Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Separation and immersion: the changing role of the armed forces in Northwestern liberal democracies

Vark, A. van

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NETHERLANDS, SWEDEN, AND FINLAND: FROM SEPARATION TO IMMERSION?

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The past three chapters presented the results of three case studies: the Netherlands, Sweden, and Finland. The topics discussed include the position of the armed forces in these countries, civil-military relations, recent developments in the domestic role of the armed forces and explanations for these developments as well as future policy options. At the end of each chapter, the balance between separation and immersion in each case study was discussed, followed by an analysis.

This chapter presents a comparison between the three countries, based on the interview data and while also relating these results to the relevant literature. The first part of this chapter contains an analysis of similarities and differences between the three case studies in various aspects: security challenges for liberal democracy, the extent of hybridization, and the extent of immersion (section 8.2). These similarities and differences will then be explained and elaborated within the context of civil-military relations theory (section 8.3).

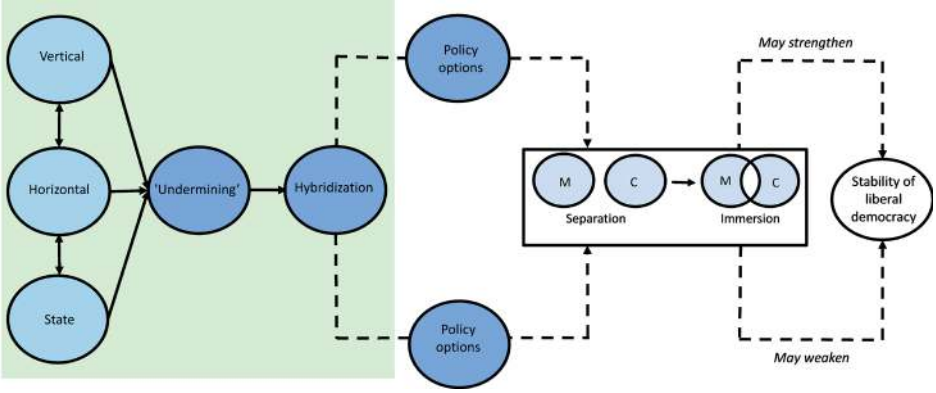
The second part of this chapter will compare policy options mentioned by respondents in each country for a future domestic role of the armed forces and look for possible trends. Then, the results of the case studies will be related to civil-military relations theory. Within this comparison, the following questions will also be answered: What changes in civil-military relations have already taken place, and how can this be related to civil-military relations theory? In what direction can we expect civil-military relations in Northwest European liberal democracies to develop? And, based on the empirical data, what impact can a changing domestic role of the armed forces have on the stability of liberal democracy?

For purposes of clarity, the conceptual model developed in chapter 2 will be used to illustrate what part of the model a specific section is focused on.

8.2 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

In this section, similarities and differences between the three cases will be summarized and analyzed, focusing on (1) the extent to which democracy is under pressure, (2) security challenges, (3) the extent of hybridization, and (4) the extent of immersion.

This section is based on the first part of the model described in chapter 2, as is shown below.



Liberal democracy under pressure

As discussed and illustrated in chapter 4, liberal democracy in all three case studies is under pressure.

The World Values Survey data show that unlike older generations, younger generations do not consider living in a democracy as important. The differences between the three case studies are quite large, with the Swedish population finding it almost twice as important to live in a democracy as the Dutch population, with Finland in between.

Data from IDEA and V-Dem show a decline in almost all indicators for liberal democracy in all three countries in the last 10 years. For Finland and the Netherlands, the decline in civil liberties and in impartial administration stand out. While Sweden's score is generally higher than that of the other two nations, it shows a deterioration in fundamental rights, civil liberties, and absence of corruption. Furthermore, representative government is declining in Sweden and the Netherlands.

The World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators show a marked decline in political stability in all three countries in the past 20 years. There is no clear change in either country in the rule of law indicator. The last relevant indicator, control of corruption, shows a relatively small decline.

Lastly, the Fund for Peace cohesion indicators show that all case studies have had a clear decline in the security apparatus indicator, which measures security threats to the state, serious criminal factors and perceived trust of citizens in domestic security. The 'factionalized elites' indicator (measuring fragmentation of state institutions) shows a decline in Finland and the Netherlands, but less so in Sweden. As a final indicator, group grievances (divisions and schisms between groups in society) are a lot higher in the Netherlands than in the two Nordic countries.

Security challenges

In chapter 4, three main security challenges for liberal democracy were identified, matching the three forms of 'undermining' of liberal democracy: (1) the struggle by states to provide security in an era where the blurring of internal and external security leads to new security threats (vertical undermining), (2) the decline of social cohesion in society leading to unrest and instability (horizontal undermining), and (3) the undermining of liberal democracy by the state.

Chapters 5-7 focused on country-specific security challenges related to these three main challenges. The respective sections show that with respect to new security threats most security challenges are similar. So-called 'grey zone threats' are rising in all three countries. For example, threats in the cyber domain such as digital espionage and cybercrime, or foreign influence operations. Organized crime is a growing problem in the Netherlands and in Sweden as well. In Sweden, it is related to gang violence in the bigger cities, which has slowly been spreading to the rest of the country. Organized crime has been less of a problem in Finland so far. This may be related to the remote location of the country. However, the Finns do fear it could rise in the future.

The second security challenge - the decline of social cohesion - has been mainly a problem in the Netherlands and Sweden and less so in Finland. The strong social cohesion is discussed by Finnish respondents as due to factors like the existence of an external threat, conscription, and the nation's very low immigration rate, which has left the population largely homogeneous.

Examples of state undermining can be found in each case study as well, for example in migration and terrorism legislation and policies and in new intelligence legislation. The COVID-19 pandemic stands out in this respect as well. In both the Netherlands and Finland, emergency legislation was activated and in both countries there were complaints that the government had so much trust in experts for determining their policies that it resembled a technocracy instead of a democracy. Sweden seems to be the most committed to respecting regular legal processes, which is one of the reasons there was a very liberal policy during the pandemic. However, the new government installed in the Fall of 2022 announced harsh measures in the fight against organized crime and gang violence, and in the effort to curtail migration. Interestingly, in all three cases, respondents do not easily come up with examples of state undermining, although when asked about policy options, they do seem to be able to reflect on this risk. As was noted in chapter 5, as almost all respondents are part of the state apparatus, it may be difficult to see specific measures taken by the state as undermining liberal democracy.

It should be noted that, in addition to these three challenges, respondents in Finland and Sweden first and foremost speak about the external threat of Russia, when asked about security threats, while Dutch respondents hardly mention this threat. It should also be noted that the interviews for this dissertation took place between 2020 and early 2022. At this time, Finland and Sweden were more aware of the Russian threat than the Netherlands. A lot has changed since the Russian-Ukraine war (see also the epilogue of this dissertation). As discussed in chapter 5, while Dutch respondents do not emphasize the Russian threat, this threat is mentioned by government reports (Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst et al., 2021, 2022).

As will be discussed later in this chapter, the existence of an external threat has an impact on the domestic role of the armed forces as well.

Hybridization

Hybridization refers to the process in which the clear separation between the armed forces and the police in a domestic context disappears (Dahlberg & Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2020, see also chapter 2). As described in chapter 2, hybridization can consist of a constabularization of the armed forces, a militarization of the police and/or the growth of gendarmerie-type forces.

Constabularization of the armed forces

As the Dutch case study shows, there may be a relation between the two types of constabularization: the experience of the Dutch armed forces with stability operations has stimulated the use of capabilities for police tasks in the Netherlands. A prime example is the use of search capabilities that have been developed to search for explosives in an expeditionary context, to look for drug laboratories in the Netherlands. Interestingly, the same development has not taken place in Sweden and Finland, although both countries have participated in stability operations. For Sweden, regular armed forces personnel have not been used for police tasks in stability operations. Finland has taken the conscious decision not to use the newly developed capabilities in the domestic context.

The literature on constabularization shows that a growing use of the armed forces for (police) tasks in a domestic context is mainly related to transborder security threats, when the police is overburdened, or a more robust performance by the authorities is deemed necessary (Edmunds, 2006). The increasing use of the Dutch military forces for security and surveillance duties is a glaring illustration of this dynamic. A recent example is the use of Army personnel to guard a court building in a prominent organized-crime trial. The decision to increasingly involve the armed forces in these tasks is related to the growth in violent organized crime. On the one hand this growth asks for a more robust

performance by the authorities and on the other hand, due to the growing number of people that must be protected, it leads to an overburdening of the police. Political reasons may play a role as well. After the murder of both a lawyer and a journalist by an organized crime group, authorities are eager to show they take security and surveillance seriously. Earlier this century, in response to the terrorist threat, a joint unit of police, Marechaussee and Marines personnel was created. This unit, the Special Intervention Service (*Dienst Speciale Interventies*), performs national operations of special forces, such as counter-terrorism operations or the arrest of dangerous criminals.

Sweden has had the least amount of constabularization of the three case studies. As explained in chapter 6, the domestic role of the armed forces is heavily regulated by the law, with support to civil authorities getting last priority. Recent legal changes have made it possible for the armed forces to assist civil authorities with helicopters and in case of a terrorist attack. However, there are no joint units like in the Netherlands and no specific police tasks have been attributed to the armed forces. Interestingly, as shown in the previous section, the security challenges Sweden is confronted with are largely comparable with the Netherlands. Section 8.3 will explore explanations for the differences between the three countries investigated. While Sweden has seen little constabularization so far, the new Swedish government has announced "*the largest offensive against organized crime in Swedish history*" and the establishment of a coordinated serious organized crime council that will "*bring together all relevant government agencies to combat gang crime*" (Kristersson, 2022). The war language is clear, but it remains to be seen if this offensive includes a role for the armed forces as well.

As for Finland, the legal possibilities for the armed forces to support civil authorities, including police tasks, are quite extensive. However, in practice, such support does not regularly take place. A recent example was the COVID-19 pandemic where the Finnish government used both professional personnel and conscripts to quarantine the Helsinki region for a couple of weeks. The armed forces have been used sporadically to assist the police in public order management. However, Finland has found a different solution for situations in which the police is overburdened, namely close cooperation between the Police, Customs and Border Guard.

Militarization of the police

A second category of hybridization is militarization of the police. The emergence of this militarization in Sweden is discussed by respondents as a response to organized crime and gang violence. Respondents argue that with organized crime and gang violence rising, government performance needs to be more robust. The Swedish response so far has been more robust gear and materiel for the police, and joint training with the

Swedish armed forces. According to respondents from the police, they can perform at the same level of robustness as the military. Interestingly, though seeing no problem in this increasing level of robustness, some respondents with a policing background do criticize the military terminology that the police is increasingly using as not fitting in a policing context.

In Finland, the organized crime problem does not seem to be at the same level as it is in the Netherlands and Sweden. Respondents see some militarization in the police, but it does not stand out as much as in Sweden. The Netherlands, which has chosen to create a specific joint police and armed forces unit (the Special Interventions Service) for robust performance and has furthermore increasingly been using the Marechaussee and more recently even other parts of the armed forces in events where a more robust performance by the authorities was asked for, is comparable with Finland.

Gendarmerie-type forces and other hybrid forces

A third category of hybridization are gendarmerie-type forces, or more in general, hybrid forces. As shown, the Swedish governance model includes a separation between government agencies. Accordingly, Sweden does not have a hybrid force between the police and the armed forces. On the other hand, the Netherlands has a long tradition of a hybrid force in the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee. As explained in chapter 2, gendarmeries, in general, have 'profited' from the rise of new security threats caused by the blurring of internal and external security (Lutterbeck, 2005). The same trend is clear in the Netherlands, where the Marechaussee has grown from around 6000 employees in 2010 to around 7500 in 2021 and is expected to grow further towards 8000 employees in the coming years. Extra personnel have been added to the organization in response to the growing terrorist threat and in the fight against organized crime, in accordance with the analysis by Lutterbeck (Van Vark & Beuving, 2022).

In Finland, the Border Guard can be considered a hybrid force. It uses military ranks and procedure, and the officers are trained at the National Defense University. At the same time, it is positioned under the Ministry of the Interior. The Border Guard cooperates closely with the Police and with Customs. Personnel get basic training for all three organizations and on request can use the powers of the other authorities for crimefighting. (This model originated in rural areas of Finland, where all organizations involved had a lack of resources.) The basis of this model is that if the Police require assistance, they should turn to the Border Guard first.

Other than in the Netherlands, the Finnish Border Guard has not grown in recent years. This may be related to the fact that the main Border Guard task is border security, while

the Marechaussee has more (police) tasks and has particularly grown in those tasks. Interestingly, while Finnish respondents name the existence of the Border Guard and its collaboration with the Police and Customs as one of the reasons that the domestic role of the armed forces has not changed very much, the existence of the Marechaussee in the Netherlands does not seem to have had a similar effect. Section 8.3 will look for an explanation for this and other differences (and similarities) between the three case studies.

Concluding, the three case studies show evidence for a process of hybridization taking place, albeit in different ways, with the Netherlands showing most signs of constabularization, Sweden seeing some militarization of the police, and both the Netherlands and (to a lesser extent) Finland, having hybrid forces.

Separation versus immersion

Chapter 2 introduced the dichotomy in civil-military relations between separation and immersion. In the separation tradition, propagated by Samuel Huntington, military and civil domains are separated and there is 'objective control' whereby the civil domain is responsible for policy and the military domain for implementation. The military's autonomy in implementation is relatively strong (Huntington, 1957). On the other side of the civil-military relations spectrum, proponents of Morris Janowitz advocate for subjective control, meaning that professional soldiers are amenable to civilian control, because they are integrated in society and share its values (Janowitz, 1960).

Separation and immersion can be found in the ideal types described by Angstrom as well (Angstrom, 2013). In the first type, which is the inherent norm for a democratic regime, civil and military are separated and there is civilian supremacy over the military. This ideal type comes from the Huntingtonian tradition and it usually has consequences for the domestic role of the armed forces as well, namely a clear distinction between organizations responsible for internal security and external security.

An alternative to this ideal type is the second ideal type described by Angstrom, namely an intertwining of civil and military (or: immersion in the Janowitzian tradition). The other two ideal types described by Angstrom are military supremacy over civilians (military dictatorship) and civil and military parity.

Where do the case studies *currently* stand on this spectrum?[19] All three countries originally come from a Huntingtonian tradition. However, when focusing on different

19 Note that the *development* in the balance between separation and immersion will be described in section 8.5.

dimensions of immersion, a different picture emerges. As is clear from table 8.1 below, only a few areas of strict separation can be identified.

Immersion	Netherlands	Sweden	Finland
Society			
Law			
Public administration / strategy			
Tasks			

Table 8.1: Immersion in the Netherlands, Sweden, and Finland

Societal dimension

Studying the societal dimension, the Netherlands provides the clearest example of a separation between the military and society, which has grown after the suspension of conscription. On the opposite side of this spectrum is Finland, where military and society are very much intertwined because of conscription and the large number of reservists all over the country. Sweden takes a middle position but is moving towards immersion with the reinstatement of conscription and the creation of new bases all over the country.

Legal dimension

As for the legal dimension, in all three case studies, the possibility for the armed forces to support civil authorities has been established in various laws. In Sweden, the legal possibilities are more restricted than in the other two cases, which limit specific areas support can take place (terrorism, helicopters) and obligate decision-making at a high level. Except in case of a terrorist attack, the Swedish armed forces are not allowed to use coercion or violence against civilians. No such limitations exist in either Finland or the Netherlands. In Sweden and Finland, support can only be given when civilian resources have been depleted and when the defense of the country is not jeopardized. In the Netherlands, there is no ranking between the core tasks of the armed forces. This reflects the discussion earlier in this section of the security threats, where it is clear that Sweden and Finland are very much aware of the Russian threat, while Dutch respondents have barely mentioned this threat (although this would most likely be different at the time of writing, almost three years after the onset of the war in Ukraine). Swedish and Finnish legislation is very clear about support to the civil authorities by the military always taking place under civilian control.

Public administration and strategy dimension

In the area of public administration and strategy, the Finnish armed forces stand out with their strong position when compared with other organizations such as the police. Although total defense has been replaced with comprehensive security, building on the role of defense in this model, the Security Committee is placed under the Ministry of Defense, and the FDF organize National Defense Courses for the nation's elite.

In Sweden, because of its governance model, there is a strict separation between agencies. However, with the recent decision to reinstate the total defense model the position of the Ministry of Defense and the armed forces has become stronger. Recently, the new Swedish government has decided to create a Minister for Civil Defense at the Ministry of Defense and has moved several agencies (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency – MSB and Psychological Defence Agency – MPF) from the Ministry of the Interior to this ministry. The National Defense Courses, that were abolished after the end of the Cold War, have been reinvigorated as well.

Finally, in the Netherlands, the armed forces have been largely absent from public administration and from public debate as well. The current government has, for the first time, published a comprehensive security strategy, comprising both internal and external security, and has created a national security council under the Prime Minister, with participation (amongst others) of the Minister of Defense, Chief of Defense and Head of the Military Intelligence Service. This could potentially ameliorate the position of the armed forces.

Task dimension

Finally, the task dimension. There is a clear trend towards more immersion in the Netherlands, although until recently developments have been slow. The COVID-19 crisis may have served as an accelerator of immersion and recently the armed forces were used for security and surveillance tasks. Although, in legal terms, Sweden has expanded the possibilities for a domestic role of the armed forces, in practice not much has changed so far. The same is the case for Finland.

All in all, none of these three case studies seem to be fully in the Huntingtonian paradigm (or the first ideal type of Angstrom), where the military and civilian domain are separated. In fact, Finland seems to be in the Janowitzian paradigm (or the second ideal type of Angstrom) in all dimensions except the performance of concrete tasks. The trend in the Netherlands and Sweden is in that direction as well, although there are differences with how the dimensions are expressed in each country, with Sweden moving towards more immersion in the dimensions of society and public administration, and

the Netherlands moving towards more immersion in the task dimension and possibly also in public administration and strategy.

The next section will explore explanations for the similarities and differences between the three case studies.

8.3 EXPLANATIONS FOR SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

This section explains the similarities and differences between the three case studies and relates the explanations offered by the respondents to possible explanations in the literature. This section builds on the country-specific data discussed in chapters 5-7 and in particular the country-specific analysis at the end of each chapter. The country-specific data consists of respondents' answers, scientific literature, (government) reports, policy documents and articles from the media. These documents were found through a search on government websites, through recommendations by respondents and using search engines (see also section 3.3). Based on this comparative analysis, four possible factors stand out. They are (1) the historical context, (2) the governance model and legal framework, (3) the changing threat environment and (4) the alignment of the political elite, military and population. These factors will be explained in the first part of this section. In the second part of this section, these factors will be related to factors found in the civil-military relations literature.

First, it is important to realize the differences in historical context between the three case studies. An important difference between the Netherlands, on the one hand, and Finland and Sweden, on the other hand, is the absence (in the case of the Netherlands) or presence (in the case of Sweden and Finland) of a direct external threat, specifically Russia (Aaltola et al., 2014; S. Larsson, 2021; Valtonen & Branders, 2021). This has been the main reason for the development of the total defense model in the 1950's in both Sweden and Finland. Finland has never abandoned this model, although it transformed the model into the comprehensive security model after the end of the Cold War. Sweden has abandoned the total defense model (although it is rebuilding it now) but has kept the domestic role of the armed forces very small. The main reason, according to the respondents, is the Ådalen incident in the 1930s. According to the respondents, while it occurred almost 100 years ago, is still ingrained in the Swedish collective memory, preventing a larger domestic role for the armed forces. The historical context in the Netherlands is very different. The Netherlands have never felt the external threat to the same extent as Finland and Sweden have felt it. However, since the housing riots of

the 1970s and 1980s, the government has been reluctant to use the armed forces in a domestic context, especially in public order management.

A second factor explaining similarities or differences between the three case studies is the governance model. In Sweden, there is a very strict separation, independence, between agencies, which is stipulated in the Constitution. In line with this strict separation, the legal possibilities for the armed forces to support the police are limited and there are no hybrid organizations or joint units. Finland, although less strict, has a similar model. It has developed a model of comprehensive security, but respondents describe this model as a silo model in which each agency sticks to its own tasks, and this is confirmed in the literature (Lehto & Limnéll, 2021; Valtonen & Branders, 2021). The legal possibilities for the armed forces to support the civilian authorities are quite extensive, but the silo culture works against this. Additionally, in Finland, there is close cooperation between the Police, Border Guard (which has hybrid elements) and Customs. Consequently, the Border Guard and Customs are the primary organizations to give support to the Police when needed. Again, the situation in the Netherlands is different. In this country, a factor contributing to the (until recently) small domestic role of the armed forces is the existence of the Marechaussee, a hybrid force (Lutterbeck, 2004). As a police organization with military status and training, it is the first organization to support the police when needed. Additionally, the country has experience with joint units of police and armed forces personnel, such as the Special Interventions Service.

Thirdly, looking at the recent past (since the end of the Cold War), for the Netherlands, the changing threat environment has impacted the domestic role of the armed forces. Fukuyama's 'the end of history' discourse led to the suspension of conscription and large budget cuts in the armed forces (Hoffenaar, 2017; R. Moelker, Noll, et al., 2015). As a result, the military had to find ways to stay active, which they did through stability operations. The performance of police tasks in these operations (for example searching for explosives) has stimulated the use of such capabilities in the domestic context as well, which was welcomed by the civilian authorities in an era when 'new' cross-border security threats were on the rise. Finland has always felt the Russian threat and was not affected so much by new security threats (Hyvönen & Juntunen, 2021). And for Sweden, the so-called 'strategic time-out' after the end of the Cold War did lead to enormous budget cuts for the armed forces, but this period was too short to cause any meaningful change, certainly in combination with the Swedish model of separate agencies and the reluctance to involve the military in police tasks (Kronvall & Petersson, 2016). In that respect, it must be noted that Sweden only sent police personnel to perform police tasks in stability operations.

A fourth and final factor impacting the domestic role of the armed forces based on the data seems to be the alignment (or the absence thereof) between the political elite, the armed forces and the population, as is shown in the analysis section of all three case studies. In Finland, all three actors are convinced that the core task of the armed forces is to defend the country against external threats, and consequently, there is alignment on continuity, not on change. Conscription plays an important role here, as almost every Finnish family has a connection with the military. Furthermore, the armed forces have a strong position in public administration and strategy, evidenced by, for example, their role in the Security Committee and their role in organizing the National Defense Courses. The Netherlands, by contrast, has seen alignment in the three actors for a changing (and growing) domestic role. The changing threat environment has been an important driver. While, on the one hand, the distance between the armed forces and the population is large, popular support for the armed forces, and specifically its domestic role, is growing. Sweden is somewhere in the middle, with the population supporting a larger domestic role for the armed forces, but the political elite and military itself is reluctant. Consequently, there is no alignment in Sweden on a changing role and changes have therefore been small and slow.

How do these empirical results relate to the literature on the changing domestic role of the armed forces? As concluded in chapter 2, literature aiming to explain the drivers for and variance in the domestic role of the armed forces is relatively scarce. In their study of fifteen western liberal democracies, Schnabel and Krupanski have identified three *common traits*: the armed forces are never the primary internal security provider, the role of the armed forces in disasters is undisputed and, lastly, the threat of terrorism has impacted the role of the armed forces in recent years. These three traits are largely confirmed in the case studies of this dissertation: in all three countries, the police are the primary internal security provider and the role of the armed forces in disasters is undisputed. As for the threat of terrorism, this has impacted the role of the armed forces in both Sweden and the Netherlands, leading to new legal possibilities and/or new cooperative arrangements (for example, the Special Interventions Service in the Netherlands). The threat of terrorism is less evident in Finland, and consequently this has not really affected the domestic role of the armed forces there.

Schnabel and Krupanski have subsequently defined ten factors that can explain the *variation* in the domestic role of the armed forces: type of political system (monarchy vs republic), presence or absence of a constitution, extent of constitutional restrictions, historical context, military history, presence of gendarmeries or home guards, presence of services within the armed forces with explicit internal roles, external determinants (such as geographical conditions), recent or ongoing internal conflicts, membership in

military alliances (Schnabel & Krupanski, 2018). There is some overlap with the factors identified in the case studies, but there are some differences as well. First, the last factor Schnabel and Krupanski identified, the fact that Sweden and Finland have not been NATO members (although this has recently changed) could contribute to their focus on the task of the armed forces to defend the country. This dissertation has identified other factors named by Schnabel and Krupanski as playing a role as well, such as the historical context, the governance model and the related legal / constitutional possibilities and restrictions, and the presence or absence of hybrid organizations.

Schnabel and Krupanski do not emphasize the changing threat environment, which based on the data gathered in this dissertation seems to be an important factor in explaining change or continuity in the domestic role of the military. They also do not mention alignment between the political elite, military, and the population as a factor. In chapter 2, it has been shown how Schiff argues that alignment (or concordance) between the actors can be an important factor in the prevention of domestic intervention by the military (Schiff, 1995). The data compiled in this dissertation indicate that concordance between the three actors is an explanatory factor for the variation in the domestic role of the armed forces as well. In the Netherlands, the three actors are aligned on change in the domestic role of the armed forces, in Finland, on continuity, and in Sweden there is thus far no alignment between the actors for change. Furthermore, Schiff argues that separation theory is too much focused on institutional aspects and fails to take cultural and historical conditions into account. She names India and Israel as examples. The data also show that Finland is a good example of a stable democracy where military and civil domains are largely immersed.

Another aspect related to alignment is Feaver's principle-agent theory in which he states that when preferences of civilian and military actors do not align, military actors may have an incentive to 'shirk' from the orders given by civilian actors (Feaver, 2005). This 'shirking' can aim for a larger or a smaller role. The possibilities for the armed forces to 'shirk' are presumably larger if they have a stronger position in public administration, as is the case in Finland in particular. Respondents confirm this, stating that the Finnish armed forces have such a strong position that they will usually get what they want. Could this also be an explanation for the Dutch armed forces slowly getting a bigger domestic role after the Cold War? After the Cold War, the Dutch armed forces were confronted with large budget cuts and needed a new cause to justify their existence and rebuild societal support. In other words, they, like the armed forces of other western countries, had institutional interests to look for new roles (Bigo, 2006; Dahlberg & Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2020; Kalkman, 2019; Kalkman & de Waard, 2017; Lutterbeck, 2005). They may have found this new role in both stability operations and a larger domestic

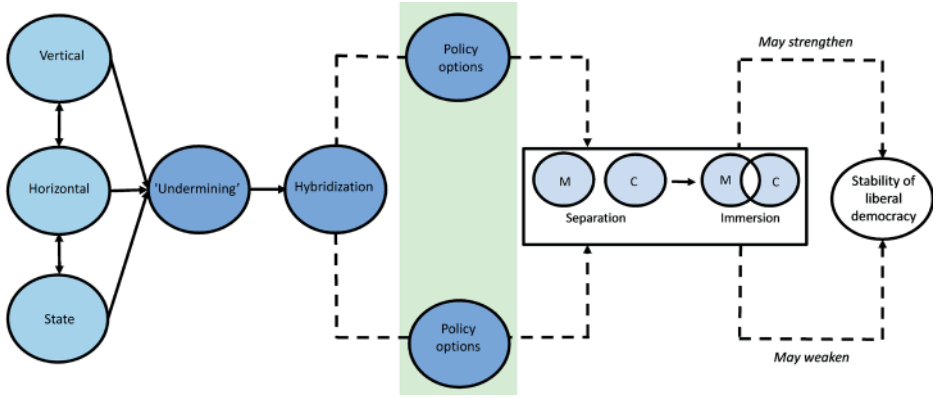
role. As the Finnish armed forces never suffered these budget cuts, there was no need to look for a different role. Sweden is more comparable with the Netherlands in that respect but as has been shown, other factors have prevented hybridization there. This raises the question whether there are examples of the armed forces in the case studies attempting to not fulfil a certain domestic role. In the Netherlands, some examples can be found during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the armed forces were in some cases reluctant to assist, and in other cases reluctant to commit capabilities for a longer period (Zijderveld & Van Vark, 2025). In Finland, there is the example of the armed forces using force in support of the police during a large demonstration. The armed forces concluded that this was detrimental to their reputation and that, therefore, they should ideally no longer carry out this duty. In Sweden, support for a larger domestic role seems to be growing on the civilian side, while the military is still reluctant.

The changing security situation is an interesting factor in this respect as well. On the one hand, it has been shown that after the end of the Cold War, the changing security situation for at least the Netherlands (absence of an external enemy and later the rise of new security threats such as terrorism and organized crime) has stimulated a larger domestic role. Both functional reasons (the changing threat environment) and institutional interests may have played a role in this increase. In Sweden, the growing concern about organized crime and gang violence could lead to calls for a larger domestic role. On the other hand, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the war continuing today, the external threat in Europe is back.

The next section will focus on policy options for the future and will consider these developments.

8.4 POLICY OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE DOMESTIC ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES

This section, based on the second part of the model described in chapter 2, shown below, is framed by the question, what policy options for a future domestic role of the armed forces have been suggested or reflected on by the respondents.



A summary of policy options can be found in table 8.2 below, which is a compilation of the information found in tables 5.2 (Netherlands), 6.1 (Sweden) and 7.1 (Finland). Respondents were asked whether they saw a role for the armed forces in police tasks (with several subcategories), civic education (including conscription), cyber threats, intelligence, and crisis management. In addition, they were asked whether they see a role for hybrid forces in the future.

Table 8.2: Future policy options

Tasks	Netherlands	Sweden	Finland
Police tasks			
- Public order management			
- Security and surveillance			
- Organized crime			
- Terrorism			
- Expert support			
Hybrid forces			
Civic education			
- Conscription			
- National Defence Courses			
Intelligence			
Cyber threats			
Crisis management			

This table show, firstly, that the performance of police tasks by the armed forces, in support of the police, remains controversial in both Sweden and Finland, except for expert support and of support in case of a terrorist attack. Due to the reasons explored in section 8.3, such as the historical context and governance model, respondents are reluctant to consider a larger or different role. One exception in Sweden may be the fight against organized crime and gang violence where some respondents consider

the use of the armed forces as an option. The use of the armed forces for public order management according to the respondents, will likely remain controversial in all case studies. The Dutch case study demonstrates that it is mainly the use of armed forces personnel that is controversial. In the other two cases as well, respondents state that the risk of the armed forces using violence against civilians is a primary reason not to involve them in this task. They also wonder whether the armed forces could have a meaningful contribution in police tasks, as they are not trained for crimefighting. The use of military materiel is less controversial: in Dutch cases where demonstrators come equipped with heavy materiel, as has happened with the farmers protests in recent years, armed forces materiel has been used on several occasions. Respondents also consider the use of logistical expertise for public order management as acceptable (for example: in determining the best route for a demonstration). And in Sweden, specific military materiel has been used as well.

As for civic education, the armed forces already play a role in Finland, both by means of conscription and in facilitating the National Defense Courses. As Sweden has decided to revive these courses and to reinstate conscription, the trend in that country seems to be in the same direction. However, it should be noted that the main reason to keep conscription (Finland) or reinstate it (Sweden) is not related to civic education, but to the growing external threat. The fostering of social cohesion (including a better integration of migrants) is considered by the respondents (but also government authorities) to be a useful by-product. For this by-product to materialize, the respondents consider it necessary that conscription is gender neutral (which in Finland it is not) and involves most (preferably all) of the generation. In the Netherlands some developments towards stimulating young people to serve in the armed forces have been made, but these are primarily related to recruitment issues in the armed forces, rather than to civic education purposes. In this regard, expanding civic education to include defense-related coursework in schools is controversial, even in Finland, where some see it as a militarization of society.

In all three cases, respondents acknowledge that there is potential for the armed forces to play a bigger role in the cyber domain and intelligence, as well as for improved collaboration between civil and military authorities. They state that the cyber domain is borderless by nature, making it very difficult to distinguish whether an incident constitutes cybercrime, has elements of cyber war, can be attributed to organized crime, a foreign state, etcetera. Therefore, and because of the scarcity in expert personnel, they consider combining capabilities of civil and military actors to make sense. Both Finland and Sweden have experimented with cyber conscripts, hoping to interest them in a role as cyber reservist afterwards. The same holds true for intelligence, where respondents

recognize that the armed forces have a different way of looking at problems (outside-in) that is complementary with the police modus operandi (inside-out). Using the armed forces for intelligence operations could help in identifying the networks behind concrete cases. At the same time, respondents recognize the legal obstacles for better cooperation in this area.

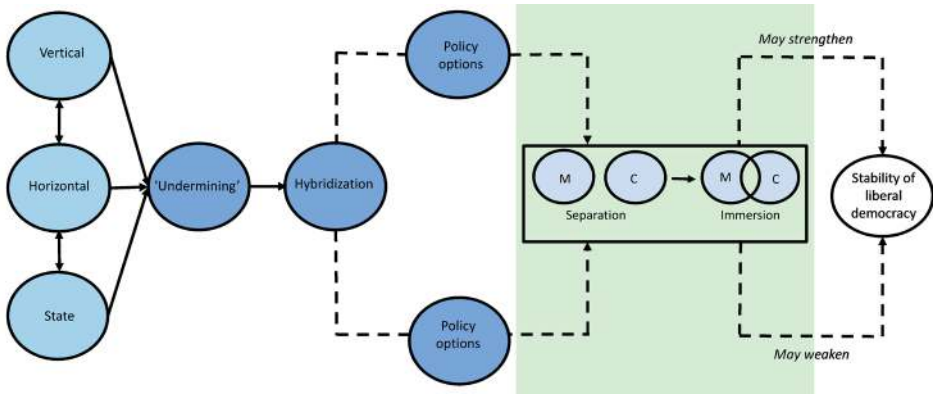
Crisis management is and will probably remain the least controversial area for the armed forces to support the police. In all three countries, the armed forces supported the civil authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic: in hospitals, care homes, in vaccination campaigns, and testing. The reputation of the armed forces as a trustworthy partner in cooperation has been beneficial. Respondents generally see this as a natural role for the armed forces to support civilian authorities, although they state the armed forces should never be in the lead.

Finally, hybrid forces. As discussed before, the Netherlands has a hybrid force, the Marechaussee, and has also been working with joint units of civilian and military personnel. Sweden and Finland have been more reluctant. Both countries prefer a separation of agencies. However, in Finland, the Finnish Border Guard shows elements of a hybrid force, and there is close cooperation between the Police, Customs and the Border Guard. According to the respondents, this makes the need for a hybrid force between the police and armed forces smaller. This close cooperation was created for pragmatic reasons, primarily to support each other in remote locations and to efficiently use scarce resources. Another development in Finland could follow from the large group of reservists that have completed conscription. To keep them action-ready, an option could be use them as a reserve force for the Police. In Sweden, some suggestions have been made to create a hybrid force, building on the Home Guard or re-establishing the Cold War 'Beredskapspolisen'. Respondents name the usefulness of such a hybrid force in dealing with grey-zone threats or augmenting the police when needed, but thus far opposition has been too strong and the preference to separate agencies prevails.

It must be noted that both Sweden and Finland have recently installed new governments, which in both cases are more rightwing oriented than their predecessors. To what extent this will lead to new policy options for a domestic role of the armed forces remains to be seen. After chapter 9, an epilogue is devoted to recent developments after the Russian-Ukraine war. As will be shown, this could have both a positive and a negative effect on the domestic role of the armed forces.

8.5 IMPACT OF A CHANGING DOMESTIC ROLE ON CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

This section is based on the third part of the model described in chapter 2, as is shown below.



As discussed in section 8.3, all three case studies show a trend towards more immersion (with Finland already immersed in three out of four dimensions) and more hybridization, though developments and speed differ per country. These differences can be explained by differences in historical context and governance, the changing threat environment, and alignment between the political elite, military and population. Looking at policy options as identified by the respondents (section 8.4), most respondents expect a (slowly) growing domestic role for the armed forces (and therefore: more hybridization and immersion) in the next 10 years, especially related to cyber threats and intelligence, and in the Netherlands (and possibly Sweden) for police tasks as well.

This section evaluates the impact of a changing domestic role and the trend towards immersion in terms of civil-military relations.

As described in chapter 2, the preferred model for civil-military relations in a liberal democracy has for a long time been a model in which the military and the civil domain are separated and there is civilian supremacy and control over the military, the Huntingtonian model. However, as Janowitz has already written in the 1960s, a model of immersion may be fitting the liberal democratic state as well. According to Janowitz, this would lead to an active military citizenship whereby the armed forces are immersed in society to such an extent that they do what civil actors ask for. As discussed, Finland fits the Janowitzian model better than the Huntingtonian model, although the principle of civilian control is clearly embedded in the relevant legislation and although in tasks

there is still quite a clear division between the armed forces and other security organizations particularly the police.

As described in chapter 2, the focus of the civil-military relations field of research is on civilian control (Feaver, 1999). Looking at the three case studies, the principle of civilian control is in fact very clear in all three. The data show that this principle is clearly defined in relevant legislation in both Finland and Sweden. In the Netherlands, article 97 of the Constitution states that the government has supreme authority over the armed forces, from which it could be inferred that the armed forces act under civilian control, although one respondent suggested to define the principle of civilian control in case of domestic tasks more clearly.

In addition to the law, culture plays a significant role as well in determining the degree of civilian control over the armed forces. As shown in the Dutch case study, the Dutch armed forces are very loyal to the government in general and to the Minister of Defense in particular even though there are possibilities to influence policies. Nevertheless, some respondents on the civilian side talk about the 'military mindset' in explaining why they feel there should be reluctance to expand the domestic role of the armed forces. In their eyes, military personnel are too dominant, find it difficult to accept civilian control and have difficulty in de-escalating in contacts with the population. The same sentiment can be found in Finland and Sweden, where some consider that being in a supporting role is against the professional identity of the military. In the Netherlands, the research shows that the metaphor of 'green on the streets' has had a strong effect in civil authorities being reluctant to involve the armed forces in domestic tasks and in Sweden this is a factor as well.

In the case study chapters, I used the leading works of Desch, Levy, Kuehn, Travis and Bland to evaluate the trend towards immersion from a control perspective. Desch expects civilian control to weaken when external threats become smaller and internal threats rise, with Levy and Kuehn adding that this is only the case if these internal threats are militarized (Desch, 1998; Kuehn & Levy, 2021b, 2021a). Based on these theories, as there is no clear change in the Finnish threat environment, continuity in civilian control would be expected, which is what the data show as well. The Finnish military has always had, and still has, a strong position, and demilitarization efforts (for example, by transforming the total defense model into a comprehensive security model) have had mainly cosmetic effects. The Finnish case study matches Travis' theory of 'pragmatic civilian control' or perhaps rather Bland's theory of shared responsibility (Bland, 2001; Travis, 2017).

In the Netherlands, the external threat has declined after the end of the Cold War and internal (or rather: cross-border) threats have risen. Based on the work of Desch and the work

of Levy and Kuehn, the expectation would be that civilian control would weaken, if these threats would become militarized. Although some respondents have addressed concerns about a military mindset and some 'war language' has been detected (for example, the mayor of Eindhoven warning of a civil war in his city during the COVID pandemic) there is no real evidence of militarization. This research has also shown that although the position of the Dutch military in public administration and strategy has become a bit stronger, there are no signs of a weakening of civilian control. Sweden, interestingly, does show some signs of militarization, with the transfer of two civilian agencies to the Ministry of Defense. However, this militarization is not related to an increasing internal threat, but to the rising external threat posed by Russia in recent years. Both Sweden and the Netherlands have created a National Security Council, which is a clear example of 'pragmatic civilian control', a viable model according to Travis in this era of rising grey zone threats.

Focusing a bit further on the role of the armed forces in public administration and government strategy, Brooks has suggested normalizing the military's role in politics (Brooks, 2019). She considers the military to be a government institution comparable with other government institutions in the sense that it can influence government policies and has institutional interests. She argues that the military has for a long time been seen as an exceptional actor, because it can use lethal force, commissioned by the state, but against the state as well. In established liberal democracies, however, it would make more sense to consider the role of the armed forces as a bureaucratic actor than the possibility for a coup.

The Finnish Defence Forces, because of their historical and current position in the security domain, can be considered an important bureaucratic power. In the Netherlands, the opposite seems to be the case: respondents state that the armed forces have been too absent in public administration, have been inward-looking and should increase their professional visibility. The Swedish situation is somewhere in between. Armed forces in all three countries have relations with politicians and with society in general. Because of their size, they are a relatively large employer and have impact on the economy through their procurement projects. Armed forces personnel can speak out in public and have been increasingly seen to do so, especially since the start of the war in Ukraine.

Both the Netherlands and Sweden have recently taken steps in the direction of the Finnish comprehensive security model with the establishment of a National Security Council, in which all relevant security actors participate. Both countries have decided to establish this council at the Prime Minister's Office, while the Finnish Security Committee is headed by the Ministry of Defense. In Finland, normalizing the role of the military in politics could mean moving the Security Committee to the Prime Minister's Office.

A challenge in the Finnish context has been to bridge the siloes between the pillars of comprehensive security in the implementation phase, especially at the national level, where bureaucratic politics and competition between organizations about budgets tend to hinder cooperation. During the COVID-19 crisis, this led to the Prime Minister of Finland creating her own coordination structure instead of using the existing model (Safety Investigation Authority, 2021). The *National Defence Courses* have been created to create a network and bridge the siloes, but apparently there is still room for improvement.

Normalizing the role of the military in politics and public administration could have an impact on the role of the military in society as well. As has been seen in both the Netherlands and Sweden, the creation of an all-volunteer force has led to a disconnect between the armed forces and society. Sweden has recently reintroduced conscription (though in small numbers) and the Netherlands is taking efforts to make young people serve in the armed forces as well. This could lead to a better connection between the armed forces and society in both countries. Wallenius has identified other ways to increase societal anchoring, such as communication, visibility, and support to civil authorities (Wallenius et al., 2019b). Normalizing the role of the military in politics could in that sense also lead to a better connection between the armed forces and society, just as an increase in domestic tasks or increasing visibility in public debate could do so as well. In that way, immersion in one area could lead to immersion in another area.

After having discussed the topic of civilian control, it is important to note that some authors consider this heavy focus on civilian control as misplaced in liberal democracies. Bland has suggested speaking about 'civilian direction' of the military (Bland, 2001). Others suggest studying other dimensions, such as military roles and missions and military effectiveness (Bruneau, 2018; Edmunds, 2006). Bruneau argues that the military needs to be both under democratic civilian control and effective (and efficient, although that is much harder to measure) in its missions at the same time (Bruneau, 2018). In line with Bruneau, for this dissertation, a relevant question is whether the strong focus on civilian control in established liberal democracies may have a negative impact on its effectiveness in dealing with new challenges and thereby on the stability of liberal democracy.

Although in general it is always difficult to say anything about the 'effectiveness' of any government performance, Sweden stands out here as the most obvious case where legal and cultural limitations have made it difficult to involve the armed forces in domestic tasks. As explained in chapter 6, a special law allows for the involvement of the armed forces in case of a terrorist attack. However, for the fight against organized crime there are no legal possibilities and most respondents are very reluctant to change this. All three countries struggle with the possible role of the armed forces in the cyber domain, where it

is often very difficult to determine whether an organized crime group or a foreign actor is behind a threat. An interesting experiment described by respondents in both Sweden and Finland in this respect is the use of cyber conscripts. So far, they do not play a role in the civil domain, but this could change towards the future. In the area of intelligence, respondents from all three countries recognize that combining the capabilities of both civil security organizations (mainly the police) and the armed forces could be helpful, as they are trained to work from a different perspective (inside-out versus outside-in). However, legal restrictions make sharing intelligence between these organizations very difficult. Finally, the weaponization of migration, as has recently happened in Belarus and in 2015/2016 in Russia as well, could be another area where legal and cultural constraints following from the principle of civilian control limit effective performance by the government.

As suggested by Bruneau (Bruneau, 2018), a solution could be to investigate how the capabilities of the armed forces could be used effectively in a domestic context, while remaining under civilian control (or rather perhaps, in Bland's words, 'civilian direction') at the same time. Looking at the case studies, a few possibilities pop up.

Based on the data, a first option to create joint units of police and armed forces personnel that operate under police command. The Special Interventions Service in the Netherlands serves as a prime example. As explained in chapter 5, this unit is used in case of a terrorist attack or a high-risk arrest. Armed forces personnel in this unit are trained to perform police tasks. At the same time, they acquire valuable experience in a domestic context that they can use in future international operations as well.

A second option, as has been seen in the Netherlands as well, is a hybrid force such as a gendarmerie that could operate as an in-between step on the escalation ladder from the police to the armed forces, providing a more robust performance than the police and at the same time preventing militarization of the police and constabularization of the armed forces. As explained, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, a police organization with military status, has expanded in recent years. Other countries with comparable forces have seen the same development. For a country like Sweden that has been confronted with security challenges that require a more robust performance by the authorities (particularly organized crime and gang violence) but prefers not to involve the armed forces in domestic police tasks, a hybrid force may be a viable solution. At the same time, some respondents see the mere existence of a hybrid force as a form of immersion that should be avoided in a liberal democracy.

A third option is the Finnish model for the Border Guard. This is a civilian organization with specific tasks in border control, but its officers receive military training, which is

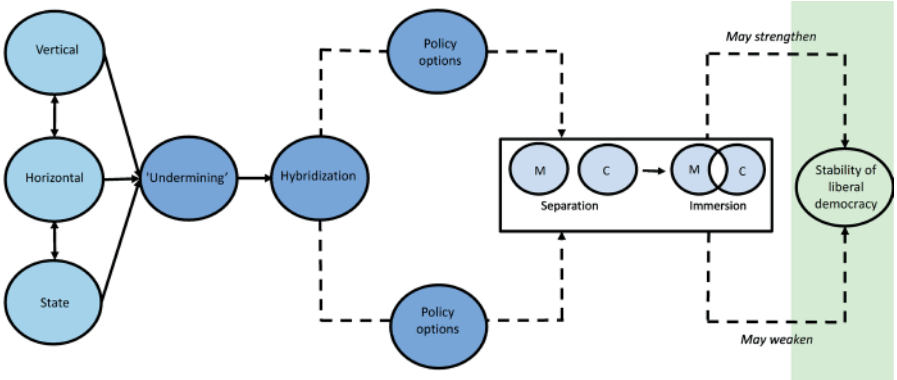
aimed at the integration of the Border Guard in the Finnish Defence Forces in case of war but can be useful in a domestic setting as well. As has been shown, the cooperation between the police, Customs and Border Guard in Finland guarantees that help can always be found with one of the partner organizations in case it is needed.

A fourth option would be to let the armed forces support the police on a case-by-case basis, for which there are many legal possibilities in the Netherlands and Finland and a few specific options in Sweden. This type of support has grown in the Netherlands in recent years, and less so in the other two countries. Case-by-case support requires adequate training for the armed forces personnel involved and some clear boundaries set in advance, for example that the armed forces personnel always operate under police command and that they cannot use violence against civilians in public order management. Another relevant question is how to prioritize capabilities for the various tasks. For example, in Finland the defense of the country always gets priority and support to other authorities can only take place when the required capabilities are not needed for that task. In the Netherlands, at least in theory, all core tasks of the armed forces are equal. Furthermore, a relevant question is whether to aim for the development of dual capabilities that can be used in both an international and a domestic context.

Having discussed the impact of a changing domestic role of the armed forces on civil-military relations, the impact on the stability of liberal democracy, the main research question of this dissertation, will now be discussed.

8.6 IMPACT OF A CHANGING DOMESTIC ROLE ON THE STABILITY OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

This section is based on the fourth part of the model developed in chapter 2, as is shown below.



What is the impact of a changing (and in many instances growing) domestic role of the armed forces, of more immersion and more hybridization on the stability of liberal democracy? As has been shown in chapter 4, three forms of undermining of liberal democracy can be distinguished, namely 1) vertical undermining (the blurring of internal and external security leading to new security threats), 2) horizontal undermining (declining social cohesion, social unrest, and the creation of parallel societies), and 3) undermining of liberal democracy by the state. As appears from the last part of the above model, a growing domestic role of the armed forces, more immersion and more hybridization, could have both positive and negative effects on the stability of liberal democracy. This section contains a general analysis of positive and negative effects based on the respondent's answers and the relevant literature. In the concluding chapter of this dissertation, this analysis will be refined and the possible effect of concrete policy options on the stability of liberal democracy will be evaluated (section 9.1).

Positive effects

With regard to positive effects, as it was explained in chapter 2, the military is a regime and state's main protector (and thus provides stability). Respondents recognize this positive effect on stability: *'In this world we live in, with growing uncertainty for people, the armed forces and gendarmeries are an implicit certainty. A form of stability and continuity and certainty which you don't speak about because it's always there. Until it's gone. Then a crisis is just around the corner. In a democratic society the armed forces can be a self-evident certainty.'* (Respondent 47, Netherlands, academic)

In other words, the armed forces can have a stabilizing effect simply by being there. Since the end of the Cold War, however, the armed forces have increasingly been absent from Dutch and Swedish societies and public administration. The armed forces in both countries suffered large budget cuts and conscription has been abolished (Sweden) or suspended (the Netherlands). This has increased the distance between the armed forces and society. The recent war in Ukraine has had an enormous effect on the awareness of both political parties and the public in both countries (in Sweden, this process started already in 2014) of the necessity to have armed forces that are sufficiently strong, leading to increased defense spending.

In Finland, the situation has been different from the other two countries. The country has always kept its large armed forces and general conscription for men. In Finland, the armed forces have the specific task to foster the will to defend the country, which could influence stability as well. Comparing World Values Survey data, the will to defend the country is much higher in Finland and Sweden than in the Netherlands, as can be seen in table 8.3 below. For Sweden, this may be a leftover from the Cold War period and / or

the fact that both Sweden and Finland have not been NATO members (though of course both countries have recently joined NATO).

Table 8.3: Willingness to fight for your country (Haerpfer et al., 2020)

	Finland[20]	Netherlands	Sweden
Yes	74,8	46,7	80,5
No	18,3	40,9	15,6
Do not know	6,2	11,8	3,0
No answer	0,7	0,6	0,9

A second positive effect to consider, referred to above as well, is the role of conscription, either military or social. As elaborated on in chapter 2, there is quite some evidence for the contact hypothesis, meaning that close personal contact with fellow citizens from different social or ethnic groups leads to better social integration and cohesion and a feeling of national identity. Recent research on the transformation of 15 European countries from a conscription-based military to an all-volunteer force and in other countries that still have conscription for at least part of the population confirms this (Ronconi & Ramos-Toro, 2022; Rosman, 2020; C. M. Weiss, 2022). Rosman's research shows no significant difference in this respect between serving in the military or an alternative national conscription (Rosman, 2020). Most of the Finnish respondents in this research believe firmly in this effect of conscription and both in the Netherlands and Sweden this is one of the arguments used to reinstate a form of conscription. Respondents also expect a better integration of migrants that take part in a conscription system and a recent article indicates that conscription indeed has a positive effect on labor market integration (Bontenbal et al., 2024). Further research, also in different countries, is needed to find out if this really is the case (see also chapter 9).

As shown in chapter 2, gender neutrality has been named a precondition for conscription to foster social cohesion in the whole population. Sweden and the Netherlands have already made their conscription systems gender neutral (although conscription is still suspended in the Netherlands). The Finnish government has recognized the importance of gender neutrality but struggles with the possible impact of making the whole generation serve, as this would not be necessary for operational security needs.

As the literature indicates that conscription fosters social cohesion and integration it could play a role in countering horizontal undermining (Bontenbal et al., 2024; Ronconi & Ramos-Toro, 2022; Rosman, 2020; C. M. Weiss, 2022). There are a few caveats: for

20 As shown in chapter 7, data from 2022 show an even higher percentage of willingness in Finland.

conscription to play this role, most of the generation (or preferably the whole generation) needs to participate, including both men and women. Respondents from all three countries either confirm this effect (for Finland) or based on their expertise state they expect this effect (for Sweden and the Netherlands). At the same time, the fundamental question whether conscription is compatible with liberal democracy in the absence of fundamental security needs has to be cosidered. On the other hand, with declining social cohesion and growing social unrest undermining liberal democracy, such a need could be present, in addition to security needs following the growing external threat.

A third positive effect concerns the vertical undermining of liberal democracy by new security challenges, particularly grey zone threats, where the distinction between internal and external threats, or internal and external security actors, is not always so clear-cut. As is evident in the Netherlands, and to a less extent in Finland, a hybrid force, such as a gendarmerie, has distinct advantages in such a situation, combining both police and military capabilities, powers, and training that allows for a layered approach to security threats, while at the same time preventing police militarization (Van Vark & Beuving, 2022). In Sweden in particular, authorities are struggling with increasing gang violence and organized crime, forcing the police to become more and more robust. According to some respondents this leads to a militarization of the police in both equipment and language, making community policing more difficult.

Negative effects

A changing domestic role of the armed forces, leading to hybridization and more immersion of civil and military domains, may have negative effects as well that may not be immediately visible. When speaking about 'militarization', in western liberal democracies the tendency is to think about tasks: soldiers in the streets, or police officers that look and act like soldiers. However, militarization may also take place in less visible ways. For example, chapter 7 shows that the Finnish armed forces are immersed in society, public administration and government strategy and the law. They lead the Security Committee, organize the *National Defence Courses*, influence a large percentage of males through conscription and, according to respondents, are a very influential actor in the security domain. In fact, the only domain where the FDF does not have a large role is in the performance of specific tasks. Though, in name, the Finnish model has developed from 'total defense' to 'comprehensive security', the position of the Ministry of Defense and the FDF remain strong (Valtonen & Branders, 2021; Virta & Branders, 2016). The new Swedish government has taken measures increasing the position of the Ministry of Defense as well. It has decided to move the responsibility for civilian defense and crisis preparedness from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Defense. A new minister for civil defense at that ministry is responsible for those tasks (Kristersson, 2022). Whether

this is a form of 'necessary' or 'surplus' militarization (Schulzke, 2018) is an interesting question to study in the coming years of the new government.

Following this line of thinking, some authors state that an increased dependence of civil authorities on the armed forces could upset the balance between civil and military authorities, and various respondents in all three countries have also referred to this risk as is evidenced by the 'mixed attitudes' factor influencing the domestic role of the military that was found in each case study (Kalkman, 2019; Zijderveld & Van Vark, 2025). In this respect, path dependence theory is of relevance as well. Chapter 2 has described several countries in Latin America where path dependence has led to both a growing involvement of the armed forces in domestic security and a militarization of the police. Sometimes there have been short positive effects on crime rates, but generally public security has worsened, and levels of violence have only gone up. The situation in European liberal democracies is very different, but at the same time we have seen that various countries have struggled with scaling down the domestic use of the armed forces after an incident. France and Belgium after the terrorist attacks of 2015 and 2016 stand out in this respect (Claerman, 2018). To avoid path dependence taking place, an adequate exit strategy seems to be an important precondition.

A third line of arguments about negative effects focuses on institutional interests. After the end of the Cold War, armed forces in many western liberal democracies were looking for new roles and purposes. As was discussed in chapter 2, some authors claim they framed security threats in certain ways to further their own institutional interests. Authors such as Bigo see the growth of gendarmeries as evidence for this and are of the opinion that this hybrid model is a form of immersion that should be avoided in a liberal democracy as it would further the armed forces institutional interests (Bigo, 2001, 2006; Bigo & Tsoukala, 2008). As described in chapter 6, this line of thinking has been influential in Sweden, where the authorities wish to keep a strict separation between agencies. On the other hand, as discussed above, the consequence of this strict separation has been a certain militarization of the police in response to new security threats involving high levels of violence, in particular gang violence. There are some indications for institutional interests playing a role in the case of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee as well (Van Vark & Beuving, 2022).

A fourth line of arguments concerns the balance in liberal democracy between order and legitimacy. As was described in chapter 4, based on the work of Weiss, liberal democracies need to maintain both order and legitimacy. To keep legitimacy with the public, the police aim to de-escalate and use minimum force and police work is heavily regulated in the law. The armed forces on the other hand need to have what is called

'escalation dominance' for them to be able to win a war and that may include the use of maximum force. Weiss argues that because of this, they cannot be expected to have the same sensitivities to civil liberties as the police which is why there should be care in using the armed forces for domestic tasks, especially where there is contact with the public, such as in public order management (T. Weiss, 2011, 2013). This line of argument was used by many of the Swedish respondents.

On the other hand, some of the Dutch respondents are not convinced this supposed 'military mindset' really exists, claiming that violence is a last resort for the armed forces as well, while the police can use violence if necessary. Others argue that an increased use of the armed forces, for example in the fight against organized crime, could lead to more legitimacy as well (Muller, 2006). These arguments are used in the Dutch case study where respondents see a disconnect between the armed forces and society and expect that a larger domestic role could lead to more support in society. In Sweden as well, some respondents support this position. Interestingly, as the Swedish case study shows, public opinion is quite positive about a larger domestic role for the armed forces, especially in the fight against organized crime and in crisis management (Berndtsson et al., 2021; Weibull, 2005).

The final chapter of this dissertation will come back to the research question and sub-questions identified in chapter 1, providing an answer to these questions and insight into the theoretical contributions of this research. Furthermore, it will identify the limitations of the research, provide suggestions for further research and identify some practical implications.