking increased transparency and regulation regarding Russia’s nuclear weapons (National ..., 2017: 11), which is reasonably argued with Lithuania’s specific geographical position next to Russia’s enclave of Kaliningrad. The enclave has high importance in the Baltic and particularly Lithuanian security, as Russia has been using the region to increase its military presence in Europe, and does so by gathering shares of its armed forces on a small territory very close to Lithuania. Latvia and Estonia, however, refrain from aspiring towards such agreement with Russia. Additionally, Norway notes the Alliance’s said aim and states this to be “demanding” in today’s security situation (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 32), while Finland takes no statement on the topic.

Furthermore, NATO introduces three objectives related to disarmament and non-proliferation of both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. As first of these, the Alliance aims to establish a stronger conventional arms regime in Europe. Lithuania and Norway are the only ones that point this goal out in their national strategies and aim to participate in such efforts, with Norway also specifying it hopes to do so via the OSCE (National ..., 2017: 11; Setting ..., 2017: 35). Next, NATO intends to contribute to international proliferation efforts, by both political and military means.

This seems to be a more or less common interest in the Nordic-Baltic area as well, with Latvia being the only one (besides the aforementioned Sweden and Denmark) that has not specified contributing to proliferation as an aim of its national security policy. Finally, the Alliance aims at maintenance and development of consultations on national decisions regarding arms control and disarmament among the Allies. With the said objective's complicated applicability on national level, it is not exactly represented in any of the national policies. However, in a way, Norway does set a similar goal, but not regarding the NATO Allies – instead, it aims to strengthen and use its expertise and capabilities of further assisting other countries with the practical implementation of disarmament agreements, as it has done in Iran and Syria in the past (Setting ..., 2017: 34-35).

As the second part of this core task, NATO sets objectives regarding its open door policy. To begin with, the concept says that the “goal of a Europe whole and free, and sharing common values, would be best served by the eventual integration of all European countries that so desire into Euro-Atlantic structures” (Strategic ..., 2010: 25). In general, the Nordic-Baltic countries that themselves are part of NATO rather support the enlargement of the Alliance and further integration of European countries into Euro-Atlantic structures. A claim supporting such developments is included in all the Baltic countries' and Norway's strategies, therefore leaving only Denmark of NATO member states to not mention said interest. However, the difference between the countries is that while Latvia and Lithuania claim to support European or Euro-Atlantic integration (National ..., 2017: 10; The National ..., 2016: 10), Estonia specifies its support to NATO and the EU (Eesti ..., 2017: 10), and Norway only mentions the European Union (Setting ..., 2017: 27). Neither of the partner states of NATO, Finland and Sweden, have set this goal in their documents, which is only reasonable as they have not decided to join the Alliance themselves. However, as NATO next claims that its door remains open to “all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and whose inclusion can contribute to common security and stability” (Strategic ..., 2010: 25-26), this pattern changes a bit. While the newer members of NATO, the Baltics, are well eager to welcome new members into the Alliance and declare to support and assist the countries in their aspirations to join NATO (Eesti ..., 2017: 10; National ..., 2017:

9-10; The National ..., 2016: 10), the older members, Denmark and Norway, refrain from making such statements. While Sweden still presents no opinion on the matter, Finland states that it is “important to Finland” that NATO maintains its open door policy and the membership remains continuously open to all European countries with necessary “capacity and qualifications to advance the goals of the North Atlantic Treaty” (Government ..., 2016: 23). Whether this is due to Finland’s future plan to join the Alliance itself remains a question of speculation.

Lastly, NATO’s strategic concept sets aims about partnerships. As the primary goal in this subsection, the Alliance seeks to promote Euro-Atlantic security “through a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organisations around the globe” (Strategic ..., 2010: 26). Looking through the national strategies regarding security promotion through partnerships, similar ideas are presented by the Baltics, Finland and Norway, while Denmark and Sweden have not included such aim in their documentation. Minor differences exist, e.g. Norway clearly states its closest partnerships will remain within the Atlantic, European and Nordic communities (Setting ..., 2017: 5), while Estonia remains broader with circumscribing its interests, saying it prefers “international and comprehensive multilateral cooperation, both at the global and regional level” (Eesti ..., 2017: 8). Finland, remarkably, makes an additional notion with the claim, stating that international defence cooperation does not provide any security guarantees for Finland as it does not belong to any military alliance (Government’s ..., 2017: 16). NATO also works towards relationships of dialogue and cooperation with partners, which are built on reciprocity, mutual benefit and mutual respect. Much the same values in partnerships are emphasised by Norway and Sweden. Norway’s strategy states its cooperation would rely on “thorough analyses and early dialogue with relevant partners” (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 20). In the case of Sweden, the objective is presented directly regarding its partnership with NATO, indicating that the Swedish-NATO relationship is based on common interests and needs (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 38). Next, NATO sets an aim to enhance partnerships through flexible formats, which is an idea also found in the strategies of Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark and Sweden. While Swedish idea of such partnerships is rather with regard to military aspects and abilities to give and receive military assistance (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 50), the other three have presented broader views of flexible approaches. Perhaps the

most interesting perspective is presented by Denmark, which states that “[i]n the light of Brexit, the government will actively expand its cooperation with traditional partners and seek new alliance partners that share interests and values with Denmark” (Foreign ..., 2017: 19), however this statement is likely more linked to foreign policy strategy rather than security and defence.

Thereupon, NATO introduces two objectives related to openness: firstly, to be “prepared to develop political dialogue and practical cooperation with any nations and relevant organisations that share our interest in peaceful international relations” (Strategic ..., 2010: 26-27), and secondly, to be “open to consultation with any partner country on security issues of common concern” (Strategic ..., 2010: 27). Out of the seven countries, Estonia is the only one to indicate a viewpoint compatible with both ideas, claiming that along with extensive cooperation with all Allies, partnerships with like-minded democracies form an integral part of Estonian security (Eesti ..., 2017: 10). Furthermore, NATO sets an aim to give its operational partners a structural, strategy- and decision-shaping role on NATO-led missions to which they contribute, which however finds no representation in the national strategies of the Nordic-Baltic countries at all. This could be considered quite predictable, as the central idea of the goal is strongly linked to NATO as an institution, and much less to its member and partner states on national level. On the contrary, as NATO next indicates a goal to further develop its existing partnerships, all seven states also relate to it in national strategies. The main partnership interests in the region are stronger relations with partner states within NATO and EU, transatlantic link with the United States, development of the Baltic Sea region states’ and Nordic-Baltic cooperation, as well as Nordic and Baltic states’ relations as separate groups. The statements on regional cooperation will be discussed in detail in chapter 4 of this thesis. Other partner countries indicated in the national strategies include Poland, United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Netherlands, the EU Eastern Partnership countries, and under some special conditions, Russia. Regarding relationships with international organisations, NATO’s strategic concept mentions two partners: the United Nations and The European Union. With the former, NATO’s desire is to enhance political dialogue and practical cooperation; with the latter, in addition, to develop stronger strategic partnership and more full cooperation in capability development, and this way minimising duplication and maximising cost-

effectiveness, has been set as aspirations. Regarding the strategic views about the UN and the EU, the Nordic-Baltic states are nearly unanimous both between each other and with NATO. About the UN, all countries' strategies except for Lithuania touch upon the importance of the organisation and its functions, emphasising their support to UN initiatives (Setting ..., 2017: 32) and involvement in them (Defence ..., 2018: 2; The National ..., 2015: 2), and aiming towards active contribution to UN's effectiveness (Eesti ..., 2017: 8; Government ..., 2016: 29). Sweden is the only country elaborating a bit more on how to do that, and suggests increased participation in operations, contributions to capacity and concept development, and education support within the UN framework as possible actions (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 35). Regarding the EU, the seven states' strategies represent largely similar intentions, both in terms of national enhancement of security-related cooperation with the EU and strengthening the EU as an actor in the security field in general, as well as of deepening NATO-EU partnership. In this case, there is no country, which would not mention the said aim. Although Norway is not itself a member of the EU, the Norwegian strategy claims the EU to be a key partner of Norway in defence and security matters (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 33). Even Denmark, known as the country that has opted out from the EU's defence sphere, states it plans to "closely follow" the new initiatives within the EU's defence dimension (Defence ..., 2018: 2). Countries also find the strength of the European Union a crucial component of their national and European security (e.g. Foreign ..., 2017:17; Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 46). Furthermore, the political dialogue, cooperation and coordination of actions between the EU and NATO is prioritized (e.g. Defence ..., 2018: 2; Eesti ..., 2017: 9; Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 35-36; Kampkraft ..., 2016: 33). Therefore, regarding partnerships with other international organisations, the Nordic-Baltic countries' and NATO's viewpoints and objectives are somewhat consistent.

Yet, this consistency does not stand regarding the next aim presented by NATO – a strategic partnership with Russia. The unanimity persists between the states, however, as none of them has included such objective in their strategic documentation. The discrepancy between NATO and the states can, evidently, originate from the difference in the time of writing the strategies – as the NATO strategic concept was adopted in 2010, the Ukrainian events of 2014, which reshaped the Western relations with Russia significantly and have probably had considerable influence on the national

strategies as well, had not yet taken place. Therefore also the next goal of the NATO concept, enhancement of political consultations and practical cooperation with Russia through NATO-Russia Council, finds rather modest representation in the Nordic-Baltic national documents. Among the Baltics, Estonia is the only one to note it cooperate with Russia as much as necessary as a neighbouring country, and maintains the opportunity for dialogue (Eesti ..., 2017: 9-10). The Nordics are more eager to work towards better relations with Russia with all countries but Sweden having included similar points in their strategies. Finland aims to maintain a “stable and well-functioning” relationship with Russia, promoting cooperation and dialogue, yet following the EU’s common positions on Russia as a basis of its actions (Government ..., 2016: 22-23). Similarly, Denmark presents a position of seeking dialogue and common understanding with Russia, while not making any concessions regarding the sanctions in place (Foreign ..., 2017: 14-15). Norwegian focus in this question is on the Northern and Arctic maritime areas and on avoiding misunderstandings regarding trainings and exercises as well as openness and predictability of military activity (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 29). At least in the case of Nordic countries, geographic factors seem to have had direct influence on formulation of said positions, however they are in general more eager to improve relations with Russia and hence more closely in line with the strategic position of NATO.

Moving on to its neighbouring areas in the south from Europe, NATO sets goals regarding relations and cooperation with countries of the Mediterranean and the Gulf region, and aims to enhance the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Perhaps due to the long distance between these two regions and Nordic-Baltic countries, none of the seven countries in question have included said aims in their national objectives. The same pattern continues regarding the next goal of NATO, which aims towards enhancement of consultations and practical military cooperation with partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. As its penultimate objective, NATO intends to continue and develop its partnerships with Ukraine and Georgia, doing so within the NATO-Ukraine and NATO-Georgia commissions. Four countries – Lithuania, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, present support to this aim. Sweden remains brief with stating its government’s support to Ukraine (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 46), while the remaining three have aimed to contribute to improvements of both Ukraine

and Georgia as well as of their relations with and integration to the Euro-Atlantic community. Denmark plans to provide support via its five-year neighbourhood programme for Ukraine and Georgia, the Norwegian government is dedicating its economic and political support to Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, and Lithuania aims to support integration aspirations of Ukraine, Georgia and several other EU Eastern Partnership countries alike. All three further emphasise the importance of such efforts in terms of overall security of the Euro-Atlantic area. (Foreign ..., 2017: 15; National ..., 2017: 10; The Military ..., 2016: 6; Setting ..., 2017: 27) Lastly, NATO aims to facilitate the Western Balkans integration to the Euro-Atlantic community, and this goal is also presented in the strategic concept of Norway. Norway intends to double its assistance in order to support the reform programmes of the Western Balkan countries, hence speeding up their integration into the EU and NATO. The strategy further mentions continuing Norway's "long-standing cooperation on defence and defence reform" with the Western Balkans, giving a hint of the role of tradition and path dependency in this strategic choice. (Setting ..., 2017: 27)

3.5. Discussion

At this point, the viewpoints of the operative strategic concept of NATO and national strategic concepts of the Nordic-Baltic countries regarding the three core tasks have been compared and concurrences between the documents determined. In order to better understand the main trends and patterns as well as the overall big picture, the results of the preceding examinations will be further discussed below. This will be done in four parts: the first three following the structure of the previous subchapter in core tasks of NATO, and the last one drawing overall conclusions based on the patterns developed within core tasks.

Within its first core task, defence and deterrence, NATO presents 16 separate aims and intentions related to actions against an armed attack towards the Alliance. On the whole, all seven Nordic-Baltic countries are rather supportive than not towards these intentions, having analogous goals set on national strategic level as well – for at least half of the aims, an upholding goal has been introduced on national level by all the states. The greatest number of such goals, 13 aims out of 16, were included in cases of Latvia

and Norway, and the least number, 9 out of 16, appeared in the documentation of Sweden and Denmark. However, as the aims within this core task as well as in the forthcoming ones are not necessarily equal to each other regarding level of specification, extent, priority and relevance, and other such variables, these numbers cannot be taken as fully objective and comparable measures for quantitative analysis in terms of this thesis, and looking for patterns and explanations behind these patterns would be more useful in understanding the countries' perceptions.

Firstly, there are goals, which are commonly shared by all actors, i.e. by NATO and all the countries on both the Alliance and national levels. Such aims are protection and defence of territory and populations against attack, development and maintenance of robust and deployable conventional forces, carrying out trainings, planning and information exchange necessary for defending against the full range of security challenges, keeping up with emerging technologies as well as assessing their security impact and taking it into account in military planning, handling and protecting against cyber attacks, and detecting and defending against international terrorism. On one hand, several of these goals are rather general and form the very basics of the security of an entity, which makes it reasonable to be able find these on all of the countries' aims in some form, but also includes a level of vagueness. The aims are general enough for each country to be able to adapt them for their own national cases according to the state's needs and available resources. On the other hand, the goals well demonstrate the most essential components of modern security policy regarding defence measures. With e.g. international terrorism and cyber attacks being threats that can endanger basically any country at any point of time, it is necessary for all to work towards the capacity to tackle security issues in these areas.

The second pattern can be noted regarding aims where the distinction line runs between partner states and member states of NATO. This is the case regarding deterrence and its key importance as a security guarantee – while all the NATO members considered in this thesis see deterrence to be a central instrument of defence, the partner countries do not emphasise the role of deterrence notably or at all; and regarding levels of defence spending. Yet, this is also the only aim where such pattern appears under the first core task. With this one being the only one among the sixteen aims, it could be determined that the correlation with the first assumption of the thesis is

weak within the first core task of NATO. However, for the case of the NATO member countries, the Alliance indeed could be a strong influence for including this objective on their national strategic level, as deterrence is the key response of NATO to current security challenges.

Thirdly, differences between Nordic and Baltic countries can be noted. For example, this distinction exists regarding maintenance of balance of nuclear and conventional forces, where the Baltics are supporters of NATO's nuclear-conventional balance and the Nordics have not set this as an aim. Additionally, energy security is a significant security issue for the Baltics, but is rather briefly or not at all dealt with in the Nordics' strategies. Divergences in both objectives can be easily traced back to historical reasons, but also rely on geography in part. In regard to the latter aim, the Baltic countries concern about energy security roots from both: the Baltics' energy supply relies partly on the Russian energy networks and markets due to historical associations, which makes them more vulnerable and extremely sensitive to any issue of security. Additionally, compared to the Nordics, the Baltics' natural conditions and resources for producing energy and providing the supply for themselves are weaker, growing the Baltics' reason for concern compared to the Nordics. The former aim is more related to historical experience of the Baltics with their eastern neighbour and the belief that a nuclear component can offer credible security balance to hinder future threats from Russia. Furthermore, there are two aims, which have been included in the security strategies by Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and to a lesser extent by Latvia and Finland – resulting in nearly unanimous views by the Nordics and, in addition, Latvia. Even though these aims do not fully represent the Nordic-Baltic distinction pattern, they still display a stronger like-mindedness between the Nordic states. The two objectives are defence against ballistic missiles and maintenance of defence and deterrence against full range of security threats. While the former aim can be related to resources and is more realistic and reachable for the Nordic rather than the Baltic states, the second aim is rather general. Based on adoption of these aims, it could be said that both Nordics and Baltics as groups of states have somewhat similar extent of intersections with NATO objectives, however Latvia shows higher level of concurrence compared to others with both groups and the Alliance.

Lastly within this core task, no strong pattern can be identified with the remaining combinations of states. These include Estonia and Latvia supporting planning of nuclear roles, Sweden and Norway aiming to develop defence capabilities against nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons of mass destruction, and Norway and Denmark working towards the capacity to sustain concurrent operations. All three pairs are formed between neighbouring countries and do not cross the Nordic-Baltic distinction line. Based on the countries and the aims in question, it could be concluded that there is some divergence regarding nuclear power, as Estonia and Latvia see it mainly as a means of deterrence, whereas Sweden and Norway perceive nuclear power as weapon of mass destruction and therefore primarily a threat to security. Again, due to their history, Estonia and Latvia have a higher perception of threat in regard to Russia, and deterring against any attack from the east based on nuclear power is more important to them than for Sweden and Norway, which lack such historical experience and see nuclear weapons as a security threat in itself. This, however, does not completely explain why the aim does not fall in the pattern of distinction between the Nordic and Baltic groups, as the same logic also stands for Lithuania, Finland and Denmark. The third objective regarding concurrent operations seems to be going hand in hand with NATO membership and availability of the necessary resources, making it on the national level difficult to reach for the Baltic countries and of lower priority for Sweden and Finland.

The second core task, crisis management, presents 12 central aims in regard to preventing and solving conflicts outside the Alliance's own territory in order to contribute to overall Euro-Atlantic security. Here, the Nordic-Baltic countries' efforts to include NATO's aims to national strategies have not been as numerous as within the first core task. While Norway still shows a high level of inclusiveness with nine analogous goals, Latvia's national strategic documents have only four common aims with NATO's concept. Despite that, there are still some objectives that find representation in all countries' strategies. Firstly, all seven have included the key aim of the core task, to prevent and manage crises as well as support post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction processes outside their own and NATO's territory, in their own strategies. All further include the goal to be prepared and capable to manage on-going hostilities. Therefore, the common share is formed by the perhaps most central and

basic objectives of participating in international crisis management. With all the Nordic-Baltic states belonging to the Western community by values and economic development, such aims are already related to good practice and tradition, even though the Nordics have been a part of this tradition for a significantly longer time than the Baltics.

Furthermore, one could assume that the strength of the countries' tradition of participating in such efforts has an effect on adoption of crisis management objectives into national strategies as well. However, this distinction cannot be clearly made in case of any of the discussed aims. The closest to said pattern could be the intention to monitor the international environment for crisis prevention, which can be found in the Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian strategies, and can indeed be related to experience that the Baltic countries do not yet have. A few other aims are included in two Nordic countries' strategies only: developing military capabilities for expeditionary operations (Denmark, Norway), capacity for training local forces in crisis zones (Denmark, Finland), and civilian crisis management capabilities (Sweden, Finland). The latter is conjointly the only aim that the partner states of NATO have in their strategies while the member states do not – providing, again, no support for the first assumption (h1) of the thesis. However, it is notable that each of the twelve aims of NATO is also an intention of at least one Nordic country. This does not stand true for Baltic countries, neither is there any that only the Baltics would support. On one hand, this tendency can be connected to the Nordics' greater experience in the crisis management field, on the other to resources – existence of both of which the countries themselves point out in the strategies. As the Baltics lack both the long experience and extensive human and financial resources to dedicate to conflict management, the extent of their participation in crisis management efforts and intentions is more modest compared to the Nordics, and the Baltics rather support the objectives related to knowledge, such as intelligence sharing or intensifying dialogue and consultations.

By and large, the trend lines within crisis management aims are rather weak. There are intentions that are included in many, but not all countries' strategies and the patterns follow general country group lines, e.g. engagement with international actors beforehand regards certain crisis management efforts and further integration of civil-military planning. However, there is one aim the non-inclusion of which all countries

agree on – training civil specialists for rapid deployment to missions. While the aims related to civilian capabilities are not popular in national strategies in general, aiming towards such specific training on national level is probably not reasonable or cost-effective for any of the Nordic-Baltic countries.

The third and last NATO's core task discussed sets aims about international security cooperation. NATO presents 25 key objectives in three topics – arms control, the open door policy, and partnerships. Within this core task, concurrences between the NATO concept and national strategies are the lowest compared to the previous two, with only the country with the highest number of shared aims, Norway, reaching more than half of the NATO goals. Other countries share around or less than ten common aims with NATO under this core task. The first noteworthy trend, already discussed in subchapter 3.5. of the thesis, is that Denmark and Sweden refrain from mentioning any aims regarding arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in their national strategies, which complicates tracking down the patterns within the subchapter in general. However, apart from those two, all countries have set disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as their objectives. Furthermore, all seven claim to work towards developing existing partnerships, in particular with the US, European partners and regional partners, and enhance cooperation with or within the UN and the EU. Additionally, there are several aims that are not represented in any national strategies.

When looking for trends coinciding with country groups within this core task, the results are not numerous. Distinction between member states and partner states of NATO can be noted in regard to enlargement of Euro-Atlantic structures to all European countries, and the only case where the Nordics (and Estonia) have gathered to one side of the view is on developing dialogue with Russia. The three Baltics seem to agree to each other more often – regarding enlargement, the open door policy, and promoting security through partnerships. Such favourable attitude towards openness can be related to their own positive experience with becoming a member of NATO and the Euro-Atlantic community in general. All in all, neither does this core task present any greater support to the proposed assumption (h1) regarding differences between member and partner states. Many aims of this core task are represented in just one or two countries' strategies, giving little ground for drawing other trend lines. Two more popular ones are supporting conventional and nuclear non-proliferation efforts and

developing partnerships with Ukraine and Georgia, both being found in four countries' national documentation. However, neither clear evident groups nor a reason for the formulation of such are present.

All in all, the Nordic-Baltic countries seem to most eagerly agree with NATO in their aims regarding defence and deterrence. As in its functions, NATO is primarily a military alliance dedicated to protection of its own territory, and the countries' defence policies' key aim is also the protection of its territory and population, the aims related to defence and deterrence appear most important and relevant for the countries. Additionally, the Baltic states seem to be more concerned about deterrence and nuclear balance than the Nordic countries, but also emphasise energy security and openness towards potential candidate states as well as partners. The Nordic countries, on the other hand, direct their emphasis more towards crisis management and security threats with global range. These differences can be traced back to different past experiences, historical background, and different availability of resources.

The first empirical assumption of the thesis proposed that the member states of NATO have higher strategic intersections with NATO compared to partner states of NATO in the Nordic-Baltic area. For this assumption to be proved valid, the implications observed in empirical data would be 1) a high degree of common strategic aims for relating to the global power strategically, i.e. strategic intersections between strategic concept of NATO and national documents; and 2) distinction between membership and partnership for identifying with the global power, i.e. closeness to NATO regarding whether the country is a member state or a partner state of NATO. The first implication can indeed be considered true for the Nordic-Baltic countries, as all the seven countries' national defence and security strategy documents include many common aims with NATO's strategic concept. Around half or more of NATO's objectives are represented in each Nordic-Baltic state's national defence strategy and the national documents largely carry the same ideas as NATO's concept. This indicates a high degree of strategic intersections between the international and national level. Therefore, the Nordic-Baltic subcomplex firmly identifies with the main global power of the security field in the region. The second implication, however, has found support in very few cases throughout the preceding analysis. The distinction between member states and partner states does exist regarding a few aims where the relationship with

NATO has probably influenced the countries' viewpoint, e.g. importance of deterrence and development of civilian crisis management capabilities. However, these cases are in a strong minority within the 53 objectives, and regarding most of the objectives, there is no clear separation between the member and non-member states' views. The extent to which NATO's aims and the national aims of Sweden and Finland concur is also not lower as assumed, but rather average within the other Nordic-Baltic countries. Therefore, the second implication cannot be observed in empirical data and the first empirical assumption (h1) does not appear valid as such. However, distinctive lines regarding national aims and intersections with NATO's strategy could be noted between Nordic and Baltic states regarding several topics, where national preferences could be traced back to reasons based on past experiences and traditions, historical background, and availability of resources.

4. PERCEPTIONS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

The following chapter aims to answer the second research question of the thesis – what are Nordic and Baltic countries’ regional cooperation interests in the changed security environment? In this chapter, the data gathered from national security and defence strategy documents regarding Nordic and Baltic countries’ cooperation will be analysed comparatively. Firstly, the chapter will present the empirical results found in the seven countries’ security concepts. Then, the results will be discussed and analysed to determine the countries’ perceptions of a Nordic-Baltic security complex in the post-2014 security landscape.

4.1. Countries’ Aims Regarding Nordic-Baltic Cooperation

In their national security and defence strategies, all countries further present their expectations and plans regarding partnerships with international actors and other countries. Regional cooperation forms an important part of it. The section below introduces the Nordic and Baltic countries’ interests and aims regarding Nordic-Baltic cooperation in the security field. This will be first done in paragraphs by country, and the findings will be discussed comparatively in the next subchapter. The country paragraphs follow alphabetical order.

Denmark presents its first statement regarding regional issues on the topic of Russia’s threatening behaviour and its contribution to growing uncertainty in the Baltic Sea region. Denmark considers Russia’s “threatening statements, military build-up and increased military exercises in the vicinity of Denmark” to be “a clear challenge” for Denmark and its allies since Russia’s usage of information and hybrid warfare

influences the Baltic Sea region's stability and the Western values in general. (Foreign ..., 2017: 7) For managing this issue, Denmark contributes to reassurance activities in the Baltic Sea region, and aims to allocate more funds to defence in order to ensure credible defence and deterrence within NATO (Foreign ..., 2017: 14). For the latter, contributions will be made through NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic countries. Denmark further presents its historical ties and close relations with the Baltic Sea region and the Baltic countries; in addition, the existence of common values shared by the NATO countries of the BSR as well as Finland and Sweden. The strategic concept sets an aim to continue and develop the cooperation with the Baltic countries, and to expand Denmark's active security policy role through stronger cooperation between Nordic countries as well as with other allies in the Baltic Sea Region. It further claims to "continue to assign high priority to security policy-related cooperation with the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea". (Foreign ..., 2017: 15-16) The Danish defence agreement discusses Denmark's commitment to support and defend the Baltic countries together with NATO allies if necessary, and sets aims regarding fulfilling host nation support tasks for when Denmark becomes a staging area for reinforcements from NATO allies (Defence ..., 2018: 7). With a few of the Nordic-Baltic countries, Denmark also cooperates within international frameworks of the Arctic area, e.g. the Arctic Council, where Denmark intends to enhance economic development through close cooperation with Finland (Foreign ..., 2017: 24) Finally, Denmark presents an objective to, within the Danish Institute of International Studies and the Centre for Military Studies, increase research initiatives that relate to the Baltic Sea and the Baltic countries (Defence ..., 2018: 11).

Estonia's strategic concept gives an assessment that there has been an increase of military pressure and of the likelihood that military measures will be used against Estonia or another country of the Baltic Sea region. Still, it finds NATO's military superiority to be sufficient against any attack, stating that its presence and activity in the region have increased, and additionally the Nordics' and Baltics' cooperation has intensified. (Eesti ..., 2017: 4) Estonia further considers the United States' military presence in the region and NATO allies' military integration to be important (Eesti ..., 2017: 9). As key aims of regional cooperation, Estonia sets friendly relations with all neighbouring states, security assurance of the Baltic Sea region, and enhancement of

Nordic and Baltic countries' cooperation. Estonia's interests are political dialogue and security cooperation regarding defence, energy, environment and transport infrastructure. (Eesti ..., 2017: 10) Some designated actions for achieving these goals are also introduced in the strategy. Such are avoiding sea pollution through development of ship management and monitoring systems, improving the security of the Baltic Sea region's nuclear plants, and ensuring effective energy transmission links with the Baltics, the Nordics and Poland (Eesti ..., 2017: 15-18).

Finland claims the security of the Baltic Sea region has deteriorated, military tensions in the region have grown, and the Baltic Sea region's military-strategic importance has risen due to Russia's actions in Ukraine and increased military activities. As a result of this, Finland's cooperation with NATO, Sweden and other Nordic countries has been intensifying. (Government ..., 2016: 11-13; Government's ..., 2017: 5) Furthermore, Nordic countries and particularly Sweden have "a special status in Finland's bilateral cooperation" based on common values, historical aspects, economic integration and other ties. Finland emphasizes wide range of cooperative security efforts with Sweden, their common viewpoints to security and intentions to deepen Finnish-Swedish foreign policy, security and defence cooperation. Through this, Finland aims to strengthen the security of the Baltic Sea region as a whole, defence capacities of Finland and Sweden, ability to react to incidents and attacks, and capability of joint use of civilian and military resources. The strategic concepts further outline Finnish intentions to intensify the Nordic countries' security cooperation within NORDEFECO to strengthen the regional security, e.g. through situational awareness cooperation, trainings and exercises, in the field of defence materiel, etc., and increase the Nordics' influence in international questions, but also to collectively intensify relations with the US. (Government ..., 2016: 21-22; Government's ..., 2017: 17-18) Moreover, Finland describes its future visions via defining itself as "a part of the European and Nordic communities" (Government ..., 2016: 11), therefore emphasising the sense of belonging primarily with the Nordic countries in the regional level. The 2016 concept claims Nordic cooperation to be "ever-strengthening" and of central importance to Finland and its security (Government ..., 2016: 11-12). In addition to the Nordic framework, Finland claims to support the cooperation between NORDEFECO and the Baltic States, and specifies that the Baltic countries' security and prosperity are

important to Finland. While Sweden was said to be a partner of special status for Finland, Norway, Denmark and Estonia are defined as “important bilateral defence cooperation partners”, and Latvia and Lithuania as “close partners”. (Government ..., 2016: 12; Government’s ..., 2017: 17-18)

Latvia also describes military actions and hybrid threat coming from Russia as the reason causing tension and uncertainty in the region, particularly for the Baltic countries, and the need to strengthen regional security measures in the Baltic region (The National ..., 2015: 5; The National ..., 2016: 4). While the most effective way to Latvia’s security and defence is claimed to be achieved through NATO’s collective capacity and presence of the allied forces in the country, Latvia emphasises the need to enhance armed forces’ coordination between the Baltic countries, and also with allies who are “interested in and are directly involved in strengthening of the security of the Baltic Sea Region” (The National ..., 2015: 13-14) Close cooperation with the Baltic states is also sought in managing the issue of energy security, railroad and road infrastructure, logistics, exchange of intelligence information, and enhanced military integration. However, regarding many of these aims, Latvia also indicates the need for cooperation on the EU level, and particularly with Poland. (The National ..., 2015: 21-23; The National ..., 2016: 6-10) Furthermore, Latvia seeks to closely cooperate with the Nordic countries in forms of information exchange, value sharing and implementation of joint capability projects and activities (The National ..., 2016: 9-10). Cooperative efforts with both Baltic and Nordic countries are desired in regard to cyber threats (The National ..., 2015: 28).

Lithuania claims its most important defence cooperation partners to be the United States, the Baltic and Nordic countries, Poland, and other allies (The Military ..., 2016: 4), with whom Lithuania aims to develop military capabilities together and increase interoperability of Lithuanian armed forces and the allies’ forces, within both bilateral and multilateral frameworks (The Military ..., 2016: 7). The 2017 security strategy further sets the aim to strengthen cooperation with neighbouring countries and strategic partners as well as enhance integration between the Baltic and Nordic regions. Details of this objective are described in two parts regarding the region. Firstly, Lithuania aims to strengthen cooperation and strategic partnership with the other two Baltic states and Poland in several fields, e.g. military, transport, energy security,

infrastructure projects, and others. Secondly, the country aims towards bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the NB8 countries in many fields – including security and defence cooperation, possibly in forms such as joint military projects, but also in politics, economics, science, culture, energy, transport, environment protection, etc. Key intention of Lithuania is a successful representation of common interests at international organizations and in other countries through relations of the Nordic and Baltic states and a more efficient use of resources. (National ..., 2017: 10) Both the Baltic and Nordic countries also play a role in Lithuania's goals in development of export and transportation corridors and Lithuanian integration into the EU transport networks (National ..., 2017: 14), which are conjointly improvements for the security field.

Norway starts off with determining itself within the global interest and value space – as closest to the Atlantic, European, and Nordic communities. The 2017 concept further lists a number of objectives set to achieve stronger European and Nordic dimension in Norwegian security, e.g. intensifying the Nordic countries' security policy dialogue and cooperation and developing closer security policy cooperation with other European allies. (Setting ..., 2017: 5-7) The increased Russian military activity in the Baltic Sea and in the High North, according to Norway, “emphasizes the need for close security policy dialogue between the Nordic countries, in a Nordic-Baltic framework and into NATO and the EU” (Kampkraft ..., 2016: 33). Norway presents close Nordic and Nordic-Baltic security cooperation as a contribution to Europe's overall peace and security. Therefore, it intends to maintain the close Nordic-Baltic dialogue on developments in neighbourhood, and to enhance the efforts within NORDEFKO. Notably, Norway also sees the Nordic-Baltic cooperation as a way to promote initiatives between NATO and the EU due to the countries' varying relations with the organisations, and hence develop security cooperation between the two. (Setting ..., 2017: 33) Regarding the Nordic-Baltic countries in terms of international organisations, Norway supports closer NATO cooperation with Sweden and Finland, and makes contributions to the Baltics' security also through NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (Setting ..., 2017: 31-32). Norway further points out that NATO's efforts are increasingly reinforced and complemented by new closer forms of cooperation between smaller country groups, and brings its own cooperation with its partners, including the Nordic and Baltic countries as an example of this (Setting ..., 2017: 11-12). Moreover,

Norway emphasises the key importance of the other Nordic countries for Norway, and sets aims regarding means of strengthening the Nordics' cooperative ties. These include holding biannual foreign ministers' meetings, cooperation in civil protection, countering violent extremism, promoting integration, and development of "knowledge-based, green and digital societies". (Setting ..., 2017: 25-28) With some countries of the region, Norway also cooperates within the Arctic Council, and Sweden is a partner of Norway in developing verifiable disarmament (Setting ..., 2017: 30-34).

Sweden has, compared to all other countries, devoted a significantly larger share of its security concept to regional cooperation – therefore, the following overview of Sweden's aims and interests will be given more comprehensively. First and foremost, Sweden emphasises the importance of cooperation in the Nordic region, but also with the Baltic states, as the enhanced cooperation efforts strengthen national defence and the ability to carry out operations in the region as well as further away. Inspired by the success of collective efforts under NORDEFECO, Sweden aims to even further deepen the Nordic cooperation and work towards more efficient use of resources and increased military capabilities. Sweden's most important bilateral partner in the security field is Finland, with whom Sweden aims to develop operational planning and preparation for the joint use of civilian and military resources in different scenarios, in order to contribute to maintaining security in the Baltic Sea area. Further, Denmark and Norway are important partners for Sweden. The concept does not list detailed objectives regarding these relations, but notes the aim to deepen the cooperation with Denmark and develop an even larger exchange with Norway. As its other partners in the region Sweden names the Baltics, Germany and Poland, adding that it could possibly develop and deepen security cooperation with the latter two, and that it desires to deepen and widen cooperation with the Baltics, e.g. in the form of joint exercises. (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 23-26) Furthermore, Sweden sets an aim of solidarity in security policy – by promoting stable relationships in the region through cooperation, but also interoperability within NATO, Nordic and Nordic-Baltic frameworks. Discussions have been held regarding necessity of establishing joint connected or coordinated resources with the Nordic and Baltic countries, e.g. a permanent Nordic battlegroup or a new structure for a joint and divisible Nordic-Baltic unit, and joint exercises with other countries are determined to be primarily with the Nordic and Baltic states, NATO and

the US. (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 56, 70) Together with the other Nordic countries, Sweden plans to continue promoting joint Nordic force contributions to the UN (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 35), and the other Nordics are the only actors with whom Sweden is ready to exchange its national defence planning (Försvarspolitisk ..., 2015: 64).

4.2. Discussion

As the initial conclusion regarding the question of Nordic-Baltic cooperation, it should be noted that all seven countries have devoted a share of their national security and defence concepts to regional cooperation with Nordic and Baltic countries. Therefore, the interest for such cooperation certainly exists in the area. Below, national viewpoints will be discussed and compared in greater detail.

To start with, in several cases countries mention the influence of recent developments in Russia and its aggressive actions regarding military and hybrid security as a threat to the Baltic Sea region. Four of the seven states – Denmark, Estonia, Finland and Latvia – express concern over Russia’s threatening actions and point it out as a reason for strengthening regional cooperation efforts in the field of security and defence. This tendency is a clear indicator of grown will towards cooperative security efforts, which draws from the changed security environment in the area and between Russia and the West in general. The countries further note the increased probability of military threat against one or several states of the region, and the challenging nature of this security issue.

The Nordic-Baltic cooperation as a separate aim and direction of security cooperation appears in concepts of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden, making it a nearly common aim of most of the countries belonging to the area. The focus is on enhancement, development and strengthening of the Nordic-Baltic security cooperation. Latvian concept indicates cyber security as an intended objective of Nordic-Baltic cooperation, Estonia aims to enhance it in political dialogue, defence, energy, environment and transport infrastructure, and Lithuania in joint military projects as well as in many other fields, and Sweden in joint military efforts and development of

interoperability. In some concepts the aim remains rather general and detailed objectives in terms of how and in which specific field the enhanced efforts should be conducted in are not specified. While some of the indicated potential cooperation fields do not overlap, common military efforts in defence seem to be the most common intention. The biggest promoter of this aim is Sweden, who mentions the idea of a new structure for a joint and divisible Nordic-Baltic unit. The only country that does not mention the common Nordic-Baltic dimension in its strategy is Denmark even though it notes interests of cooperation with both country groups separately.

Secondly, cooperation with the Nordic states is also an aim of all the seven countries. This intention is, as could be assumed, stronger within the Nordic countries themselves, who also strongly identify with the Nordic community in their documentation. All four aim to work towards cooperative Nordic efforts such as enhancement of NORDEFECO, more intense security policy dialogue, joint operations, trainings, exercises and international contributions, etc. All three Baltic countries also indicate interest towards close relations with the Nordics. Estonia sets its cooperation interest on objectives regarding energy security, Latvia on information exchange and joint capability projects, and Lithuania on transportation infrastructure. An extraordinary bond within the Nordic countries is between Finland and Sweden, who mutually define each other as a partner of special status in the security field, emphasising intentions of deepening the Finnish-Swedish defence cooperation and developing joint use of civilian and military resources. Regarding the three Baltic countries, the trends are similar by and large. The most important aims set between the three states themselves are energy security and infrastructure, but also military cooperation. The Nordic countries all claim the Baltics to be close or important partners of theirs, but differ in the extent of their cooperation aims. While Finland does not point out any specific objectives regarding the Baltics, Denmark commits to cooperation, reassurance and defence of the Baltics and even aims to increase research related to the Baltic states. Norway, similarly to Denmark, aims to cooperate with the Baltics through NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, and Sweden indicates the interest to conduct joint military exercises with the Baltics. Furthermore, the countries indicate some other actors who are considered important regarding the cooperation efforts within the Nordic-Baltic area, such as NATO, the US, Poland and the European Union.

The second empirical assumption of the thesis proposed that military strengthening and aggressive behaviour of Russia makes the countries of Nordic-Baltic area aim towards enhanced cooperative security efforts in the area. For this assumption to be proved valid, the implications observed in empirical data would be the countries expressing a will and aim of cooperative security efforts in the area for enhancing cooperation and moving towards higher amity. This can be claimed to be true in two parts. Firstly, all seven countries' security strategies indicate aims and objectives regarding cooperation with the Nordic and the Baltic countries, six of them also in regard to Nordic-Baltic multilateral cooperation. Of the more specific aims indicated in the national documents, several overlap with other countries' interests, which also makes the goals more collective and achievable. The key collective efforts include joint military projects, trainings and exercises, energy and infrastructure security, and general enhancement of cooperation. Secondly, while all seven Nordic-Baltic countries indicate Russia's aggressive behaviour and the changed security environment as a threat to the region, more than half of the countries directly refer to it as a motivation behind enhancement of security cooperation between the states in question. Therefore, the assumption proposed is indeed valid in the current case of Nordic-Baltic area, and generalising the case within the RSC theory, the countries within the subcomplex are enhancing their cooperation and relations of amity within the subcomplex are growing due to the countries balancing their cooperation against a common proximate security threat.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has dealt with the Nordic and Baltic countries' perceptions of shared security in the changed security environment after the year 2014. As the aggressive international behaviour, threatening statements and military strengthening of Russia have increased the security risks in the area, the security perceptions of the Nordic-Baltic countries and the security relations between them have become subjects of influence. The thesis has examined the Nordic-Baltic security environment from two perspectives: regarding the countries' affiliation to NATO's strategic aims, and regarding the regional Nordic-Baltic cooperation. As two central research questions, the thesis proposed the following: 1) how do Nordic and Baltic countries relate to NATO's strategic aims and objectives?; and 2) what are Nordic and Baltic countries' regional cooperation interests in the changed security environment? Answers were sought within the theoretical framework of regional security complex theory, by conducting qualitative content analysis of the Nordic-Baltic countries' and NATO's most recent security concepts. The findings will be summarised below.

The Nordic and Baltic countries' strategic aims in security and defence have a lot in common with NATO's strategic aims. By and large, majority of the aims of NATO are also represented in the Nordic-Baltic countries' security aims. The extent to which the countries' national aims concur with NATO's strategic aims does not differ significantly by country, neither does it depend on whether the country in question is a member state of NATO or merely a partner. What was noted from the analysis is that aims related to defence and deterrence appear most important and relevant for the countries. Additionally, the Baltic states seem to be more concerned about deterrence and nuclear balance than the Nordic countries, but also emphasise energy security and openness towards potential candidate states and partners. The Nordic countries direct their emphasis more towards crisis management and security threats with global range.

These differences can be traced back to different past experiences, historical background, and different availability of resources. Secondly, the Baltic and Nordic countries' security cooperation interests were indicated to be high, and this tendency to be at least partly connected to the change of security environment in the region and intensification of threats from Russia. All seven countries' security strategies indicate aims and objectives regarding cooperation with the Nordic and the Baltic countries, six of them also in regard to Nordic-Baltic multilateral cooperation. The key collective efforts include joint military projects, trainings and exercises, energy and infrastructure security, and general enhancement of cooperation. Four countries directly refer to Russia's behaviour as a motivation behind enhancement of security cooperation between the states. Hence, although the countries' self-perception may rather follow identification with either the Nordic or Baltic group, the Nordic-Baltic countries are interested in working together towards re-establishing stability in the area. The thesis had two empirical assumptions: (h1) that member states of NATO have higher strategic intersections with NATO compared to partner states of NATO in the Nordic-Baltic area, and (h2) that military strengthening and aggressive behaviour of Russia makes the countries of Nordic-Baltic area aim towards enhanced cooperative security efforts in the area. Therefore, the first assumption (h1) did not find confirmation as a result of the empirical analysis, while the second one was confirmed (h2).

The thesis has contributed to filling a gap in literature by looking at how NATO's objectives have been integrated into the member and partner states' national defence policies, and by providing a case study of the Nordic-Baltic area within the regional security complex theory. On theoretical level, the thesis has confirmed that within a regional (sub)complex, strengthening of a common threat brings countries closer together in cooperation based on amity (H2). The other assumption, that states, which identify with the global power more closely, are also more eager to relate to it strategically (H1) was not supported by the empirical evidence. Furthermore, the thesis has mapped the main security aims of the Nordic-Baltic countries, their cooperation interests and strategic relating to NATO on national level, providing better understanding of the dynamics of the region's defence environment and NATO's role in it as well as providing comparative knowledge on the Nordic-Baltic countries' security aims. Future research could, for example, test the theoretical assumptions with a

different subcomplex, either within NATO or a different international framework, to provide more knowledge on similar tendencies elsewhere and allow to make more certain overall conclusions. Alternatively, to further develop the research in regards to the Nordic-Baltic area, the aims or groups of aims could be investigated in greater detail, comparing and contrasting the national positions also within actual policies instead of the strategic level.

In conclusion, the Nordic-Baltic countries' security perceptions include both identifying with the greater Euro-Atlantic community as well as with the regional cooperative efforts. The countries are well eager to work together towards their common aims in security and defence on both levels, even despite not all belonging to a unifying security structure.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. List of Strategic Documents Used as Sources of Empirical Data (alphabetical, by country)

1. Denmark: Defence Agreement 2018-2023. Adopted 28 January 2018.
2. Denmark: Foreign and Security Policy Strategy 2017-2018. Adopted 14 June 2017.
3. Estonia: *Eesti julgeolekupoliitika alused* (Basics of Estonian Security Policy). Adopted 31 May 2017.
4. Finland: Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy. Adopted 19 May 2016.
5. Finland: Government's Defence Report. Adopted 16 February 2017.
6. Latvia: The National Defence Concept. Adopted 16 June 2016.
7. Latvia: The National Security Concept of the Republic of Latvia (2015 -). Adopted 26 November 2015.
8. Lithuania: National Security Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania. Adopted 17 January 2017.
9. Lithuania: The Military Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania. Adopted 17 March 2016.
10. NATO: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Adopted 19-20 November 2010.
11. Norway: *Kampkraft og bærekraft* (Capable and Sustainable). Adopted 17 June 2016.
12. Norway: Setting the Course for Norwegian Foreign and Security policy. Adopted 21 April 2017.

13. Sweden: *Försvarspolitisk inriktning – Sveriges försvar 2016–2020* (Defence Policy Orientation – Sweden’s Defence). Adopted 23 April 2015.

Appendix 2. Categories in NATO Strategic Concept (2010)

Defence and deterrence

1. Protection and defence of our territory and our populations against attack (Article 5)
2. Deterrence as a core strategic element
3. Strategic nuclear forces as supreme guarantee of security
4. Maintenance of an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities
5. Maintenance of ability to sustain concurrent operations
6. Development and maintenance of robust, mobile and deployable conventional forces
7. Necessary training, exercises, contingency planning and information exchange to assure defence against full range of conventional and emerging security challenges, and provide appropriate visible assurance and reinforcement for allies
8. Allies' broadest possible participation in collective defence planning on nuclear roles
9. Development of capability to defend our populations and territories against ballistic missile attack while seeking cooperation with Russia and other Euro-Atlantic partners
10. Further development of capacity to defend against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction
11. Further development of ability to prevent, detect, defend against and recover from cyber attacks
12. Enhancement of capability to detect and defend against international terrorism
13. Development of capacity to contribute to energy security
14. Ensuring being at the front edge in assessing the security impact of emerging technologies and taking potential threats into account in military planning
15. Sustaining the necessary levels of defence spending
16. Deterring and defending against full range of threats

Crisis management

17. Engagement (where possible and necessary) in crisis prevention, management, post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction support beyond NATO's borders
18. Engagement with other international actors before, during and after crises to maximise coherence and effectiveness
19. Monitoring and analysing international environment to anticipate crises and take preventive steps if appropriate
20. Preparedness and capability to manage on-going hostilities
21. Preparedness and capability to contribute to post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction
22. Enhancement of intelligence sharing within NATO
23. Further development of doctrine and military capabilities for expeditionary operations
24. Forming a civilian crisis management capability to interface more effectively with civilian partners
25. Enhancement of integrated civilian-military planning throughout the crisis spectrum
26. Development of capability to train and develop local forces in crisis zones
27. Identifying and training civilian specialists for rapid deployment for selected missions
28. Broadening and intensifying political consultations among allies and with partners on a regular basis and in dealing with all stages of a crisis

Promoting International Security Through Cooperation

29. Reinforcement of arms control, promotion of disarmament of both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, non-proliferation
30. Creation of conditions for a world without nuclear weapons (in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty)
31. Further reductions of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe

32. Seeking Russian agreement to increase transparency on its nuclear weapons in Europe and to relocate these weapons away from the territory of NATO members
33. Stronger conventional arms control regime in Europe
34. Contribution to fight proliferation
35. Maintenance and development of consultations on national decisions regarding arms control and disarmament
36. Eventual integration of all European countries that so desire into Euro-Atlantic structures
37. Open door to NATO membership to all European democracies which share the values of our alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and whose inclusion can contribute to common security and stability
38. Promotion of security through a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organisations around the globe
39. Dialogue and cooperation with partners, based on reciprocity, mutual benefit and mutual respect
40. Enhancement of partnerships through flexible formats
41. Preparedness to develop political dialogue and practical cooperation with any nations and relevant organisations that share our interest in peaceful international relations
42. Being open to consultation with any partner country on security issues of common concern
43. Giving operational partners a structural role in shaping strategy and decisions on NATO-led missions to which they contribute
44. Further development of existing partnerships
45. Deeper political dialogue and practical cooperation with the UN
46. Stronger strategic partnership, deeper political dialogue and practical cooperation with the EU, cooperating more fully in capability development to minimise duplication and maximise cost-effectiveness
47. Strategic partnership with Russia

48. Enhancement of political consultations and practical cooperation with Russia (through NATO-Russia Council)
49. Development of friendly and cooperative relations with all countries of the Mediterranean, deeper cooperation in the Mediterranean Dialogue and openness to inclusion of other countries of the region
50. Deeper security partnership with Gulf partners, stronger cooperation in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and readiness to welcome new partners
51. Enhancement of consultations and practical military cooperation with partners in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
52. Continuation and development of partnerships with Ukraine and Georgia (NATO-Ukraine and NATO-Georgia commissions)
53. Facilitation of Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans

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