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Contemporary EU: a New Era of Security and Defence Policies?

Bachelor's thesis in European Studies with English

Supervisor: Michael J. Geary

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Abstract

This thesis examines the changes in the public discourse surrounding European Security and Defence policies in Denmark and Ireland, specifically in response to the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. By analysing Eurobarometer surveys and country reports, this study demonstrates that while Denmark and Ireland were historically non-participatory and neutral in their approach to European defence policies, their attitudes changed significantly in response to the perceived threat posed by the Russian actions.

Denmark cancelled its defence opt-out in 2022, while Ireland -despite a long tradition of neutrality- participated in and helped establish PESCO in 2017. The analysis suggests that while there were some minor changes in discourse after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the discourse around European security and defence policies was drastically impacted by the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The study argues that the changing perceptions of threat within the European continent, brought on by the Russian actions, increased support for further security and defence cooperation. The paper concludes that there has indeed been changes in public discourse on policy positions in Denmark and Ireland, and that these shifts could have wider implications for the future of European security and defence policies.

Keywords: public discourse, security and defence policies, non-participation, neutrality, perceptions, defensive cooperation.

Sammendrag

Denne tesen undersøker endringene i den offentlige diskursen rundt Europeisk Sikkerhets- og Forsvarspolitik i Danmark og Irland, spesielt som svar på den Russiske annekteringen av Krim i 2014 og invasjonen av Ukraina i 2022. Ved å analysere Eurobarometer-undersøkelser og landrapporter, viser denne studien at mens Danmark og Irland historisk sett har vært ikke-deltakende og nøytral i sin tilnærming til europeisk forsvarspolitik, endret holdningene deres betydelig som svar på den antatte trusselen fra de russiske handlingene.

Danmark avskaffet sitt forsvarsforbehold i 2022, mens Irland -til tross for en lang tradisjon med nøytralitet- deltok i og bidro til å etablere PESCO i 2017. Analysen antyder at selv om det var noen mindre endringer i diskursen etter annekteringen av Krim i 2014, så ble diskursen rundt europeisk sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitik drastisk påvirket av invasjonen av Ukraina i 2022.

Studien argumenterer for at den endrede oppfatningen av trussel på det europeiske kontinentet, forårsaket av de russiske handlingene, økte støtten til et videre sikkerhets- og forsvarssamarbeid. Artikkelen konkluderer med det har vært endringer i den offentlige diskursen om politiske posisjoner i Danmark og Irland, og at disse endringene kan ha bredere implikasjoner for fremtiden til europeisk sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitik.

Nøkkelord: offentlig diskurs, sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitik, ikke-deltakelse, nøytralitet, oppfatninger, forsvarssamarbeid

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List of Abbreviations

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	The Common Security and Defence Policy
EEAS	European External Action Service
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EU BG	European Union Battlegroups
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
WEU	Western European Union

1. Introduction

Over the past nine years, Europe has experienced significant political turbulence, in the form of the Russian annexation of Crimea, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the most recent war in Ukraine. Feelings must have been running high among people in Europe during this period, but have these feelings gone further than angry thoughts and harsh words?

Recent changes in discourse surrounding European security and defence policies in response to these events can be seen in both different research articles and surveys. Denmark, for its part, recently voted to end its 30-year opt-out from the EU's common security and defence policy (Roy & Ortolani, 2022, p. 6), and Ireland has been participating in defence cooperation through PESCO for quite a few years now, which in itself could reflect a shift away from their earlier neutrality policy. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) aim to promote and strengthen security, as well as being platforms from which to develop of European strategic culture, protect the union, strengthen peace and security, and address different conflicts and crises (Services for Foreign Policy Instruments, n.d.; European External Action Service, 2021; Legrand, 2022). Denmark has historically been more willing than not in their participation in CFSP (Olsen & Pilegaard, 2005, p. 345), but has demonstrated a 'non-commitment' policy in debates related to the Common Security and Defence policy (CSDP), as well as in the earlier version of CSDP, European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). This 'non-participation' forced them to give up their most crucial instrument of influence, coalition power (Olsen & Pilegaard, 2005, p. 345). The Irish policy of neutrality has traditionally meant non-membership in military alliances (Devine, 2011, p.343), but the country seems to have changed recently, arguing that PESCO does in fact not challenge this stance (Flynn, 2018, p. 77-78).

These developments suggest a changing landscape of European integration, and further observation is needed to understand their implications, thus, looking at the most recent history of the European continent, what influence has the annexation of Crimea and the Invasion of Ukraine had on the development of the public discourse surrounding EU security and defence policies in Denmark and Ireland?

This thesis aims to examine the development of changes in the public discourse on European security and defence policies in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea, and the invasion of Ukraine, with a specific focus on Denmark and Ireland. The study is relevant as it may have implications for the future of the European Union and the political landscape of European and its neighbouring countries, and is written through the anticipation that recent political turbulence, especially the Russo-Ukrainian War, has led to a more positive development in the discourse surrounding security and defence cooperation in Denmark and Ireland.

To achieve this aim, the thesis is structured as follows. In part 2 of this thesis, we provide a brief overview of research surrounding key EU policies such as the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). We will be reviewing the existing research on the discourse surrounding security and defence policies in Denmark and Ireland, identifying key themes and patterns in the public debate on this issue, as well as previous research surrounding social constructivism in the context of security and

defence policies. Following this, we will outline our research methodology, explaining the qualitative approach we have adopted, as well as explaining the methods we have used to collect and analyse the data. Towards the end of this part, we will discuss the limitations and challenges of our approach, and the steps we have taken to ensure the reliability and validity of our findings.

In part 3 of the thesis, we present the key findings on the changes in discourse surrounding the European security and defence policies in Denmark and Ireland following the annexation and invasion. By the use of three country reports, and a fair amount of Eurobarometer surveys, we should be able to thoroughly conceptualize the changes in public discourse over time, both on a European level and on a national level. Each relevant finding will be followed up with a comprehensive analysis and discussion, which will be given throughout this part, so as to later attempt to arrive to the most probable conclusion for our research question, before we finally consider the limitations of our study, such as sample size and measuring difficulties.

Finally, in part 4, we draw together the key findings of our study and provide a summary of our main conclusions. We highlight the contributions of our study to the existing literature on European security and defence policies and offer suggestions for further research in this area and offer recommendations for policymakers seeking to promote greater European defence cooperation in the future. All of this will be based on our analysis of the factors that influence public attitudes towards European defence initiatives. We conclude the thesis by emphasizing the importance of understanding changes in discourse surrounding European defence initiatives, and the need for continued research and policy action to address the challenges facing European security in the years ahead.

2. The Theoretical Considerations

In this section, we will examine the current state of research on the discourse surrounding European security and defence policies. We will look at some of the different policies entailed, as well as research surrounding the developments in Danish and Irish opinions on this matter.

We begin by exploring the key concepts related to European security and defence policies, such as the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Following this we will be examining the existing literature on how different member states have responded to the changing security landscape in Europe, and how their attitudes towards European security and defence policies have evolved as a response to this.

In particular, we focus on the cases of Denmark and Ireland. Through a detailed analysis of the relevant literature, we aim to shed light on the factors shaping the discourse surrounding European security and defence policies, and how this discourse has evolved over time.

2.1 EU Security and Defence: Frameworks and Policies

Before we can go into depth on the discourse surrounding European security and defence policy we need to first understand the basic history, structure and theories surrounding these policies.

Where better to begin, than with the more “recent” creation of the EEAS, which has been a significant step towards furthering EU foreign policy governance (Murdoch, 2012, p. 1012). The establishment of this service in 2010 demonstrated the commitment within EU Member States to further promote peace, prosperity and security on a global scale (European External Action Service, 2021). The EEAS consists of two policies that are of particular significance in this context: The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Whereas the CFSP seeks to maintain international peace and strengthen its security as long as it is consistent with the values stated in the UN Charter (Services for Foreign Policy Instruments, n.d.; European External Action Service, 2021), CSDP, previously known as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), provides a policy framework for Member States through which they are able to develop a more common European strategic culture of security and defence to better safeguard their citizens and the union itself, to promote global peace and security, and to jointly address international conflicts and crises (Legrand, 2022).

CFSP, the older of the two policies, has been alive since the ‘Maastricht Treaty’ in 1993 as an integral part of the ‘three-pillar structure’ (Malovec, 2022), with the hopes of “harmonizing the foreign policy of its members” (Ruiz, Hainaut, Schiffino, 2016, p. 777), as well as having the function of being a “domain of intergovernmental politics between member states” (Karampekios, Oikonomou & Carayannis, 2012, p. 21). The main aims of this policy were stated in Malovec’s (2022) article as a set of goals to sustain peace and security, as well as “promoting international cooperation and developing and

consolidating democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". In short, CFSP is a vital tool for the EU to protect and promote European values and interests outside its borders, which have significant implications for the global impact and foreign relations of the union.

The CSDP was described and established in 2009, sixteen years after the Maastricht treaty as a result of The Treaty of Lisbon (Legrand, 2022; Malovec, 2022). To say it was created that would not be completely correct either as it was simply a continuation of the already existing ESDP, which had been created ten years earlier (Ruiz et al., 2016, p. 777). The CFSP utilizes the CSDP as a mechanism for developing a European strategic culture as well as for improving the security and defence capabilities of Member States, for the protection of its citizens through collaborative efforts, and for making contributions towards the promotion of international peace and security (Legrand, 2022). This strengthens the Union's security and defence capabilities considerably, as well as enhancing its global influence, and enables it to respond more effectively to security challenges at home and abroad.

The difference between the two might be hard to recognise, but in all simplicity, the CSDP focuses specifically on military and defence topics, while the CFSP has a much broader spectre of issues.

2.2 Denmark: The Hesitant Participant

Ever since the implementation of the Maastricht treaty in 1993, Denmark has been actively involved in the procedures surrounding most CFSP policies (Olsen & Pilegaard, 2005, p. 345). This however, changed after the introduction of the ESDP, wherein they chose to give up their "most crucial instrument of influence – namely coalition power – by manifesting 'non-commitment'" (Olsen & Pilegaard, 2005, p. 345), achieving an 'opt-out' of the defence policies of the Maastricht treaty because of Danish concerns regarding a future 'EU army' (Olsen & Pilegaard, 2005, p. 340 & 345). This had in truth been their stance ever since 93, where the Danish had made an agreement internally to remain uninvolved in the defence policy dimensions that includes "membership in WEU and a common defence policy or common defence" (Ryborg, 1998, as cited in Larsen, 2007, p. 84). Denmark's new position had as a result of this the effect of limiting their ability to shape EU security and defence policies, which in turn diminished their role as a security actor, and potentially weakened their capacity to address security issues.

Support towards ESDP however, started to grow within the Danish government after 1995 when discussions around the Petersberg military tasks popped up (Larsen, 2007, p. 85). These tasks became the priority tasks of the ESDP in 1999 and covered "humanitarian operations and rescue operations, peacekeeping tasks and missions involving combat troops in crisis management including peacemaking" (Olsen & Pilegaard, 2005, p. 345). Larsen (2007) further tells us that the development seen within the ESDP during the early 2000s "increased tension between the general Danish support of the EU's role in the field of security including the ESDP and the Danish ability to take part in this development concretely" (p. 87). This may refer to the establishment of the EU Battlegroups (EU BG) in 2004, as mentioned in Olsen & Pilegaard (2005) which was "marked as an important development of the ESDP" (p. 346). This slow but steady growth

in support towards ESDP marks a shift in the Danish positions on European defence policies, which seems to have been accentuated in the 2000s with the establishment of the EU BG, creating tension within the Danish population about the amount of participation in the ESDP, or rather lack thereof, and their lack of developing the policy decisions within it. Thus, while the Danish government and population showed greater support for the ESDP, their decision of opting out of defensive policymaking within the EU after the Treaty of Maastricht would surely continue to impair their ability to integrate into the ESDP.

In general, it seems as Larsen (2007) indicated in his chapter, that the policy lines towards European security and defence only could be seen as a field of division (p. 88). This is complemented throughout the rest of the chapter, which in its entirety suggest that Denmark's position with regards to European defence policies has undergone noticeable changes over time, and that even if these positions have experienced fluctuations, it is indicated that there has been a gradual rise in support which have in turn been halted due to their opt-out decision from the outset.

2.3 Ireland: From staunch neutrality to ardent engagement?

Ireland has a long history of neutrality, being "one of only two EU members which have not joined and do not plan to join NATO (along with Austria)" (Oxenford, 2022, p. 5). What kind of neutrality was defined in Devine (2011), where he came with an example of an earlier definition of neutrality, showing it as "non-membership of a military alliance", which naturally included NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) (p.343). He further shows that this definition was redefined in 2004, now being defined as "non-membership of 'pre-existing military alliances with mutual *automatic* obligations'" (Devine, 2011, p. 345). It is important to take this neutrality into consideration, as it had been a defining factor in the questions on defence and security issues. The political party of Dáil Éireann, stated that "a common foreign policy is incompatible with our neutrality" (Dáil Éireann, 1977-8, as cited in Devine, 2011, p. 346). It is not too hard to understand Ireland's wish for autonomy and neutrality as is underpinned by their earlier hostile history with their closest neighbour, the United Kingdom (Meijer & Wyss, 2018, p. 402).

It seemed clear that Irish participation, even in the CFSP would be limited at best, remaining independent in their judgement and being free to carve out the best course for Ireland (Cowen, 2003, as cited in Devine, 2011, p. 344). This had been a talking point ever since Ireland started pursuing membership in the EEC, having already back then become "apparent [...] that neutrality represented a 'special problem'" (Devine, 2011, p. 339). As Ireland eventually joined and participated in the CSDP, the definitions of neutrality as set by Dáil Éireann became rather restricted throughout the years, to "non-participation in a military alliance through a common defence clause" (Doherty, 2002; Ferreira-Pereria, 2007, as cited in Rayroux, 2014, p. 393). This step away from the neutrality policy changed even further, to the point where it was almost no longer a discussion point at the negotiations surrounding the establishment of the Lisbon Treaty (Rayroux, 2014, p. 398).

Still, while Ireland seems to remain cautious in the CSDP, they have a history with other earlier neutral states of considerable engagement in UN peacekeeping missions

(Meijer & Wyss, 2018, p. 854 & 857), which is in accordance with the notion of idealism and active neutrality (Rayroux, 2014, p. 390).

Some might believe that the choice of joining the PESCO in 2017 would breach Ireland's neutrality stance, even if it is a framework for voluntary engagement in security and defence. As the Permanent Structured Cooperation Secretariat (n.d.) explains, PESCO is designed to "engage – on a voluntary basis – [...] in the area of security and defence". However, as Flynn (2018) puts it, "from an Irish perspective, PESCO is not a defence pact with a strict obligation to defend each other, such as NATO offers via its Article 5" (p. 77), and therefore "does not challenge Ireland's policy of neutrality, or non-alignment" (p. 78).

Despite ongoing discourse on neutrality and security, particularly in relation to NATO, public support for participation in any sort of defence alliance remains unchanged even in the wake of the war in Ukraine (Oxenford, 2022, p. 5).

2.4 Social constructivist theory on defence and security policies

Social Constructivism is one of the main theoretical frameworks within the field of International Relations (IR), among other schools of thought like liberalism and realism. The school of thought that is constructivism "argues that the structure shapes the identity of the agents - actors - and the choices available to them; but the structure is also a result of actors' constitutive identities" (Giegerich, 2006, as cited in Larivé, 2014, p. 36). What is here meant by structure and agents are institutions (Risse, 2009, p. 147) and human agency, which in itself "creates, reproduces, and changes culture through our daily practices" (Risse, 2009, p. 146).

According to social constructivists, one cannot understand the relationship between these actors and structures without taking constitutive theory into consideration. This theory "explicitates the rules governing social situations, showing how actors can engage in certain practices in certain contexts, and how these practices instantiate the rules" (Wendt, 1991, as cited in Brown & Ainley, 2009 p. 68).

Turning to the CSDP, social constructivism offers a view that "Preferences and interests, rather than being predefined as rational, are in fact socially constructed through different networks of interactions among agents" (Larivé, 2014, p. 37). It thus "opens the door to new explanatory factors by looking at the "interaction between ideas, discourses, preferences and interests across different levels of governance"" (Meyer and Stickmann, 2011, as cited in Larivé, 2014, p. 37).

To illustrate this point, consider the end of the Cold War as an example. The perception of threat eventually "contributed to the decision to create an autonomous EU defense component, the ESDP, in order to tackle the emerging regional and international threats" (Larivé, 2014, p. 38). The reasoning behind this, is that, as constructivists claim, "that "critical juncture", crisis or political failure, lead to a challenge of existing norms" (Hyde-Rice and Jeffery, 2001, as cited in Larivé, 2014, p. 37), which again can lead to changes within the policy of structure that is the EU.

2.5 Methodology

The objective of this thesis is to examine the changing developments in the discourse surrounding European security and defence policies in the wake of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Invasion of Ukraine in 2022, with a particular focus on the cases of Denmark and Ireland. In order to achieve this aim, I have adopted a qualitative research approach that draws on one of its main methods, discourse analysis.

2.5.1 Case selection

This research utilizes discourse analysis to examine surveys of public discourses on security and defence within Denmark and Ireland, with the aim of analysing recent developments in discourse and opinions made by these countries. Given the focus on exploring changes in discourse since 2014 and through 2022, discourse analysis is the most appropriate method for this study.

This type of analysis also complements the theories surrounding social constructivism, by going off the idea that “‘Things’ do not have meaning in and of themselves; they only become meaningful in discourse” (Wæver, 2009, p. 164). The main goal of a discourse analysis is to analyse how the political debate is shaped by underlying structures and patterns within public statements to formulate a narrative where some statements will be given greater weight, while rendering others meaningless or less impactful (Wæver, 2009, p. 165).

The chosen cases in this thesis are Denmark and Ireland, because they lie at the extremities when considering European security and defence policies, and thus have the biggest chances of contributing the most notable developments in public opinion and discourse on these policy areas. Both countries have for a long time been either cautious towards, or straight out non-participatory towards CSDP. The choice was also made considering the recent developments in and choices made by the governments in each country, that highlighted the need to look deeper into why they were made, and how it happened.

2.5.2 Data Collection and Analysis

To gain a comprehensive understand of public discourse surrounding the EU security and defence policies, the thesis draws on three country reports for Denmark and Ireland, as well as Eurobarometer surveys such as the “Standard Eurobarometer”, “Flash Eurobarometer”, and the “Special Eurobarometer of the European Parliament”. These datasets provide valuable insights into changes in public discourse over time, particularly attitudes towards EU security and defence policy cooperation in response to Russian aggression towards Ukraine. The survey questions also explore public concerns about future threats. The findings from these surveys and datasets will complement existing literature on the topic, further enhancing the analysis of changes on discourse surrounding security and defence policies.

2.5.3 Limitations and Challenges

Discourse analysis do however have some limitations that we need to make clear. Wæver (2009) explained what the most crucial limitation of this sort of analysis, describing it as being “problematic to ground one’s analysis in ‘given’ subjects or objects because both are constituted discursively” (Wæver, 2009, p. 164). Considering this, as well as earlier descriptions of discourse analysis, it will inevitably suffer from inherent bias, both in the collection of data and in the analysis of the collected data.

3. Recent Developments and Their Implications

This section will address the research question and statement by presenting different data and surveys. We will be analysing these surveys and the data given to find out whether there had been noticeable changes in discourses on EU security and defence policies following the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. The analysis is limited to the two Member States, Denmark and Ireland, and will have a consistent and clear presentation, highlighting the key findings and interpreting their implications.

3.1 Developments of Public Discourse in Denmark and Ireland

Starting with Denmark, we can see that the discourse surrounding the concept of European defence cooperation is shown to change marginally after the Russian annexation of Crimea back in 2014, but still being negative towards joining it. In the country report (Smith, 2015) conducted in the January following the annexation, it is shown that Denmark was "less likely to rescind its EU exemptions on defence or monetary union" (p. 4). One year later, in the subsequent January country report (Haralambous, 2016), it was shown that it was now 'unlikely' that Denmark would join the defence union (p. 4). This sentiment must clearly have changed after the most recent invasion of Ukraine, seeing how "on June 1st Denmark voted in a referendum to join the common EU defence and security policy, ending its 30-year opt-out" (Roy & Ortolani, 2022, p. 6).

Ireland on the other hand, does not mention a defence union or any sort of security issues in their country reports in 2015 and 2016. In one of their most recent country reports written by Oxenford (2022), they focus less on common security and defence policies and instead state that Ireland is unlikely to join NATO as a continuation of their policy of neutrality (p. 5).

The two country reports from Denmark in the two years following the annexation of Crimea thus show minimal change. The 2015 emphasis on 'less likely' compared to the 2016 emphasis on 'unlikely' could indicate a minor change in Danish attitudes toward their participation in European security and defence policies immediately following the incident, but they reverted back to their old status quo of seeing it as 'unlikely' in 2016. This clearly implies that Danish policymakers were reluctant to take significant action in response to the annexation, remaining content with their former approaches towards security and defence policies. This data deviates from our initial assumptions that the annexation would have a "positive" impact on the development of public discourse surrounding security and defence policies in Denmark, however our current data shows us that the annexation had no effect development of public discourse at all.

It is clear that the annexation of Crimea had little to no impact on the discourses surrounding CSDP within Denmark. However, their cancellation of the defence opt-out in 2022 following the war in Ukraine is a clear sign that there was a sudden tremendous change in attitudes towards defence policies within Denmark. This suggests that the conflict developed such an intense threat perception within Denmark, increasing their willingness to engage in contemporary and future EU defence initiatives through the

CSDP. This is more in line with our anticipation, because even if the annexation did not seem to generate enough incentives within Denmark to consider participation in the CSDP, the invasion in 2022 certainly did.

In the case of Ireland, their 2015 country report did not mention security and defence policies, indicating that the importance of this issue was next to nothing at that time. Neither did its 2022 country report show any sign of specifically CSDP-related issues, but noted that, even after the outbreak of war, Ireland was unlikely to join NATO. The fact that there are no mentions of CSDP in Ireland's case is that they already participated to some degree in the CSDP and thus they would not need to comment on it. On the other hand, they do seem to maintain the tradition of neutrality they have kept since the end of the Cold War. It is clear that Ireland places a high value on their neutrality, as it would through these reports seem that little interest was put on security and defence policies among the Irish population. This contrasts our anticipations that there would be positive development in Ireland as well.

During the same period, Eurobarometer surveys did not address issues related to security and defence. This is evident in one of the only questions that could have shown a connection between the Russian annexation of Crimea and public opinion on EU security and defence policies, which was not asked in either 2015 or 2016 surveys. In similar vein at the same period of time, the issues concerning defence and security was not even mentioned in these surveys as can be seen in *figure 1* below.

QA6 What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?

	Economic situation	Unemployment	The state of Member States public finances	Immigration	Rising prices/inflation	EU's influence in the world	Crime	Terrorism	Energy supply	Climate change	Taxation	The environment	Pensions
EU28	39%	34%	25%	21%	10%	8%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	3%
BE	39%	36%	21%	21%	10%	8%	16%	11%	5%	7%	5%	6%	5%
BG	34%	18%	14%	28%	5%	10%	6%	8%	9%	5%	2%	7%	2%
CZ	28%	24%	30%	21%	13%	11%	11%	11%	8%	4%	3%	7%	5%
DK	42%	42%	18%	21%	3%	10%	14%	6%	5%	15%	1%	11%	1%
DE	33%	30%	42%	28%	9%	8%	9%	4%	9%	6%	2%	4%	3%
EE	34%	16%	31%	21%	9%	16%	5%	8%	11%	1%	4%	4%	4%
IE	45%	40%	22%	10%	13%	7%	9%	5%	4%	4%	11%	4%	2%
EL	44%	37%	30%	18%	8%	13%	8%	5%	3%	3%	6%	4%	2%
ES	52%	40%	26%	13%	9%	6%	4%	2%	3%	2%	6%	2%	3%
FR	46%	35%	23%	16%	10%	11%	6%	10%	7%	5%	4%	8%	3%
HR	38%	33%	25%	14%	11%	12%	12%	5%	5%	6%	3%	3%	1%
IT	45%	53%	16%	25%	12%	4%	4%	4%	2%	1%	16%	2%	4%
CY	54%	54%	19%	15%	5%	7%	15%	7%	1%	2%	3%	1%	0%
LV	33%	17%	28%	22%	10%	9%	7%	7%	8%	5%	7%	4%	4%
LT	28%	15%	27%	21%	14%	10%	11%	9%	11%	5%	8%	2%	2%
LU	26%	48%	19%	18%	12%	9%	10%	4%	6%	6%	5%	7%	5%
HU	34%	29%	31%	19%	12%	10%	13%	7%	9%	6%	4%	4%	4%
MT	30%	26%	15%	55%	5%	3%	7%	4%	5%	5%	1%	5%	3%
NL	49%	36%	31%	27%	6%	15%	6%	5%	4%	5%	2%	4%	1%
AT	31%	32%	35%	18%	13%	11%	11%	2%	4%	8%	6%	9%	5%
PL	26%	26%	21%	15%	10%	10%	4%	8%	11%	4%	3%	4%	5%
PT	42%	47%	32%	8%	14%	4%	5%	3%	1%	2%	8%	0%	4%
RO	26%	22%	14%	14%	18%	6%	16%	10%	4%	4%	7%	5%	5%
SI	43%	40%	26%	13%	4%	9%	11%	3%	3%	5%	6%	4%	2%
SK	36%	34%	26%	9%	16%	9%	12%	10%	8%	3%	5%	6%	6%
FI	40%	31%	36%	15%	9%	11%	9%	5%	9%	11%	4%	7%	2%
SE	40%	37%	19%	18%	0%	7%	6%	2%	9%	25%	2%	25%	1%
UK	33%	26%	11%	29%	8%	9%	5%	7%	6%	5%	3%	3%	2%

1st MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONNED ITEM
 2nd MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONNED ITEM
 3rd MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONNED ITEM

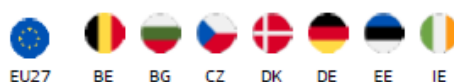
Figure 1: The two most important issues facing the EU in spring 2014

Source: European Commission (2014)

There are not many issues relating to security and defence or foreign affairs, other than “EU’s influence in the world”, and as one can clearly see, the importance of that issue is almost non-existent throughout the union, including Denmark and Ireland, being the formers 7th most pressing issue with 10% importance and the latter’s 8th most pressing issue with 7% importance.

This issue named “EU’s influence in the world” would be the only indication of any foreign issue that might concern Europeans in these surveys throughout the new few years. This trend would see fluctuations in the following years, showing a Danish 14% and Irish 10% in 2018 (European Commission, 2018, p. 7), a Danish 11% and Irish 16% in 2019 (European Commission, 2019, p. 19), and reaching no higher than 20% until 2022, with the peak being 19% in Denmark in 2021-2022 (European Commission, 2022a, p. 25), and 16% in Ireland in 2021 (European Commission, 2021, p. 24).

This disinterest changed quite radically in 2022. Where there had earlier only been “EU’s influence in the world”, there was now another issue named “The international issue” as well. Whether this new issue came as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine or not, is uncertain, but the war certainly entails this issue. The radical change will be shown under in *Figure 2*.



	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE
Rising prices/ inflation/ cost of living	34	34	31	42	33	40	29	47
Energy supply	28	33	26	46	32	37	45	33
The international situation	28	23	34	36	41	29	43	20
The environment and climate change	20	24	6	10	32	24	6	21
Economic situation	19	18	24	19	14	15	18	18
The state of Member States public finances	13	12	8	9	7	15	8	9
Immigration	13	19	24	20	13	11	19	11
EU's influence in the world	8	8	10	5	11	9	5	8
Health	7	5	5	1	2	2	2	7
Unemployment	5	4	3	1	1	2	2	4
Crime	4	5	3	1	2	2	2	3
Terrorism	4	3	3	1	4	3	3	8
Taxation	3	3	1	0	1	1	2	2
Pensions	3	4	3	2	1	2	1	1
Don't know	1	0	3	1	1	0	2	1
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
None (SPONTANEOUS)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1st MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ITEM
 2nd MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ITEM
 3rd MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ITEM

Figure 2: The two most important issues facing the EU in the summer of 2022

Source: European Commission (2022c)

With the appearance of this new issue variable, the importance of international affairs suddenly spiked, with the issue being ranked as Denmark’s number one priority issue with an astonishing 41% perceived importance, while Ireland did not spike as strongly, but still ranked it as its fourth most pressing issue with a 20% perceived importance, just beneath “environment and climate change”. These issues are still holding relatively strong today, with this new issue being ranked as the second most important issue in the Danish discourse, dropping from 41% to 38%, while its importance in Ireland increased to 28% from the previous 20%, making it the country’s second most important issue (European Commission, 2023, p. 44).

It is prudent to remember that all the surveys above reflect the perceived importance of external affairs at the European level. Looking at the latest survey in winter 2022-2023, we see a somewhat different sentiment. *Figures 3 and 4* will be showing Demark and Ireland individually.

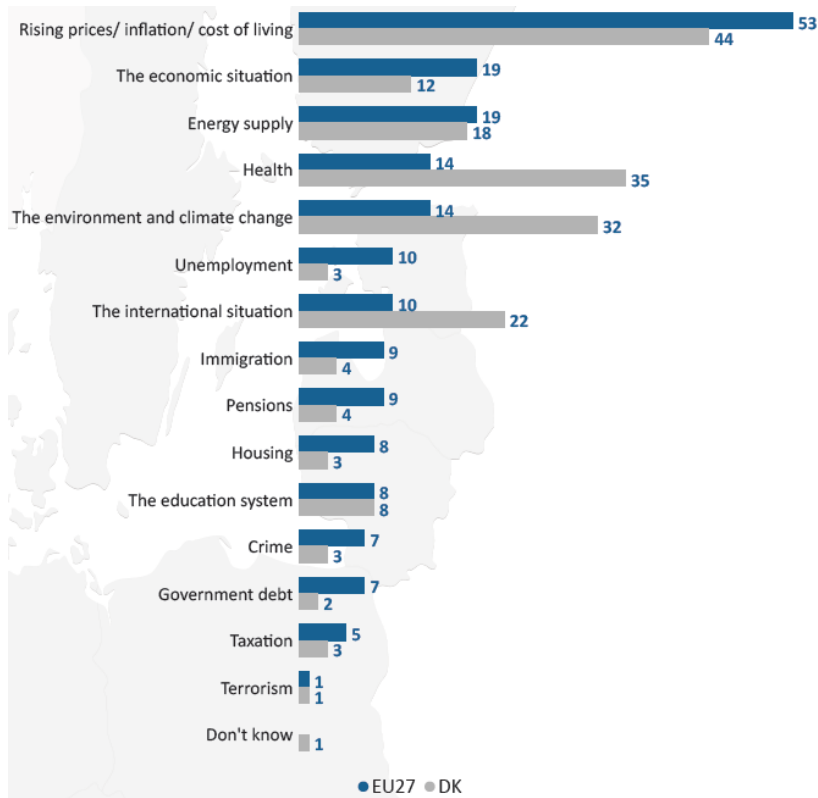


Figure 3: The two most important issues facing Denmark in the winter of 2022-2023

Source: European Commission (2023)

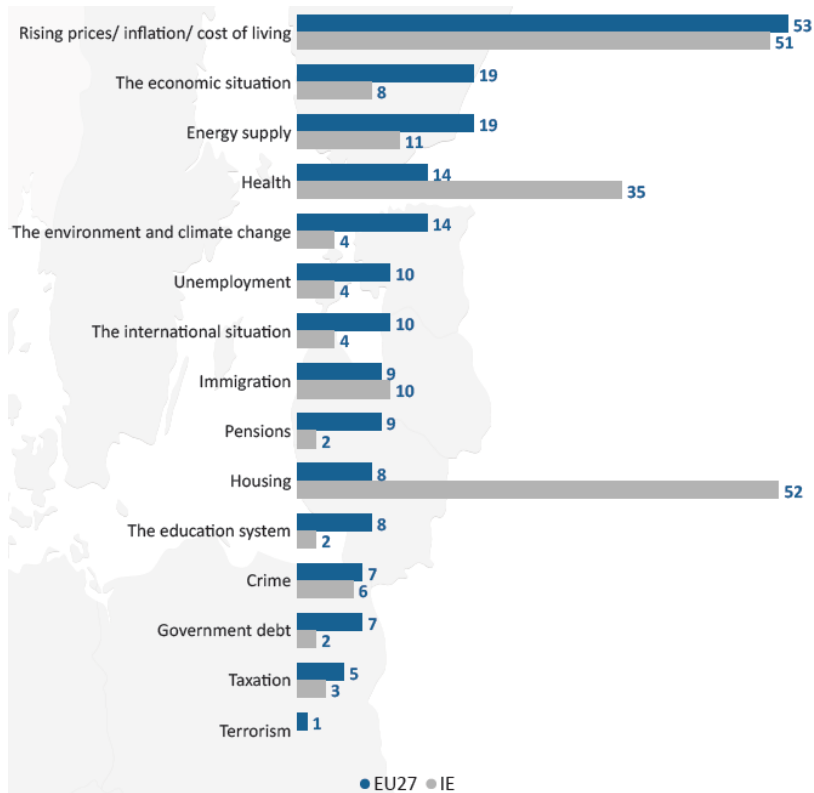


Figure 4: The two most important issues facing Ireland in the winter of 2022-2023

Source: European Commission (2023)

Figures 3 and 4 show us that the issue named “the international situation” is seen as the 4th most important in Denmark and a shared 8th most important issue in Ireland, sharing the podium with “the environment and climate change” and “unemployment”. This is a bit interesting, because a different view can be found under a year earlier, shown in *figures 5 and 6* below.

The results shown in these figures are not surprising. The 2014 and 2022 datasets each lie in the wake of two different crises, with the 2014 survey in *figure 1* indicating the unmistakable signs of the eurozone crisis. At that time, the public opinion is mostly concerned with the economic situation of the union, as well as the unemployment rates. Similarly, *figures 3 and 4* reflect the impact of the COVID-19 recession, which is why issues such as ‘rising prices/inflation/cost of living’ and ‘health’ ranks among top three in both countries. ‘The international situation’ is situated as the 4th and 8th most important issues, indicating that domestic issues clearly outweighed international issues, even after the outbreak of war in Ukraine. However, it is interesting to note that, although the Irish population views ‘Rising prices/inflation/cost of living’ as the most pressing issues in both Ireland and the EU, the Danish population suddenly changed their perceptions and regarded ‘the international situation’ as the most crucial issue facing the EU in the summer of 2022.

This in turn supports what was said in Larsen (2007), of how Danish policy lines towards EU security and defence lies in a limbo of division (p. 88), as well as their ideas that there have been earlier tensions within the Danish population with regards to security and the ESDP (p. 87). It is also complementary to the earlier research surrounding the Irish stance on security and defence policies, seeing as the less importance neutrality policies has within Ireland, the more it is likely for them to engage in further military cooperation on the European level.

This opens the considerations around other factors like, economic recessions, and pandemics on the public opinion, as is shown in these surveys. The data shown in these figures comes somewhat into conflict with our presumed anticipations, by the fact that they indicate a positive development for security and defence policies as an issue only the EU is facing, and only in 2022. When the participants consider their own country however, security and defence policies rank fairly low in both Ireland and Denmark, considering that the war had just started. Yet, it does not break our statement, seeing how a somewhat positive development can be observed, even if it is lacking.

QB6 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.
(%)

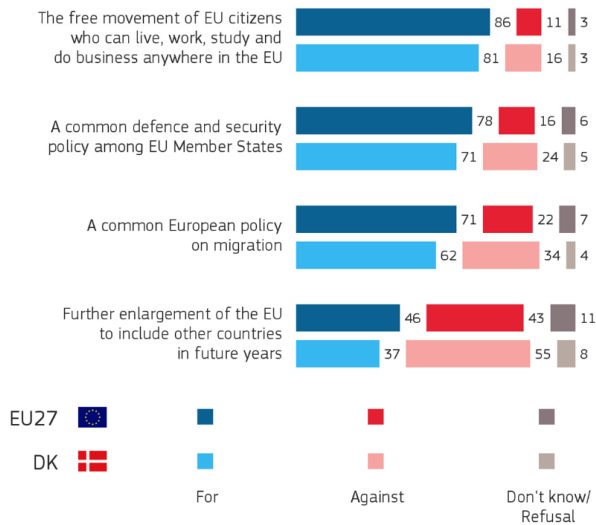


Figure 5: Opinions on broader EU policies in Denmark in the spring of 2021

Source: European Commission (2021)

QB6 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.
(%)

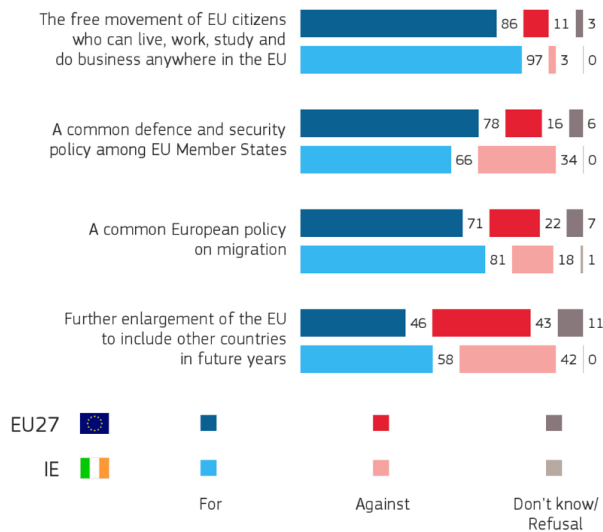


Figure 6: Opinions on broader EU policies in Ireland in the spring of 2021

Source: European Commission (2021)

Figures 5 and 6 demonstrate that Denmark and Ireland both supported a common security and defence policy during the spring of 2021, with 71% and 66% in favour and 24% and 34% in opposition, respectively. It is worth noting that these numbers were collected before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and subsequent surveys showed fluctuations in support. In the summer of 2022, Danish support decreased slightly to 69% in favour and 27% in opposition, while Irish support increased to 73% in favour and 19% in opposition (European Commission, 2022c).

As can be seen in *Figures 5 and 6*, Denmark’s and Ireland’s sudden interest in furthering the CSDP project among EU Member States comes both as expected and not so much. We have already seen that Denmark had shown an extraordinary change by suddenly taking part in the CSDP in 2022, and this survey is complementary to that. However, Ireland shows a sudden support for the expansion of the CSDP as well. It does not indicate much more than earlier however, as they had already for some time taken part, if only on specific issues within the CSDP, so support for the policy does not in itself indicate that they support for expanded defence policy.

These figures also reveal high levels of interest in the CSDP despite being released seven years after the annexation of Crimea and one year before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is peculiar why both cases show such an interest in increased participation in CSDP before the war erupted. While these figures suggest that there was a slight dip in Danish discourse towards a common security and defence policy, while Ireland experienced a contrasting trend with a small spike just after the outbreak of the invasion, the Irish saw a small spike in support instead. How interesting, that Ireland was more supportive towards CSDP in 2022 than Denmark was, yet did not make as drastic changes as their counterpart did. The figures thus conceptualize the highly complex nature of support and action of state is, which not necessarily need a war or a crisis to develop.

Figures 5-6 are, however, a tough nut to crack. It seems to neither completely confirm or contradict our initial assumptions, as it does not specify whether the support is a remnant of the earlier annexation of Crimea or whether it may have come from other external variables, like for example COVID-19. One could look at it one way, that the assumption specifies the Russo-Ukrainian war, whereas you could say that the assumption includes political turbulence, which the pandemic certainly entails. Seeing how it includes other turbulent variables however, we will retain our earlier assumptions.

While these numbers do not necessarily in itself indicate that the support for CSDP in Denmark and Ireland came as a result of the invasion of Ukraine in itself, seeing how support were pretty high even before the war broke out. However, if the reason was something other than Russian aggression before the war, it seemed to have changed after it started as demonstrated in *figures 7 and 8*.

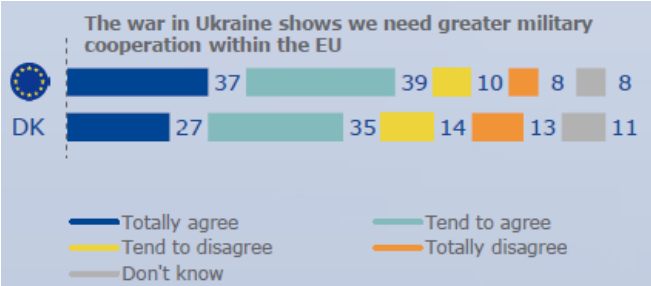


Figure 7: Danish sentiments towards military cooperation in the spring of 2022

Source: European Commission (2022b)

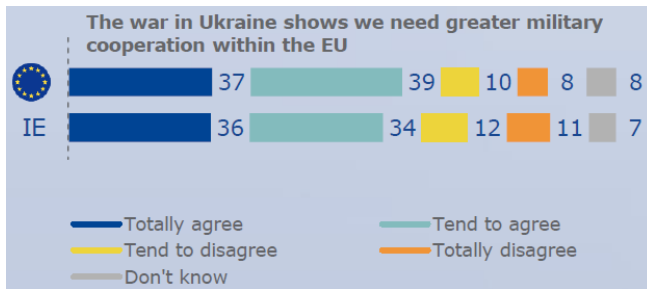


Figure 8: Irish sentiments towards military cooperation in the spring of 2022

Source: European Commission (2022b)

Figures 7 and 8 as shown above demonstrates that participants in both Denmark and Ireland favoured 'greater military cooperation within the EU'. Specifically, the data showed that approximately 62% of participants in Denmark and 70% in Ireland were positive towards this idea. As was shown in figures 5 and 6, public support in favour of CSDP was already equivalent in both cases in 2021. However, in this instance, the question asked specifically about the need for greater military cooperation as a result of the war in Ukraine.

A significant interest is thus shown to have developed among the citizens of Denmark and Ireland with regard to the EU's security and defence cooperation. Even though it is important to take into consideration that the reasons for Denmark and Ireland showing such strong support for CSDP in 2021 cannot be fully determined with certainty, figures 7 and 8 suggest that the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 further consolidated this support, with the war now serving as the prime motivator. While the reason for the initial 2021 support remains uncertain, it would now appear that the main reason for the 2022 support was the war.

These final figures can only indicate that we made an accurate assessment with our initial assumption that recent political turbulence, especially the Russo-Ukrainian War, has led to a more positive development in the discourse surrounding security and defence cooperation in Denmark and Ireland. When comparing the first figures to these last ones, it is clear to us that in 2022, further integration into CSDP is perceived as a result of the war in Ukraine.

3.2 The resulting implications of the data

Looking back at what we have seen so far, can the results answer the question we set out to answer: have the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 Invasion of Ukraine influenced the discourse surrounding security and defence policies in Denmark and Ireland within the context of the EU?

In previous sections, I explored and analysed the changes in the discourse surrounding EU's security and defence policy in Denmark and Ireland as a result of the annexation and the invasion. From our analysis, I can confirm that there have indeed been positive developments in public discourse towards security and defence policies in both cases, as reflected in the Eurobarometer surveys and country reports. While Ireland has remained more cautious in its approach to EU-level initiatives and cooperative

defence efforts, Denmark has shown a greater willingness to engage in such initiatives. In line with social constructivist theory, we understand that these shifts in attitudes are not the result of events or objective facts, but are, as a result of interactions between actors and structures, a product of the social constructions of meaning, which suggest that we view discourse as a socially constructed reality that shapes and is shaped by the actors and institutions evolved (Giegerich, 2006, as cited in Larivé, 2014, p. 36).

This can be seen through my discussion of the country reports and the different surveys. The changes seen in the country reports could indicate that there had arisen a new social reality within Denmark where greater importance was placed on defence cooperation as a response to the new threat brought forth by the invasion, whereas Ireland have had a long social identity as a neutral Member State, which in turn shapes its foreign policy decision. The outbreak of war does not seem to have dented this social construction as it did in Denmark.

The data shown in *figures 1-4* suggests that there is a context-dependence when the meaning and reality of something is shaped, being created through different social contexts. In this instance, the invasion of Ukraine reshaped the reality of EU issues, but not so much domestic issues.

The difference in shaping or reshaping of social identity and reality can very well be the reason for the differing opinions between Denmark and Ireland as a result of the invasion of Ukraine. To explain this pre-war support towards CSDP among Denmark and Ireland, one has to take into consideration how a European might view Europe as a construction. In this instance it would appear that Danish and Irish support towards further integration of CSDP could come from the notion of Europe as a peaceful and cooperative entity, which are ideals Denmark and Ireland are greatly interested in. As for the differing levels of support given throughout the years, they might not be so much a result of material factors, then that of changing social constructions of security and European integration. An explanation for the Danish dip in support in summer 2022 could be that there has since 2021 been a negative shift in the Danish perception towards the CSDP and how it moved forward, whereas the Irish spike may have indicated a perception of external threat, leading to greater support for the project. Even if Danish support towards CSDP in 2022 experienced a minimal dip, it was such a small one that it did not affect the decision to cancel their opt-out that same year.

We can see here *figures 7-8* that individuals' attitudes are not static and has here been changed. What is meant by this is that the data shown might indicate that support is still holding in favour of further military cooperation because the norms and ideas from the previous year has been reinforced and shaped by the war. Another indication of this continued support may be explained in the sense of identity. The strong support for military cooperation could again indicate that Danish and Irish feelings of Europeanness has increased in the last few years, and with increased feelings of a European identity, they might see their security as intertwined with that of the broader Europe.

3.3 Practical Limitations

The scope of this study cannot satisfactorily answer how the conflict between Russia and Ukraine have affected the discourse surrounding European security and defence policies.

There are several limitations to this paper, the first and most notable one being that of the limited time frame. As the war in Ukraine is still ongoing, and may even be so for quite some time, we cannot see the full picture yet, nor can we yet know what will happen or how the discourse on security and defence policies will evolve as the war continues. That is something future researchers can embark on.

The second most crucial limitation is the small sample size of the paper. While Denmark and Ireland are perfectly representative of the different attitudes within the scope of the EU, they are still only two countries of 27, and is not in themselves capable to represent every EU Member State.

Seeing how Denmark and Ireland could be considered somewhat of "extreme" cases in terms of their approach to security and defence policies, one must be very cautious about generalizing the findings to more "harmonious" Member States.

Taking outside variables into account, we must give considerable attention to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which could have had a substantial effect on perceptions and discourses within the EU.

And finally, the choice of the research method of discourse analysis has in itself quite a few limitations. As it is a method within the qualitative approach, it relies on the author's interpretation of the data, who can be subject to bias, both at the data selection phase and at the analysis phase. All of these limitations need to be considered when interpreting the results and the conclusion this paper present.

However, as the research question specifically asks about the period from 2014 to 2022, the results that were given should be adequate enough to; if not fully, then partly explain how discourse have evolved. There is also the fact that one need somewhat "extreme" cases to see notable changes, yes there could have been more harmonized cases involved which would have been preferred, it would have made for a very long paper. As this was a discourse analysis, it would be hard to add the variable of COVID-19, as that would most likely require a more qualitative approach to investigate whether that variable is statistically significant or not.

4. Conclusion

Through thorough analysis of the changes within the discourse surrounding European security and defence policies, this thesis has shown that the discourse within Denmark and Ireland have become favourable towards the policies as a result of recent turbulence in the political climate of the European continent, with specific consideration to the Russo-Ukrainian War.

Through a comprehensive analysis of academic articles in conjunction with Eurobarometer surveys and country reports, this study highlights how and possibly why the recent events in Ukraine have influenced the discourse surrounding security and defence policies and priorities of Denmark and Ireland as a result of the recent aggression from Russia against Ukraine. While the country reports as well as the Eurobarometer survey from 2014 did not yield any positive attitudes towards furthering security and defence policies in either country, it did not mean the result were disappointing for that matter. Later surveys and the country report from 2022 show a steady rise of support in these fields of foreign relations. While the idea that the invasion in 2022 worked as the main instigator towards changes in attitudes toward security and defence policies within Denmark and Ireland, it was shown that the support shown in 2022 and 2023 figures, already took place a year before the invasion, thus raising the question of what might have caused this earlier support.

All these figures can be explained throughs and are supported by theories surrounding social constructivism, which emphasizes the idea that crises and perceptions of threat play a role in the creation and shaping of new social constructions, where in this instance importance was put on defence cooperation in Demark, while Ireland retained their social identity as a neutral state. This notion is further supported throughout the analysis, linking the four first figures to the ideas concerning the importance of how external factors can contribute to changes in the social reality of different populations, depending on the social context they inhabit. The following four figures represents other prominent ideas within constructivist theory, such as how social identity impacts public opinion, as well as how social perception regulate how people viewing social construction such as Europe as a peaceful and cooperative entity. Towards the end, we are given two figures which ties together most of what have been given in earlier figures, showing how a sense of European identity may explain a lot of the decisions and ideas both cases have expressed throughout the paper.

4.1 Implications for future consideration

This study has impressed on me the need for more research surrounding this area of research. As mentioned, this paper has quite a few limitations, marking the need for further studies where for example the scope of the study could be expanded, with the inclusion of one or more cases.

There is also a need to conduct a more quantitative study on this matter where external variables such as for example COVID-19, and income, could be implemented to find out whether or not they had any impact one the public opinions on CSDP.

Later on, after a few years, there should also be studies conducted on the long-term effects of the war on public support towards CSDP and the changes it may have had through the next years.

There could also be more research done, looking at how external factors like NATO shapes the CSDP discourse and implementations among EU Member States, with particular regard to non-NATO members like Ireland and Austria.

Based on the conclusions made in this paper, practitioners should consider increasing their awareness of the public debate when regarding the integration process of the CSDP within the contemporary political landscape. One could also use it to weigh the consequences of possible future questions regarding opt-out of certain policies.

The contributions this study gives to the studies on Member State discourses are significant for the future of EU security and defence policy, especially considering how the war in Ukraine might change the security landscape in Europe. Seeing how the war is still an ongoing issue, there is only so much you can do to truly come to a satisfying conclusion, as of yet. And through the actions made by both Ireland and Denmark, it conveys the need for further research on the role of discourse when considering how security and defence policies are being shaped among Member States, as well as highlighting the need to understand why emerging security threats changes the perception of further EU-level military cooperation and coordination.

4.2 Contemporary contributions

As the research surrounding reactionary discourse on security and defence policy in the EU as a result of Russian aggression in Ukraine is as of yet quite limited, this thesis should be able to contribute new insights into this field, at least in conveying the Danish and Irish stances on the matter. A detailed analysis of the differences and similarities between the evolution of the security and defence discourse of both the Member State have been given in the paper, which could contribute to explain why certain events have taken place in these two countries in the last few years.

4.3 Final words

All things considered, this thesis have helped highlight the complex interplay between national interests, public discourse and EU integration. It has also conveyed that even Member States with long traditions of non-participation on certain security and defence policies, are able to experience changes in its discourses and policy decisions.

The findings of this study suggest that the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 invasion of Ukraine have certainly had an influence on the discourses surrounding European-level security and defence policies within Denmark and Ireland. This thesis, therefore, is able to highlight the necessity to continuously monitor and analyse the discourses surrounding the CSDP among Member States, especially during periods of turbulence and geopolitical instability, so as to grant a greater understanding of the different dynamics that come into play during those times, and how it may be used as information in the establishment of future policy decisions.

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