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**Resilience and International Relations:
A Study of the Impact of Resilience Interpretations on
Russia-NATO Relations and Human Rights.**

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Abstract

In the realm of international relations, *resilience* stands as a complex and pivotal political concept. Article 3 of NATO explicitly calls for member states to build *resilience* against potential threats. The most prominent threat as perceived by NATO is Russia, who also have been forced to adapt a *resilience*-based approach as a result of historical events. This thesis investigates how Russia, NATO, and potential member states interpret *resilience*, probing its impact on Human Rights and inter-state dynamics. Examining diverse perspectives, it reveals NATO and the EU's focus on *resilience* against varied shocks, including countering Russian threats. In this context, the relationship between *resilience* and Human Rights is examined. Contrasting priorities emerge between NATO's democratic principles and Russia's stability-centric approach, highlighting tensions between stability and Human Rights. Uncovering the challenges in applying *resilience*, the inadvertent escalation of tensions due to its focus on *otherness* is emphasized. Based on the analysis carried out in this work, it is likely that political strategies centered around *resilience* will be detrimental with respect to Human Rights.

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1 Introduction

In the complex landscape of international relations, the concept of *resilience* has emerged as a central yet multi-layered political construct. This work aims to explore how the interpretation of *resilience* among global actors, in particular Russia, NATO, and future member states, diverges in terms of the relationships between these actors and their impact on Human Rights. To do so, the following research question is explored: **In what ways does Russia's interpretation of resilience differ from that of NATO and the new member states, and how does this impact relations between these actors and human rights?**

Drawing from two documents, including an unpublished paper on *Resilience in the context of sanctions against Russia* by this author and Julian Reid's publication *Resilient Ukraine* this thesis merges the underlying ideas. Firstly, *resilience* is examined as a political concept, showing its assimilation from various scientific disciplines and its elusive, multifaceted nature lacking a definitive definition in chapter 2. Chapter 3 dissects the diverse understandings of *resilience* among NATO, potential NATO accession countries, and Russia. Each entity's unique historical and contemporary context shapes its perception of *resilience*, which is reflected in their strategies and actions towards potential threats. Chapter 4 navigates the contrasting views on *resilience* among NATO, new member states, and Russia. Highlighting the divergent priorities between NATO's emphasis on democratic principles and collective defense concerning Russia's stability-centric approach, this chapter illuminates the tensions that arise from differing interpretations. In chapter 5, the intricate relationship between Human Rights and *resilience* is delineated, showcasing the clash between prioritizing stability, as envisioned in *resilience*, and upholding universal fundamental rights.

The final discussion points out the intrinsic challenges embedded in interpreting and applying *resilience* within a political or Human Rights context. The inadvertent escalation of tensions due to the inherent emphasis on *otherness* within the core of the *resilience* concept is underlined.

2 A Closer Look into Resilience

The concept of *resilience* is intricate and cannot be simplified into one definition. Different fields have their own interpretations of the term. Not only multiple meanings exist, but these may even be contradictory.¹ Generally, *resilience* refers to the ability to adapt, recover, and thrive in the face of adversity, stress, or change.² But also in the political sphere different countries, political systems, and individuals will have their own understanding of the term. The pluralistic character of *resilience* impacts discourses and practices surrounding it.³ It is important to understand that “discourses and practices of *resilience* can carry multiple logics”⁴. Therefore, an analysis that recognizes *resilience* as an evolving process is crucial.⁵

2.1 Origins and Evolution of Resilience

The term *resilience* originates from the Latin word *resilio*, meaning to leap or spring back, rebound, or retreat.⁶ In the seventeenth century, *resilience* referred to the ability of physical materials to return to their original shape after being deformed.⁷ In the last two decades, *resilience* became a buzzword in various fields such as economics, health, sports, and politics, but there is a lack of common understanding of its meaning, particularly in policymaking.⁸ The following Figure 1 is taken from Google’s Books Ngram Viewer⁹, and shows how usage of the term *resilience* in books has increased significantly since 2000.

¹ Cf. Reid/ Botterill (2013). P.38.

² Cf. Reid (2022).

³ Cf. Humbert/ Joseph (2019). P.215.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cf. Ibid.

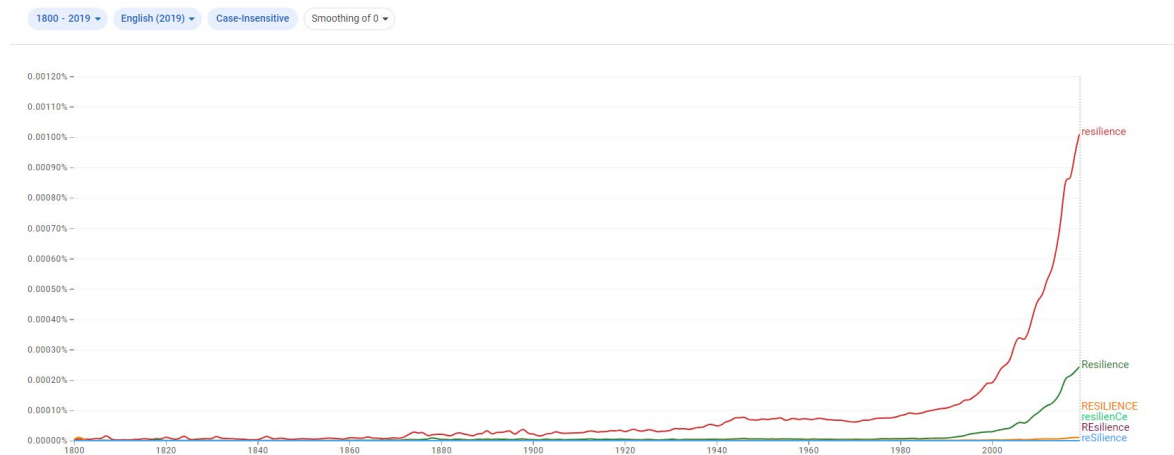
⁶ Cf. Plugh (2021). P.225.

⁷ Cf. Ibid.

⁸ Cf. Joseph/ McGregor (2020). P.40.; Pugh (2021). P.225.; Reid/ Botterill (2013). P.31.

⁹ Author’s note: The Google Ngram Viewer determines the frequency of any search term based on an annual count of n-grams in printed sources.

Figure 1) Development of the Use of the Term Resilience



Source: Google Ngram Viewer (2023).

The concept of *resilience* finds its roots in physics and mathematics, initially describing a material or system’s ability to return to equilibrium after displacement, essentially synonymous with elasticity.¹⁰ While this traditional meaning persists in the term *engineering resilience*, *ecosystem resilience*, on the other hand, focuses on persistence, adaptiveness, variability, and unpredictability, attributes embraced by those with an evolutionary or developmental perspective.¹¹

In psychology, *resilience* is not directly tied to the mathematical or ecological origins but rather associated to some extent with Adam Rose’s¹² economic understanding. In his 2004 paper on *economic resilience* to disasters, Rose introduces the term as “the inherent and adaptive responses to disasters that enable individuals and communities to avoid potential losses.”¹³ He defines *resilience* in terms of “post-disaster conditions and response, which are distinguished from pre-disaster activities to reduce potential losses through mitigation.”¹⁴

Psychological resilience predominantly concerns individuals, while other interpretations, such as Rose’s, explore *community resilience*, also known as *social resilience*.¹⁵ *Social resilience* operates at the community level, tied to the social capital of societies and com-

¹⁰ Cf. Reid/ Botterill (2013). P.32.

¹¹ Cf. Ibid. P.33.

¹² Author’s note: Adam Rose is a Research Professor in the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy and a Senior Research Fellow at CREATE, the first university-based Center of Excellence funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. He received his PhD in economics and his primary research interest is the economics of disasters.

¹³ Rose (2004). P.307.

¹⁴ Ibid. P.308.

¹⁵ Cf. Reid/ Botterill (2013). P.33.

munities. Notably, *individual resilience* can impact *community* and *social resilience*, just as *individual*, *community*, and *social resilience* can influence *ecological resilience*.¹⁶

Resilience can be classified at three levels:¹⁷ 1) Microeconomic, concerning individual behavior of firms, households, or organizations; 2) Meso-economic, focusing on economic sectors, individual markets, or cooperative groups; and 3) Macroeconomic, encompassing all individual units and markets combined, along with interactive effects.

Moreover, Rose distinguishes between *inherent resilience*, which refers to the ordinary ability to handle crises, and *adaptive resilience*, which involves maintaining function during crises through ingenuity or extra effort.¹⁸ According to Rose, the *inherent resilience* of markets is often less appreciated by disaster researchers outside economics and closely related disciplines.¹⁹ In this regard, he refers to the metaphorical expression of *the invisible hand* of the Scottish economist and moral philosopher Adam Smith, who described the unconscious promotion of the common good.²⁰

2.2 Societal and Cultural Views of Resilience

In sociology, *resilience* is viewed as “the ability of an individual, household, community, country, or region to withstand, adapt to, and recover quickly from stresses and shocks”²¹, by building strong social networks, promoting social cohesion, and enhancing the capacity of communities to address social problems, such as poverty, discrimination, or political instability. The sociologists Pedro Estêvão, Alexandre Calado, and Luís Capucha introduce *resilience* as a response to the “combined effect of the economic recession in the wake of the 2007-08 global financial crisis and the general adoption of austerity policies in Europe starting in 2010.”²² Back then the term *resilience* has become increasingly visible in political and popular discourse, referencing a significant decline in household incomes and increased vulnerability to poverty in countries on the periphery of the European Union, such as Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and Greece.²³ In this context, the term was used with a strong

¹⁶ Cf. Ibid. P.34.

¹⁷ Cf. Rose (2004). P.309.

¹⁸ Cf. Ibid. P.309f.

¹⁹ Cf. Ibid. P.309.

²⁰ Cf. Ibid.

²¹ European Commission (2012).

²² Estêvão/ Calado/ Capucha (2017). P.10.

²³ Cf. Ibid.

positive connotation since it was seen as a way to counterbalance the vulnerability of those countries.²⁴ With respect to the phenomenon of poverty, many *resilience*-based approaches in sociology are characterized by a *heroic* notion of *resilience*.²⁵ For example, Rosemary Davidson²⁶ calls *resilience* “an increasingly valuable construct that facilitates understanding of why some people succeed despite traumatic experiences and disadvantaged circumstances while others flounder”²⁷. In this interpretation *resilience* is defined as a positive characteristic of so-called heroes, those individuals who manage to successfully survive. This aspect will be revisited later regarding Ukrainian resistance against the Russian attack. With regards to Estêvão, Calado, and Capucha, the *heroic* approach comes with the risk of legitimizing the dismantling of the welfare state and the shifting of risks to the individual, who could previously benefit from collective resources.²⁸ In contrast, Estêvão, Calado, and Capucha highlight that “resilience should thus not be understood as an attribute that is inherent to some families or individuals”²⁹. Moreover, they see *resilience* as a complex and multilevel process through which societies, institutions and individuals respond to sudden and large-scale environmental, social and economic shocks.”³⁰ Thus, they are not far from the cultural studies definition of *resilience*.

According to Catherine Panter-Brick³¹, culture is a slippery concept, as is *resilience*.³² She cautions against equating culture with society, religion, or ethnicity, thereby dividing individuals into neat analytical categories, and viewing *resilience* simply as the opposite of vulnerability.³³ Panter-Brick states that the importance of a fine-grained approach to culture in the study of *resilience* lies in the normative dimension of *resilience*.³⁴ For her *resilience* is not just a concept related to well-being or development; it also has a normative aspect that is connected to moral values and social aspirations. *Resilience* encompasses moral, social, and political dimensions that go beyond the simple consideration of poor

²⁴ Cf. Ibid.

²⁵ Cf. Ibid. P.12.

²⁶ Author’s note: Rosemary Davidson worked at City, University of London, the Policy Studies Institute, University College London and London School of Economics and has been a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Health Research at the University of Bedfordshire since 2015.

²⁷ Davidson (2008). P.115.

²⁸ Cf. Estêvão/ Calado/ Capucha (2017). P.21.

²⁹ Ibid. P.17.

³⁰ Ibid. P.21.

³¹ Author’s note: Panter-Brick is the Bruce A. and Davi-Allen Chabner Professor of Anthropology, Health, and Global Affairs at Yale University. She directs the Program on Conflict, Resilience, and Health and the Program on Stress and Family Resilience.

³² Cf. Panter-Brick (2015). P.233.

³³ Cf. Ibid.

³⁴ Cf. Ibid. P.236.

well-being or development.³⁵ Furthermore, according to Panter-Brick, when examining *resilience* across different cultures, an ethnographic approach is necessary to uncover the underlying political and economic factors that impact individuals' ability to bounce back from adversity. These factors can include oppressive poverty, endemic violence, limited opportunities for economic or educational advancement, or marginalization based on factors such as sexual orientation or religious affiliation. Here Panter-Brick gives examples such as Afghanistan, where *resilience* is often associated with dignity and family honor, while in Palestine it is connected to social justice and adherence to land. In inland cities of the US, *resilience* may be linked to respect and financial resources.³⁶ For her, again, *resilience* is not solely an individual trait but can also be observed at social and structural levels. It is evident in how successful societies navigate and negotiate the economic and political changes brought about by neoliberalism.³⁷

Based on this, *resilience* in cultural studies can be described as something shaped by cultural values and beliefs. In some cultures, *resilience* is valued as a personal attribute that reflects strength and determination. In other cultures, *resilience* is viewed as a collective effort that involves social support and cooperation. *Cultural resilience* involves preserving cultural heritage, protecting cultural resources, and enhancing cultural identity. For example, UNESCO highlights the role of culture for *resilience*, peace, and security, since “cultural heritage and cultural expressions have increasingly become the direct targets of systematic and deliberate attacks in numerous conflicts around the world”³⁸.

Cornelius Holtorf, the UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures, Department of Cultural Sciences at the Linnaeus University in Kalmar, Sweden, defines *cultural resilience* “as the capability of a cultural system (consisting of cultural processes in relevant communities) to absorb adversity, deal with change and continue to develop.”³⁹ He goes on to say that *cultural resilience* thus implies both continuity and change. Thus, disruptions that can be coped with are not an enemy per se, but a factor in the process of cultural sustainability.⁴⁰ Even when cultural heritage is only destroyed in an armed conflict, the real challenge is how to deal with the current loss of cultural heritage and how to get the community to cope with the impact of the changes that have taken place, while simultaneously promoting

³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁸ UNESCO (2021).

³⁹ Holtorf (2018). P.639.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

peace and understanding in the region.⁴¹ Holtorf highlights that cultural heritage, just like nature, is per se a constantly evolving process, not a legacy already accomplished in whichever way.⁴² Humbert and Joseph also take up this aspect of the never-ending process with regard to *resilience*, as will be explained in more detail below.

The different understandings of *resilience* in the social sciences and cultural studies are significant when considering the *resilience* understandings of different countries and transnational alliances, such as NATO. If the understanding differs within a country due to different definitions by different disciplines, it can be assumed that the interpretation differs even more between different countries depending on which approach dominates.

2.3 Resilience in Policy and Discourse

The perception of *resilience* in political science overlaps with that of social and cultural studies. According to the sociologists and political scientists Jonathan Joseph and J. Allister McGregor, *resilience* refers to the ability to recover from crises, shocks, and disasters, or to cope with risks and stresses, but the exact definition remains unclear.⁴³ Joseph and McGregor view *resilience* as a way of thinking that can be applied to systems, institutions, societies, and individuals.⁴⁴ On the other hand, according to Stephanie Wakefield et al., *resilience* is an attempt to govern the emotional intimacies that jeopardize the modern subject's status as a source of truth, security, and politics.⁴⁵

Michael Ungar⁴⁶ defines *resilience* as follows:⁴⁷

In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways.

Ungar highlights that the *resilience* understanding has expanded to account for community and cultural factors. Nevertheless, these factors are still most routinely evaluated from the

⁴¹ Cf. Ibid. P.643.

⁴² Cf. Ibid. P.644.

⁴³ Cf. Joseph/ McGregor (2020). P.40.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ibid.

⁴⁵ Cf. Wakefield et al. (2021). P.12.

⁴⁶ Author's note: Michael Ungar is the founder and Director of the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University. There he holds the Canada Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience.

⁴⁷ Ungar (2008). P.225.

perspective of Western scientific discourse.⁴⁸ This is an important aspect, as it again illustrates how little is known in Western discourse about the understanding of *resilience* in other countries and cultures, such as Russia. It should be emphasized that, due to the author's personal background, a Western perspective is predominant also in this thesis.

In their paper titled *The Multiple Meanings of 'Resilience': An Overview of the Literature*, Richard Reid and Linda C. Botterill, researchers from the University of Canberra, aim to demonstrate how diverse interpretations of *resilience* have significant implications for policymakers when formulating and conveying policies aimed at achieving *resilience*. They provide the following examples to illustrate these different perspectives:⁴⁹ 1) Based on the approach proposed by Holling, which is highlighting that a resilient system can contain highly insecure elements, the policy focus would be on supporting a resilient community or industry sector rather than being overly concerned with the outcomes for individuals within that sector. This perspective suggests that fluctuations and varying levels of instability should be expected to occur. 2) If a resilient society were a society in which people *bounced back* to a certain status quo after experiencing a disruption, resilient communities could be those capable of returning to their normal activities once they have recovered from an external shock of some kind. 3) Rather than focusing on proactive risk management and preparedness activities within public policy a third interpretation would emphasize post hoc recovery from such external shocks.

Humbert and Joseph summarize considering the difficulties of the *resilience* definition that possibly the dominant tendency in the critical literature, is “to see resilience as conforming to a neoliberal view of how individuals and societies behave.”⁵⁰ Here they also refer to Evans and Reid, who say that “the resilience of the poor requires neoliberal systems of governance”⁵¹⁵². This they contrast with Zebrowski, who notes that *resilience* is better understood, not about the changing nature of security threats, but as indicative of the changing organizational structure of advanced liberal societies.⁵³ Assuming neoliberal govern-

⁴⁸ Cf. Ungar (2015). P.224.

⁴⁹ Cf. Reid/ Botterill (2013). P.38.

⁵⁰ Humbert/ Joseph (2019). P.216.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Author's note: For the primary source see Evans/ Reid (2014). P.36.

⁵³ Cf. Humbert/ Joseph (2019). P.216.

mentality, they compare *resilience* to Foucault's notions of *governing from afar* and responsible governance of the self.⁵⁴⁵⁵

In the military-strategic arena, *resilience* is defined as the capability of ordinary individuals to defend themselves against attackers, which means that a resilient individual or community does not rely on the military of their country to protect them.⁵⁶ Instead, they take matters into their own hands and actively defend against any threats. In this understanding *resilience* is the answer to a threat, whereby a threat often is understood as something “external, something that is related to extreme change or extreme adverse conditions”⁵⁷. According to Julian Reid the concept of *society must defend itself* is the underlying principle of *resilience* in the military-strategic context. Reid further states that this idea is analogous to the way *resilience* is applied in other policy domains like the economy, health, and development. In these areas, people are taught to be self-sufficient and take responsibility for their own safety rather than depend on the government to rescue them. Essentially, Reid summarizes, *resilience* is about the ability of individuals and communities to respond and adapt to crises independently, rather than waiting for external help.⁵⁸ Reid emphasizes that *resilience* in the military strategic sense is not just about preparing society, but also about projecting an image of strong *resilience* to potential attackers to deter them from the idea of attacking.

Not only are the attackers uncertain but so is future. According to Humbert and Joseph the future “is uncertain and remains so until things are ‘back to normal’”⁵⁹, meaning to the point when sufficient *resilience* has been developed. They further highlight that this state where there is sufficient resilience is not reachable. This leads them to the conclusion that *resilience* is dependent on a certain degree of uncertainty, with no real end or outcome as a result.⁶⁰

While all these perspectives can be considered policies geared toward *resilience* when referring to the academic literature, adopting any of these perspectives would lead to quite

⁵⁴ Cf. Ibid.

⁵⁵ Author's note: Brad Evans and Julian Reid use Foucault's ideas to explore resilience in today's politics and society in their book *Resilient life. The art of living dangerously*. They focus on Foucault's views on the liberal subject, security strategies, and neoliberalism. Since their book predates Humbert and Joseph's, it can be assumed that Humbert and Joseph built on the ideas of Evans and Reid.

⁵⁶ Cf. Reid (2022).

⁵⁷ Humbert/ Joseph (2019). P.217.

⁵⁸ Cf. Reid (2022).

⁵⁹ Humbert/ Joseph (2019). P.219.

⁶⁰ Cf. Ibid.

distinct outcomes.⁶¹ This shows again how important it is to know the *resilience* understanding of different parties, be it countries like Russia or (possible) NATO member states or organizations like the European Union or NATO. Otherwise, there is a danger that everyone will talk about one thing and mean or understand something else because of different basic assumptions. Richard Reid and Laura Botterill point out that using the term *resilience* because of its unclear definition in policy debate can lead to the impression that policymakers are deceiving the public about their intentions or failing to deliver on promised outcomes.⁶² They further highlight that in such critical areas as climate change adaptation, disaster management, or drought policy, clear language is needed and that the term *resilience* should not be used given its multiple meanings. In doing so, however, they do not reject the concepts underlying the various understandings of the term. Rather, they point out that policymakers who use the term in policy documents and policy communications should define what they mean by *resilience* and which elements of the concept they draw on.⁶³

Fridolin Simon Brand and Kurt Jax also advocate a clearly specified, descriptive concept of *resilience* to counterbalance the use of *resilience* as a vague boundary object.⁶⁴ They note that greater conceptual vagueness can be valuable for communication across disciplines and between science and practice, but in the case of *resilience* they see conceptual clarity as well as the practical relevance of the concept critically compromised. As results of their analysis on the different understandings of *resilience*, Brand and Jax present a table that shows 3 categories, 10 classes, and correspondingly 10 definitions of *resilience*.⁶⁵ In doing so, they name the descriptive concept, the hybrid concept, and the normative concept to which they subordinate the various classes. Because of that, for them, a clear, descriptive concept is the basis for operationalizing and applying *resilience* in ecological science.⁶⁶ Which, in turn, can also be applied to the policy field.

This is precisely why this paper will next look at and attempt to define the *resilience* understanding of the various research subjects of this paper.

⁶¹ Cf. Reid/ Botterill (2013). P.38.

⁶² Cf. Ibid.

⁶³ Cf. Ibid.

⁶⁴ Cf. Brand/ Jax (2007). P.1.

⁶⁵ Cf. Ibid. P.3&4.

⁶⁶ Cf. Ibid.

3 Presentation of Objects of Investigation and their Understanding of Resilience

This chapter presents NATO, (possible) accession countries, the EU and Russia as a counterpart as objects of investigation. Their respective understanding of *resilience* is also elaborated so that it can be better compared in the subsequent chapter.

3.1 NATO

After World War II, several Western European democracies came together to implement projects for greater military cooperation and collective defense. With the help of networks within militarily relevant economic sectors, a new war between the former adversaries was to be made impossible. This was also supposed to achieve political rapprochement and lasting reconciliation between the states involved. One focus was on integrating the young Federal Republic of Germany into the Western bloc. In the incipient Cold War, this was seen as relevant for the security policy within the European continent. One of the first results of these endeavors was the Western Union, founded in 1948, which became the Western European Union in 1954, which in turn dissolved in July 2011, to become the European Union. During further discussions, the participants concluded that a transatlantic security agreement was necessary to counter the opponent Soviet Union (SU).⁶⁷ This resulted in the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949, which established NATO and regulates the rights and obligations of its members.⁶⁸ The treaty consists of fourteen articles that outline the organization's mission, structure, and principles:⁶⁹ **Article 1)** Defines the parties to the treaty and establishes the aim of NATO as collective defense; **Article 2)** Requires members to contribute toward NATO's common defense and to resolve disputes peacefully; **Article 3)** Calls on Parties individually and collectively to build *resilience* to armed attacks through self-help and mutual aid.; **Article 4)** Establishes consultations between members if they feel their security is at risk; **Article 5)** Establishes that an attack on one member will be considered an attack on all members and that each mem-

⁶⁷ See NATO (1949).

⁶⁸ Cf. NATO (2022a).

⁶⁹ Cf. NATO (1949).

ber will provide assistance as needed. Provides for measures to be taken in the event of an attack; **Article 6)** Defines when an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is considered an armed attack.; **Article 7)** Notes that the treaty does not affect the rights and obligations of parties that are members of the United Nations (UN) under the charter, nor the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.; **Article 8)** Specifies that the Member States shall not have or incur any international obligations contrary to the provisions of the treaty.; **Article 9)** Establishes the North Atlantic Council as the primary decision-making body of NATO; **Article 10)** Allows for additional countries to be invited to join NATO.; **Article 11)** Governs the ratification of the treaty by the contracting parties in accordance with their constitutional procedures.; **Article 12)** Allows for amendments to the treaty to be made by unanimous agreement among members. **Article 13)** Specifies when and how members can withdraw from the contract.; **Article 14)** Requires that the treaty be deposited by each member's government.

The treaty was initially signed by twelve men representing Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.⁷⁰ By autumn 2023, NATO has thirty-one European and North American member states. Most recently, Northern Macedonia joined the military alliance in March 2020, Finland in April 2023.⁷¹ As NATO itself writes on its own website, NATO was founded for the following three reasons:⁷² 1) deterring Soviet expansionism, 2) preventing the resurgence of nationalist militarism in Europe, by a strong North American presence in Europe, and 3) promoting European political integration. The point that NATO was founded in response to the threat posed by the SU is often seen as the main reason. Based on this, it is reasonable to assume that the main opponent of NATO today is the successor of the former SU, namely Russia.

Since the beginning of Russia's aggressions towards Ukraine in 2014, NATO has been developing a strategic approach of *resilience* in accordance with **Article 3** of the treaty to equip member states and strategic partners such as Ukraine for future conflicts.⁷³ **Article 3** from 1949 reads as follows:⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Cf. NATO (n.d.).

⁷¹ See NATO (2020a); NATO (2023a).

⁷² Cf. NATO (2022a).

⁷³ Cf. Reid (2022); Roepke/ Thankey (2019).

⁷⁴ NATO (1994).

In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

In this regard, NATO expects its members “to resist and recover from a major shock such as a natural disaster, failure of critical infrastructure, or a hybrid or armed attack”⁷⁵. NATO defines *resilience* as the “society’s ability to resist and recover from such shocks and combines both civil preparedness and military capacity”⁷⁶. This definition aligns with the interpretation of *resilience* in the military-strategic sense as described in chapter two. In this context, *resilience* is framed as the capability of individuals and communities to defend themselves against threats without relying solely on external forces, meaning that a resilient individual or community does not rely only on the military of their country to protect them. This refers to the concept of *society must defend itself*, whereby in the case of NATO and the member states, the member states must defend themselves.

In this regard, NATO supports allies’ in assessing and improving their civilian preparedness, which is particularly important for the *resilience* of those countries and a decisive factor for the collective defense of the alliance.⁷⁷ Again, the reference to the Russian attack on Ukraine, in which Ukraine is called for and praised above all for its self-defense and particularly for the commitment of the civic population. The importance of **Article 3** for NATO is also illustrated by the fact that it was only after 9/11, on the 12th of September 2001, that **Article 5** entered into force for the first and only time, and on behalf of its strongest member, the United States.⁷⁸

The significance of *resilience* for NATO was directly emphasized in the 2014 Wales Summit, where NATO leaders recognized that *resilience* is a critical element of collective defense.⁷⁹ Accordingly, the Wales Summit Declaration states the following under point 23 (out of 113), where a direct reference is made to Russia:⁸⁰

The Alliance does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia. But we cannot and will not compromise on the principles on which our Alliance and security in Europe and North America rest. NATO is both transparent and predictable, and we are resolved to display endurance and resilience, as we have done since the founding of our Alliance. The nature of the Alliance’s relations with Rus-

⁷⁵ NATO (2021a).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Cf. Ibid.

⁷⁸ Cf. Reid (2022).

⁷⁹ See NATO (2014).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

sia and our aspiration for partnership will be contingent on our seeing a clear, constructive change in Russia's actions which demonstrates compliance with international law and its international obligations and responsibilities.

The Declaration mentions *resilience* a second time under point 72:

As the Alliance looks to the future, cyber threats and attacks will continue to become more common, sophisticated, and potentially damaging. To face this evolving challenge, we have endorsed an Enhanced Cyber Defence Policy, contributing to the fulfillment of the Alliance's core tasks. The policy reaffirms the principles of the indivisibility of Allied security and of prevention, detection, resilience, recovery, and defence. [...]

In this statement there is no reference to Russia, but to cyber-attacks in general. Here, however, a reference to Russia can be assumed since Russia has long been suspected by the West and by NATO of intervening in world political events with the help of cyber-attacks.⁸¹ And indeed, in June 2022, NATO established a program to coordinate rapid response to cyberattacks with reference to Russia and Ukraine and a focus on *resilience*, which was published with the Madrid Summit declaration.⁸² There, under point 8 it is stated:⁸³

We will continue and further step up political and practical support to our close partner Ukraine as it continues to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russian aggression. Jointly with Ukraine, we have decided on a strengthened package of support. This will accelerate the delivery of non-lethal defence equipment, improve Ukraine's cyber defences and resilience, and support modernising its defence sector in its transition to strengthen long-term interoperability. In the longer term, we will assist Ukraine, and support efforts on its path of post-war reconstruction and reforms.

Under point 10 there is an even stronger focus on *resilience*:⁸⁴

Resilience is a national responsibility and a collective commitment. We are enhancing our resilience, including through nationally-developed goals and implementation plans, guided by objectives developed by Allies together. We are also strengthening our energy security. We will ensure reliable energy supplies to our military forces. We will accelerate our adaptation in all domains, boosting our resilience to cyber and hybrid threats, and strengthening our interoperability. [...]

Another significant declaration worth mentioning regarding NATO's *resilience* understanding is the one issued during the 2016 Warsaw Summit, wherein the heads of state and government of the North Atlantic Alliance leaders made a commitment to strengthen *resil-*

⁸¹ Cf. Mueller, et al. (2023).

⁸² Cf. NATO (2022b).

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

ience “against armed attacks and various threats”⁸⁵ based on the North Atlantic Treaty. The commitment focuses on seven fundamental requirements for civil preparedness.⁸⁶

1. Governments, private sector, international bodies like the European Union and partners must work together to address a broader range of military and non-military security challenges.
2. Civil preparedness must be improved to safeguard populations and critical infrastructure, meeting agreed-upon requirements for national resilience with NATO’s support when requested.
3. Prepare for, deter, and defend against attacks involving chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials.
4. Enhance resilience by investing in robust, flexible, and interoperable military capabilities in line with NATO’s Level of Ambition and defense investment pledge, while reducing dependencies on Russian-sourced legacy military equipment.
5. Prioritize the protection against cyber-attacks, demonstrated by the Cyber Defence Pledge to address evolving threats.
6. Engage with international bodies, particularly the European Union, to enhance resilience and security collectively, and support partners in addressing vulnerabilities in their countries.
7. Uphold shared commitments to liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law as the foundation of resilience, reaffirming the dedication to defend populations and territories.

Those documents and statements show how over the years NATO’s understanding of *resilience* has evolved from a focus on the preparedness of military organizations to a more comprehensive approach that encompasses the ability of societies, governments, and critical infrastructure to withstand and recover from a range of shocks and disruptions, including hybrid threats, cyber-attacks, and climate change. NATO has expanded its *resilience* agenda, including cooperation with partner countries, building *resilience* of critical infrastructure, and enhancing situational awareness. In conclusion, NATO’s understanding of *resilience* has evolved from a narrow military focus to a more comprehensive approach encompassing societies and infrastructure’s ability to withstand and recover from a range of shocks and disruptions.

Before examining at NATO accession countries, the *resilience* understanding of the European Union (EU) will be briefly looked at. The EU officially is not part of NATO but an important partner, like the Warsaw Summit Commitment shows. Looking at the EU member states, one can see that there are only four of the twenty-seven EU member countries that are not in NATO, namely Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, and Malta. However, these four non-NATO members are all in a stable relationship with NATO. Since NATO has thirty-one member states and twenty-four of those are also part of the EU, one can assume that

⁸⁵ NATO (2016).

⁸⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*

the impact of the EU understanding of *resilience* could have an impact on the NATO's definition of *resilience*. On the other hand, one could also think that NATO's definition influences the EU understanding. This actually seems to be more likely, since the term *resilience* became a mode in foreign policy circles in Europe after NATO's strategic approach of *resilience*: In June 2016, *resilience* has been determined as one of the five main concerns of the EU, when the European Union Global Strategy was publicised.⁸⁷ The *resilience* principle was outlined in a briefing for the European Parliament with a focus on becoming more robust against Russian threats, such as hybrid threats, energy security, and disinformation.⁸⁸ This involves deterring military aggression, thwarting hybrid threats to EU countries, and reducing the EU's reliance on Russian energy imports. In January 2023, the NATO-EU Task Force on Critical Infrastructure Resilience was formed to enhance collaboration in energy, transport, digital infrastructure, and space.⁸⁹ Its June 2023 report offered 14 key recommendations to bolster NATO-EU cooperation for infrastructure *resilience*.

3.2 NATO Accession Countries

Currently, there are four countries that wish to join NATO, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Sweden, and Ukraine. Since Finland is the newest accession country and Sweden could theoretically also become a member in a brief time, the development towards (possible) accession and potential motives will be looked at in more detail below, followed by Ukraine due to the political actuality. It will also be examined in more detail what role the Russian attack played in the accession process and their dealing with the concept of *resilience*. As a preview, it can be stated that the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine has catalyzed profound shifts in the security outlook of previously non-aligned nations, particularly Finland and Sweden. This subchapter delves into how these nations have responded to the changing geopolitical landscape, with a focus on their evolving attitudes towards NATO membership and the concept of *resilience*.

⁸⁷ Cf. Tocci (2019). P.176&177.

⁸⁸ Cf. Russel (2020). P.3.

⁸⁹ Cf. NATO (2021a).

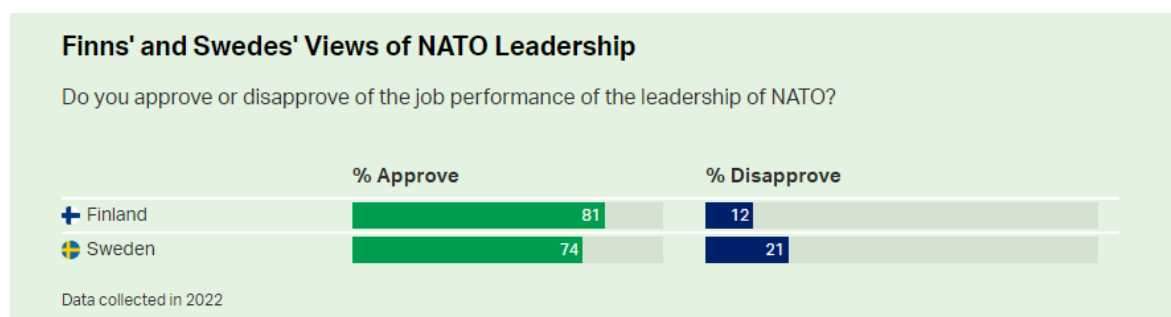
3.2.1 Finland

Now that the moment of decision-making is near, we state our equal views [...]. NATO membership would strengthen Finland's security. As a member of NATO, Finland would strengthen the entire defence alliance. Finland must apply for NATO membership without delay.

Press release by the President of the Republic and Prime Minister of Finland on May 12th 2022.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was followed by a rise in public support towards a NATO membership in the beforehand non-aligned states of Finland and Sweden: According to a poll conducted by the Gallup Organization, a Washington, D.C.-based market and public opinion research firm, a clear majority of the Finnish and Swedish populations favored NATO leadership between April and July 2022, just months after the start of Russia's war of aggression (see Figure 2).⁹⁰

Figure 2) Finns' and Swedes' View of NATO Leadership



Source: Reinhart (2022).

According to Julian Reid the development was driven by the “public perception of NATO as a source of collective security”⁹¹ in the event of an attack by Russia. With the prominence and severity of the Russian attack against Ukraine in mind, it therefore seems logical that Finland joined NATO in April 2023. But while the Finnish and Swedish population is driven by the idea that they benefit from the protection of **Article 5** of the North Atlantic Treaty, it remains uncertain whether the people are aware of what exactly NATO accession means, especially regarding **Article 3**.⁹² Indeed, according to Reid, the war taking place on Ukrainian territory exemplifies what NATO would expect from a rather small state like Finland if it were invaded by Russia, namely a main self-defense according to NATO's understanding of *resilience*.⁹³ For example, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which, like Finland, are in direct border contact with Russia and are NATO members

⁹⁰ Cf. Reinhart (2022).

⁹¹ Reid (2022).

⁹² Cf. Ibid.

⁹³ Cf. Ibid.

since 2004, have been focusing more on involving their own societies in state defense preparations since the Russian - Ukrainian conflict unfolded in 2014.⁹⁴ In this context, *resilience* for these states means, above all, strengthening the will of their societies so that they can, if necessary, participate directly in the defense.⁹⁵ According to Māris Andžāns, the willingness to defend one's own country depends on various reasons and is usually case-related.⁹⁶ Those reasons could be “the (lack) of patriotism and national pride, (dis)trust in state institutions and politicians, economic situation and (in)equality, historical grievances and past victories, religious and cultural affiliations, education level, gender, ethnicity, political and ideological affiliations, and military recruitment models.”⁹⁷ But the degree of preparedness also depends on the nature of the (potential) conflict, such as whether it is a necessity, such as Ukraine's response to the Russian attack, or a choice, in the case of a more distant threat, such as Finland's fear of a Russian attack.⁹⁸

In 2018, the former Finnish ambassador to Russia, René Nyberg, wrote an article on hybrid operations and the importance of *resilience*, regarding the Finish-Russian relationship. There he states that only “few countries can match Finland's long experience of dealing with Soviet and Russian hybrid warfare”⁹⁹ with not many being successful in standing up to it like Finland. He sees Finland's success in the *resilience* of Finnish society, “which is derived from its unique history and record of combining firmness with flexibility in dealing with its much larger, difficult, and unpredictable neighbor”¹⁰⁰, meaning Russia. For him, *resilience* is a prerequisite for a country's defense capability. However, the article does not give a precise definition of *resilience*. Nyberg refers to the “concept of resilience”¹⁰¹ as a response to challenges of hybrid warfare, whereby “resilience is the key concept in responding to disinformation and hybrid operations in all forms.”¹⁰² In his article, he describes several clashes between Russia and Finland, starting in 1939, in which he believes Finland responded resiliently, or rather, built *resilience*. For Nyberg, the fact that the Finnish government established the European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in September 2017 was a logical consequence of these politically sensitive mo-

⁹⁴ Cf. Andžāns et.al. (2021). P.4.

⁹⁵ Cf. Ibid.

⁹⁶ Cf. Ibid. P.78.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Cf. Ibid.

⁹⁹ Nyberg (2018).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

ments. He emphasizes that “it is not an operational center for anti-hybrid warfare but rather a center that promotes countering hybrid threats at the strategic level through research and training among participants from the EU and NATO.”¹⁰³ Thus, Finnish officials are trained in courses in cooperation with Harvard University on how to recognize a hybrid operation and how to act. Behind this is the Finnish security concept, which also includes conscription, and “is also deemed highly appropriate to new types of threats since it emphasizes building awareness and strengthening the resilience of Finnish society.”¹⁰⁴ He concludes his article by saying that *resilience* is something that requires time, determination, and resources in education. Thus, he says, building *resilience* in a society is too late when you realize it is lacking.

Nyberg’s article is noteworthy because it assumes an understanding of *resilience* without defining the term as such. On the one hand, this is of limited help when it comes to understanding Finland’s understanding of *resilience*, or rather the Finnish government’s understanding of *resilience*. However, it shows that Nyberg, as an official representative of the Finnish government, considered *resilience* as a concept to be important, without possibly having dealt with the concept as such in depth. It can be assumed that in the framework of the European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, among others, he simply adopted the term from the EU and NATO. At this point, one should note Brand and Jax, and Reid and Botterill, who argue for a precise definition to avoid political misunderstandings. What is clear, however, is that Nyberg sees Russia as the threat that has made Finland so resilient and that will continue to threaten Finland in the future.

In fact, Finland has a Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP), Finland’s national plan for using funds from the EU’s Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), which is part of Finland’s Sustainable Growth Program.¹⁰⁵ But even here, on 592 pages, the term *resilience* is not defined, although it is used over 100 times.

3.2.2 Sweden

Regarding Sweden, it can be said that hardly any other country is so close to NATO membership. Since NATO has completed negotiations and formalized the accession protocols, Sweden’s entry has been hindered by the reservations of two NATO members: Turkey and

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ See Finnish Government (2021).

Hungary. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has most recently in September 2023 made his country's approval of Sweden's admission to NATO conditional on a fighter jet deal with the US.¹⁰⁶ Looking at Hungary the analysis does not allow any conclusions to be drawn regarding why Hungary is against the accession. Sweden's reservations about Hungary's adherence to democratic values and EU policies may be influencing Hungary's stance against Sweden's potential NATO membership, as it implies shared values and principles. Hungary likely fears the impact of Sweden's NATO membership on the European political landscape and the alliance's direction. This can be assumed since the Political Director of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Balázs Orbán, a lawyer and political scientist, wrote the following on twitter/X¹⁰⁷. He expresses that Sweden's desire to join NATO has raised concerns in Hungary, fueled by critical statements from prominent Swedish political figures regarding Hungary's domestic policies and EU involvement.¹⁰⁸ According to Balázs Orbán, Johan Pehrson, a former Liberal Party leader and current Minister for Employment and Integration, criticized Hungary's government as "xenophobic and nationalist"¹⁰⁹ while questioning its commitment to the rule of law and support for Ukraine, in May 2022. These examples underline the complicated interplay between the needs of individual existing NATO members and NATO as a community. It also reflects the strategic considerations and defense priorities of NATO member states.

Despite not being a NATO member, Sweden has already actively participated in NATO meetings as an official guest since July 2022, joining meetings and coordinating actions.¹¹⁰ This underlines the orientation of Sweden's foreign policy and security interests with respect to NATO's objectives. Similar to NATO, Sweden highlights the importance of *resilience* and, just as with NATO, this is connected to the relationship with Russia. In 2015, Sweden revived the *Total Defence* policy, originally from the Cold War era, after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.¹¹¹ In September 2015, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven said in a statement that Sweden is facing a deteriorating security situation in its region, primarily due to Russian aggression and the destabilization of Ukraine, presenting a significant challenge to European security since the Cold War.¹¹² Sweden developed a modern total de-

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Cicero (2023).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Orbán (2023).

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Cf. NATO (2023c).

¹¹¹ Cf. Löfven (2015).

¹¹² Cf. Ibid.

fense strategy, increasing defense appropriations, and enhancing its military capability while deepening international cooperation, to address these security challenges. The defense strategy can be seen as a *resilience* concept, and one could say that Sweden's heightened focus on *resilience* is a response to its anticipation of future security challenges.¹¹³

Another example for Sweden's *resilience* approach is the following: In 2018, Sweden set an example by prioritizing the development of societal and psychological *resilience*. It distributed a brochure titled *If War or Crisis Comes* to every household, offering valuable guidance on how to navigate scenarios involving power shortages or internet disruptions.¹¹⁴ In this brochure, Sweden instructs its people that they "must be able to resist various types of attacks directed against our country"¹¹⁵, which can be understood as a definition of *resilience*. In detail the brochures list the following potential attacks:¹¹⁶ 1) Cyberattacks targeting critical IT systems. 2) Sabotage of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, airports, railways, electricity cables, and nuclear power stations. 3) Terrorist attacks impacting a significant number of people or vital organizations. 4) Efforts to influence Sweden's policymakers or residents. 5) Disruption of transport links leading to shortages of essential goods. 6) Military actions, such as air strikes, rocket attacks, or acts of war.

Returning to the question of Sweden's NATO accession, the official website of the Government of Sweden asserts that Sweden's forthcoming NATO membership is anticipated to enhance security for both Sweden and the alliance.¹¹⁷ Notably, Sweden will fall under the collective defense commitments outlined in **Article 5** of the North Atlantic Treaty upon joining NATO. This is considered significant, as the Defense Commission's security policy report has concluded that the possibility of an armed attack or military force being used against Sweden cannot be ruled out.¹¹⁸ The concept of *resilience*, particularly in the context of **Article 3**, is also emphasized on the website, stating that there is no universally accepted Swedish definition of *resilience*, although in general, *resilience* conveys a society's fundamental robustness, strength, and adaptability. While *resilience* matters are a national responsibility within NATO, they are simultaneously viewed as a collective commitment. This collective commitment centers on three fundamental functions: ensuring the continui-

¹¹³ Cf. Dewaele/ Lucas (2022). P.4.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Hall/ Sandeman (2022).

¹¹⁵ The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (2018). P.11.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Government Offices of Sweden (2023).

¹¹⁸ Cf. Ibid.

ty of government and critical government services, providing essential services to the population, and offering civil support to the military.¹¹⁹

To conclude this chapter: Sweden's evolving relationship with NATO and its dedication to *resilience* reflect its proactive response to a changing security landscape, driven in part by Russian actions and regional instability. Sweden's potential NATO membership carries implications not only for its own security but also for the broader dynamics of the alliance and the principles it upholds. Sweden's aspiration for **Article 5**, which triggers collective defense, is evident. However, Sweden also recognizes that each individual NATO member's efforts to bolster and fortify national *resilience* collectively reduce the vulnerability of the entire Alliance and elevate the threshold for potential attacks.

3.2.3 Ukraine

This is a war of aggression. Ukraine will defend itself and will win.
The world can and must stop Putin. The time to act is now.
Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba, February 2022¹²⁰

Although Ukraine is not a NATO member yet, it has been “developed into one of the most substantial of NATO's partnerships”¹²¹ since the 1990s. NATO sees Ukraine's strength as a decisive factor for its own safety: “A strong, independent Ukraine is vital for the stability of the Euro-Atlantic area.”¹²² Shortly after Ukraine became independent from the SU in 1991, the country joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and three years later the Partnership for Peace program. In 1997 Ukraine signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, and subsequently established the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC). The NUC oversees Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration process, including reforms under the Annual National Programme (ANP) since 2009. After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, cooperation intensified in several areas. For example, NATO has increased its support for capability development and capacity building in Ukraine. NATO has also increased its presence in the Black Sea and intensified maritime cooperation with Ukraine and Georgia. Since the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July 2016, NATO's practical support for Ukraine is set out in the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Ukraine. In 2016, NATO's practical support for Ukraine was set out in the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) at the

¹¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Reuters (2022).

¹²¹ NATO (2023b).

¹²² *Ibid.*

NATO Summit in Warsaw. A year later, the Ukrainian Parliament passed a law reestablishing NATO membership as a strategic foreign and security policy goal, followed by a necessary for this amendment to the Ukrainian Constitution in 2019. In 2020, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy approved Ukraine's new National Security Strategy, which envisages the expansion of the distinctive partnership with NATO with the goal of NATO membership. Since the Russian attack in 2022, NATO and its allies have provided unique support to Ukraine.¹²³

Throughout the period of cooperation, NATO placed a great emphasis on increasing Ukraine's *resilience*, with a lot of effort being demanded of Ukraine in the first place. Thus, NATO considers it particularly important to support the comprehensive reform in the security and defense sector, which NATO sees as "vital for Ukraine's democratic development and for strengthening its ability to defend itself"¹²⁴. This influenced the development of its strategic thinking and actions. NATO's increasing influence on Ukraine was also an important factor in the escalation of the conflict with Russia.¹²⁵

NATO condemns Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. According to NATO, the war seriously undermines international security and stability and is a blatant violation of international law¹²⁶. NATO calls on Russia to immediately end the war, withdraw its forces from Ukraine and begin "genuine"¹²⁷ diplomatic negotiations. NATO condemns the referendums held in four on Ukrainian territories regions (Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhya), stating that they were sham processes orchestrated by Moscow and imposed on Ukraine. Consequently, NATO does not recognize their legitimacy, much like its non-recognition of the annexation of Crimea.¹²⁸

Due to the over three decades of cooperation with NATO, it can be assumed that at least the political and military leadership has understood and adopted NATO's understanding of *resilience*. Whether the Ukrainian population knows it is precisely in the interest of NATO that it defends itself and, from this point of view, has been prepared for a possible attack by Russia over the last decades is not known. For Reid, Ukraine represents a laboratory for

¹²³ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Cf. Reid (2022).

¹²⁶ Cf. NATO (2023b).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

testing *resilience* as a strategy for NATO national defense.¹²⁹ He sees the course and results of the war up to the time of the publication of his article in March 2022 as encouraging for the proponents of *resilience* in NATO.¹³⁰

Iulian Romanyshyn, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Advanced Security, Strategic, and Integration Studies, underlines Ukraine's distinctive and expansive approach to *resilience*, setting it apart from many EU member states.¹³¹ He emphasizes that Ukraine achieved this by placing democratic reforms at the core of its comprehensive societal resistance against Russian aggression. In his article, Romanyshyn points out that Russia resorted to terrorist attacks on civilians, including extensive missile and cyber strikes on energy and infrastructure, as it could not prevail over Ukraine militarily. According to him, these attacks had the unintended effect of boosting Ukrainian morale and unity. Furthermore, Romanyshyn highlights several key steps Ukraine took to bolster its *resilience* against Russia. These include countering Russian disinformation through communication efforts and media reforms, as well as a gradual weakening of the influence of the Russian government through oligarchs as the conflict continued. While asset seizures were slow, the government upheld religious freedom while imposing sanctions on certain top priests linked to the Russian Orthodox Church. To effectively confront Russian aggression and promote governance reforms, Ukraine recognizes the need to enhance its societal *resilience*. In this endeavor, the EU and its partners can provide valuable support through intelligence sharing, sanctions, and capacity-building initiatives. Romanyshyn underscores that Ukraine's experience can serve as a valuable model for strengthening democracies and achieving total democratic *resilience*, offering valuable lessons to other nations facing similar challenges.¹³²

Based on these insights, it can be suggested that Ukraine's primary focus in recent years has been on bolstering its *resilience* in the face of conflict. This encompasses the *resilience* of its military forces, government institutions, and civil society as they confront ongoing hostilities. Ukraine has also emphasized the significance of societal *resilience*, including its population's ability to withstand the repercussions of conflict. Additionally, energy security has been a critical area of concern, given Ukraine's historical dependence on Russian

¹²⁹ Cf. Reid (2022).

¹³⁰ Cf. Ibid.

¹³¹ Cf. Romanyshyn (2023).

¹³² Cf. Ibid.

energy sources.¹³³ Consequently, Ukraine has actively worked to enhance its energy *resilience* by diversifying its energy supplies and reducing dependence on Russia. Given the cyber threats, including those attributed to Russia, Ukraine has taken proactive measures to enhance its cybersecurity and overall *resilience*.¹³⁴ Finally, Ukraine's aspirations for closer integration with the European Union and NATO have further shaped its approach to *resilience*. Aligning with European norms and standards, particularly in governance, the rule of law, and economic reforms, is viewed as integral to building *resilience* against external pressures. This alignment has entailed close cooperation with Western nations, international organizations, and the receipt of security assistance and cooperation from NATO.

In July 2023, at the 2023 Vilnius Summit, NATO members reaffirmed their commitment to Ukraine's NATO membership, recognizing Ukraine's progress in interoperability and reforms. They assured that they will continue to support and assess Ukraine's progress, with an invitation contingent on consensus and meeting membership conditions.¹³⁵

3.3 Russia as Follow-Up of the Soviet Union

A preliminary investigation of the understanding and use of the term *resilience* in the Russian language and the Russian State revealed that there is no direct translation the term *resilience* into Russian language. However, several words can be found that are equivalent to the meaning of the term *resilience*: For example, *vynoslivost'* (the physical ability to adopt and withstand in given situations), *stojkost'* and *uporstvo* (resistance as a human character trait), *žiznestojkost'* (viability), *gibkost'* (flexibility), and *otkazoustojčivost'* (resistance to failure) or *gotovnost' k ispytaniyam* (readiness for a test or challenge) and the frame *sposobnost' k preodoleniju s neblagoprijatnyh žiznennyh obstojaťctv* (the ability to cope with adversity).¹³⁶¹³⁷ In Russian literature on the topic *resilience* the terms *ustojčivost'* (sustainability) and *stressoustojčivost'* (stress tolerance) can be found. If looking for a translation via the online translator Deepl the term *ustojčivost'* (sustainability) can be found again. The online translator of the Russian browser provider Yandex also translates *resilience* as *ustojčivost'*. However, *Google translator* just simply converts the Eng-

¹³³ See Stulberg (2015); Stulberg (2017).

¹³⁴ See Davis (2015).

¹³⁵ Cf. NATO (2023b).

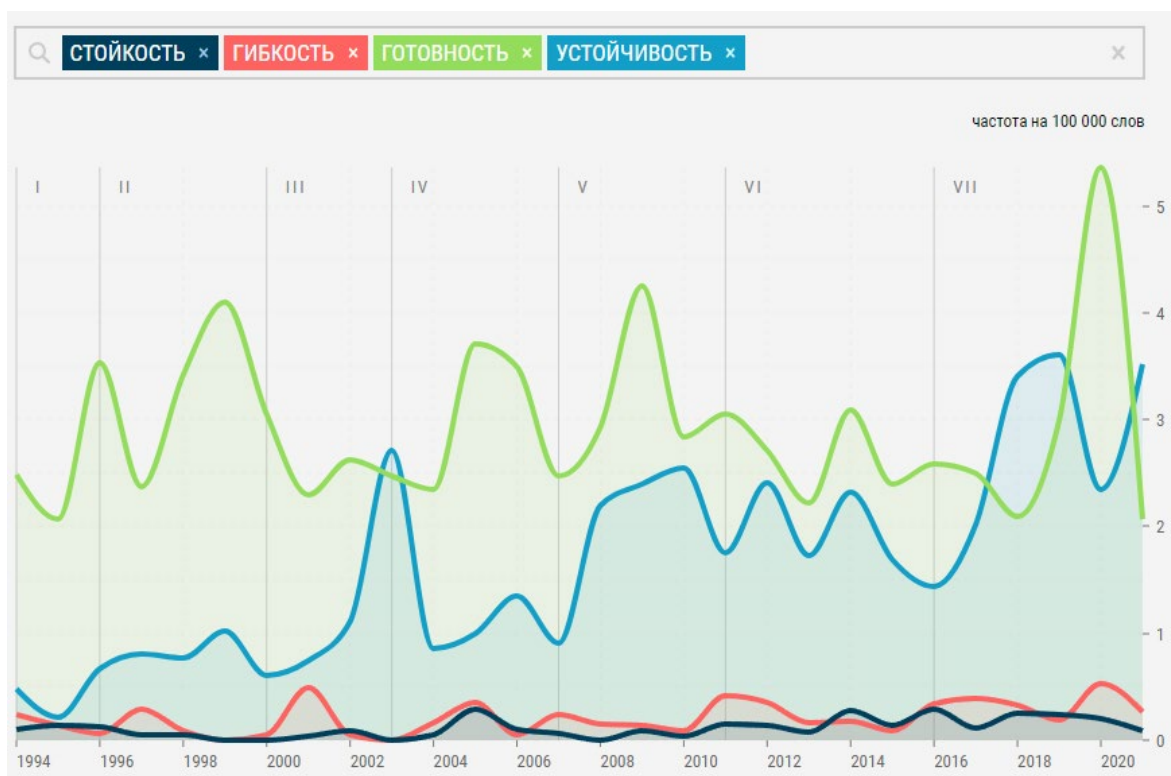
¹³⁶ Cf. Stammer (2021). P.6.

¹³⁷ Author's note: Based on the international standard ISO 9 I use DIN 1460-2 for the transliteration of Cyrillic characters into Latin characters.

lish word into Cyrillic letters: *rezilienc*. Based on recent publications, *stressoustojčivost'* seems to be a common term to translate *resilience* in the context of political science and international relations.¹³⁸

The online platform *decoder* together with the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* DeepL provides a service which analysis transcripts of 27 years (since 1994), seven convocations and 385,000 speeches of the Russian State Duma.¹³⁹ There on the one hand *stressoustojčivost'* cannot be found, which likely means that the word was expressed less than 15 times throughout the entire period of the Russian State Duma's presence. *Ustojčivost'* [light blue] on the other hand was used (see Figure 3), as well as *gibkost'* [salmon], *stojkost'* [dark blue]. For comparison, the word willingness *gotovnost'* [green] was added, which, as can be seen, was used much more often than the other terms.

Figure 3) Resilience Terms Used in the Russian State Duma



Source: dekodeer (2022).

However, it is also clear that the term *ustojčivost'* has been used with increasing tendency since 1995, mostly by the ruling party Unity of Russia. A first peak occurred in 2003, with the term being used 46 times in a year for the first time.

¹³⁸ Cf. Stammer (2021). P.6.

¹³⁹ Author's note: The service was last updated January 24th, 2022.

Another term worth mentioning is the Russian verb *smirit'sja/ primirjat'sja*, which means coming to terms, accepting something, to reconcile. This one does not entirely cover the *resilience* concept but brings light to another underlying ability of the Russian population close to *resilience*: Basically, the Russian population has resigned itself to the crises and conditions in the country and, in the absence of alternatives and better prospects, is simply *coming to terms* with the situation.

The variety of possible translations is representative for the challenge to find a common understanding for the concept of *resilience*, in Russian literature or in literature worldwide. Given that the political concept of *resilience* is mainly anchored in the Anglo-Saxon culture, with its cultural roots in neoliberalism and contemporary conceptualisation it seems logical that non-Western states such as Russia had and have trouble understanding this *new* way of Western thinking.¹⁴⁰ Since Russia was subject to a history of conflict and crisis, the Russian state and the Russian population were forced to learn to be adaptable and resilient over the past decades and centuries. Hence it can be assumed that the scientific concept of *resilience* Russia is new, but not the practice itself.¹⁴¹

3.3.1 Russia's History of Conflict and Crisis

To support the thesis that Russia has a history of conflict and crisis, which has necessitated adaptability and *resilience* as defined by NATO in both the state and its population, some historical examples will be provided. Beforehand, it is important to note that Russian political history can be segmented into distinct epochs, which include the Kievan Empire (10th-13th centuries), the era of Mongol rule and the ascent of Moscow (13th-15th centuries), the Moscow Empire (15th-17th centuries), the Russian Empire or Petersburg Empire (1700-1917), the Revolution and Civil War (1917-1921), the existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1922 to 1991, and the contemporary Russian Federation (since 1991). The following examples for moments in history where Russia faced severe conflicts and crises may be attributed to these epochs respectively. In some cases, even the entire epoch may be regarded as an example. Due to the scope of the work, only a brief overview is given.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Joseph/ McGregor (2020). P.41.; Wakefield (2021). P.12.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Stammler (2021). P.6.

1) The Mongol invasion of Russia, which at that time covered more land than the present-day Russian territory and was called Kievan Rus, took place in the 13th century and was a devastating event that subjected Russian principalities to Mongol rule for several centuries, including the city Kiev. Russian society had to adapt to Mongol governance and high taxation while preserving its cultural identity and strength to survive and endure foreign domination.¹⁴²

2) The Time of Troubles in the early 17th century was characterized by political turmoil, foreign incursions, and internal strife. During this time Russia witnessed six changes in leadership within just 15 years.¹⁴³ Estimates suggest that the conflict resulted in a staggering death toll of more than one million people. Furthermore, certain regions of Russia saw their populations dwindle by more than half, with the devastating famine of 1601-1603, caused by “bad weather associated with the ‘little ice age’”¹⁴⁴, exacerbating the decline. In the Time of Troubles, the Russian people had to prove their will to live, their ability to resist and adapt in the face of multiple and alternating threats, so that Russia as such could retain its sovereignty.

3) During the Napoleonic Wars, the Russian Empire confronted the French invasion led by Napoleon in 1812. The Russian population and military showed strength in the face of the occupation, ultimately leading to the French retreat and a significant turning point in European history.¹⁴⁵

4) The turmoil of World War I and the subsequent Russian Revolution in 1917 plunged the country into a prolonged period of crisis. The state underwent significant changes, transitioning from the Russian Empire to the SU, while the population had to adapt to new political and economic systems.¹⁴⁶

5) From 1941 to 1945 the Eastern Front of World War II saw the SU, including Russia, facing the impact of the invasion of the German national socialist regime. The Russian population endured immense hardships and losses but showed *resilience* in their fight against forces.¹⁴⁷ In addition, there was the violence and terror of Stalinism, when Josef Stalin ruled the SU as dictator between 1928 and 1953. He carried out forced collectivisa-

¹⁴² See Maiorov (2016); Halperin (1987).

¹⁴³ See Maureen (2018); Platonov (1970).

¹⁴⁴ Dunning (1995). P.115.

¹⁴⁵ See Lieven (2009).

¹⁴⁶ For examples of specific resilience see Kyle (2022); Borisova (2017).

¹⁴⁷ For an example of the resilience of the soviet children see Kirschbaum (2017).

tion against peasants, had political opponents violently murdered and established Marxism-Leninism as a binding ideology.

6) The ending of the SU in 1991 brought about a period of political, economic, and social disturbance. Russian people had to adapt to a new reality as the country transitioned from a communist state to a market-oriented economy in a different geopolitical landscape. The area of the previously existing SU was significantly reduced as more and more countries declared their independence, starting with Lithuania on 11 March 1990, followed by Ukraine on 24 August 1991, and finally the declarations of independence by present-day Russia on 12 December 1991 and Kazakhstan on 16 December 1991. Furthermore, during the Post-Soviet Economic Challenges throughout the 1990s, Russia faced significant economic encounters, including hyperinflation, privatization, and economic instability.¹⁴⁸ The Russian population had to adapt to these changes and encounters and navigate a challenging transition period.

8) The Chechen Wars in the 1990s posed internal conflicts and security challenges for Russia. The state had to employ adaptability and flexibility in managing these conflicts and their aftermath. Also, the annexation of Crimea and conflict in Ukraine starting in 2014 challenged Russia's resistance. Russia's actions in Crimea and the following conflict in eastern Ukraine tested its relations with the international community. The state has had to adapt to sanctions and diplomatic pressure while maintaining its interests in the region.

These instances demonstrate that Russia has frequently faced significant challenges, like external invasions, political upheavals, economic crises, and various conflicts. They highlight how Russia and its people consistently surmounted these challenges, exemplifying *resilience* as defined by NATO. This *resilience* aligns with what NATO expects from its member states (see NATO's *resilience* definition in chapter 3.1). Therefore, it can be stated that the practice of *resilience* is evident within the Russian state and its population, even if the scientific concept of *resilience* is not officially employed in Russian politics. The numerous (attempted) invasions throughout history all but forced Russia to adopt *resilience* as their baseline response. The historical *resilience* exhibited by both the Russian state and its people has played a pivotal role in upholding Russia's identity and sovereignty throughout its history. This is why the relationship with NATO is intriguing, considering that the SU's existence was the catalyst for NATO's formation. Similarly, it is logical to

¹⁴⁸ See Mau (2017).

assume that Russia, as the successor to the SU, might view NATO as an adversary, thereby testing its *resilience*.

The instances above also can explain why Russia still fears that it could be attacked. Based on its history of invasions and military conflicts it can be assumed that Russia mostly focuses on National Sovereignty and Independence and Security and Defense Resilience and therefore, on preventing conflicts, i.e., preventing potential attacks in the first place, for example by striking first - as opposed to focusing on conflict management after a crisis. In this sense, one can understand why Russia opposed NATO's eastward enlargement from the beginning, always with the idea of a possible attack on its own country in mind. Looking on conflicts that are already taking place one could assume that Russian *resilience* approach is more on extinguishing the threat and less on recovering from it.

But the understanding of *resilience* in Russia does not seem to exclusively include military aspects. Although the military undoubtedly plays an important role in Russia's security strategy, Russia considers *resilience* on broader level and in different dimension. This can be assumed based on the multifaceted ways Russia demonstrated *resilience* in the past. It seems that the understanding and the application of *resilience* in Russia is more complete and includes different areas of national security and stability.

To come back to the question how Russia understands the concept of *resilience*, it can be summarized that Russia proved *resilience* as defined by NATO in several ways: Historical *resilience*, by coping with various challenges, including invasions, political upheavals, and economic crises. National Sovereignty and Independence, by maintaining national sovereignty and independence. Security and Defense *resilience*, by emphasizing on national security and defense *resilience*. Political *resilience*, by proving stability and endurance of the Russian government. Economic *resilience*, by absorbing shocks and recovering from economic crises, including sanctions. Social Cohesion and Adaptability of the Russian population, by adapting to changing circumstances and maintain social cohesion. Cultural and Identity *resilience*, by preserving and promoting Russian cultural heritage and national identity in the face of cultural influences and nowadays globalization. Emergency Response and Disaster Management, by applying *resilience* principles in its emergency response and disaster management efforts, with preparing for and responds to natural disasters, industrial accidents, and public health crises. For example, there is a school subject in Russian schools called OBŽ (Osnovy bezopasnosti žiznedejatel'nosti), which translates as Basics of Life Safety. The subject deals with the mechanisms and regularities of human

protection and behavior in society and in extreme situations which comes close to educate young students in *resilience* already.

In summary, Russia demonstrated *resilience* in multifaceted ways, encompassing historical, national, political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Russia's *resilience* is in fact in accordance with the *resilience* definition spread by NATO. Despite the fact that both parties have similar *resilience* ideologies, the *resilience* approach itself appears to have a negative impact on their relationship. This aspect will be analyzed and discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

4 The Resilience Paradox: NATO's Emphasis and Russia's Perception

Based on the previous chapter it can be said that NATO's understanding of *resilience* differs from that of its accession countries. While NATO emphasizes the importance of building strong democratic institutions and improving the *resilience* of societies against external threats, natural as well as military, many of its accession countries, especially those that were part of the former Eastern Bloc and under Soviet influence during the Cold War, have a *resilience* understanding which is focusing on military strength and national security. This focus on military strength and national security that can also be seen in Russia, as will be discussed in more detail in the following subchapter. These countries, having experienced historical military occupations and threats from neighboring states, often prioritize military deterrence as a key element of their *resilience* strategy. They may focus on bolstering their armed forces and enhancing their national defense capabilities to protect against external aggression. In contrast, NATO, as a Western alliance founded on democratic principles and collective defense, places greater emphasis on the promotion of democracy and the protection of individual rights to ensure long-term security and stability. This divide between NATO's understanding of *resilience* and that of its accession countries is driven by different perceptions of the threats facing Europe. But it can be seen most clearly in their attitudes towards Russia. It can be assumed that this different understanding of *resilience* is because the possible accession countries are individual countries that are not part of an alliance that has promised each other help and support. This uncertainty gives rise to the demand for security. NATO, on the other hand, is sure in theory that it is strong enough to counter possible dangers. Here, it is more a question of building on this strength and maintaining it. In addition, it would be interesting to further research how the *resilience* understanding of individual NATO members already established differs from the understanding of NATO as a community. This leads to the assumption that the USA, being the most influential and largest NATO member, strongly characterized the approach, also due to its geographical location. Unfortunately, this is not possible within the framework of this paper.

Despite attempts to steer the NATO-Russia relationship in the direction of partnership after the end of the Cold War, it eventually came to a renewed revalidate. NATO sees Russia as

a potential threat to the stability and security of Europe and has taken steps to counter its influence. This includes building up military capabilities and enhancing its ability to respond to potential threats from Russia. However, many of NATO's accession countries view Russia as a more immediate threat. They believe that Russia is actively working to undermine their democracies and destabilize their regions and are therefore focused on building up their military capabilities to deter Russia's aggression. And while NATO views Russia as a potential threat to the security and stability of Europe, many of its accession countries view Russia as a direct threat to their own national security. This has led to tensions between NATO and its accession countries, as well as between accession countries themselves.

NATO acknowledges these differing perspectives and has worked to bridge the gap between its own emphasis on democratic *resilience* and the historical security concerns, especially, of its Eastern European members. While NATO continues to stress the importance of democratic values and institutions, it has also made efforts to enhance the military capabilities and security of its member states, especially those in Eastern Europe, to address their unique security concerns. Over recent years, member countries have bolstered NATO's forward presence by deploying multinational battlegroups in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, increased deployments of naval vessels, aircraft, and troops along NATO's eastern border, spanning from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south.¹⁵⁰ Russia is seen as the greatest threat to Eastern Europe, as the following NATO statement shows:

NATO has increased its military presence in the eastern part of the Alliance as a direct result of Russia's behaviour, which reflects a pattern of aggressive actions against its neighbours and the wider transatlantic community. Russia is the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

When looking at the difference between Russia against NATO and the accession countries, it cannot easily be said that Russia's interpretation of *resilience* differs from that of NATO and the new member states. It can rather be said that the respective actors set different priorities. While the concept of *resilience* is being used by all entities simultaneously, there is a lack of common understanding of the term.

Russia's interpretation of *resilience*, grounded in the country's troubled history, often revolves around preserving its sovereignty and sphere of influence. Therefore, Russia's gov-

¹⁴⁹ NATO (2023d).

¹⁵⁰ See *Ibid.*

ernment seeks to maintain control over neighbouring countries and limit their ties to Western institutions like NATO and the EU. Russia views attempts by NATO or the EU to expand their influence in its perceived sphere as a threat, whereby NATO and the new member states claim to prioritize the sovereignty of independent nations and their right to choose their alliances and partnerships. They see *resilience* as strengthening the capacity of these nations to make sovereign decisions without external coercion. Nevertheless, Russia is seen as one of the main opponents to NATO and its member states, especially when the European area and its borders is considered. This is why the West, including NATO and EU, uses *resilience* to justify ongoing sanctions against Russia, while Russia sees it as an answer to the sanctions. Russia promotes a resilient narrative, emphasizing the strength and capability to survive any crisis, urging its citizens to cultivate their *resilience*. Nevertheless, these different approaches reinforce perceptions of *otherness*, blurring the efforts to resolve the situation.

Mark Webber, James Sperling, and Martin A. Smith emphasize in their book *What's wrong with NATO and how to fix it* that Russia continues to consistently play the role of NATO's primary outsider on the global platform, persisting even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.¹⁵¹ They refer to the fact that the Norwegian political scientist and social anthropologist Iver Brynild Neumann delved into the construction of Russian identity in relation to Europe as early as 1999, offering insights into the dynamics of identity formation and the concept of *otherness* in the context of international politics.¹⁵² Neumann highlights the ways in which Europe has positioned Russia as a foil to its own identity, by portraying Russia as fundamentally different in terms of culture, political systems, and values, creating a dichotomy between the *civilized* West and the *barbaric* or *backward* East. Taking up this idea and linking it to the concept of political *resilience*, one can say that emphasizing differences between Europe and Russia was used to strengthen Europe's cohesion and solidarity in the face of perceived external threats. Additionally, understanding Russia as different or oppositional to Europe led to the formation of resilience strategies in terms of military preparedness, diplomatic negotiations, and economic alliances to protect against perceived threats. Furthermore, the narrative of difference has been employed to reinforce the uniqueness and *resilience* of European cultural values, traditions,

¹⁵¹ Cf. Webber/ Sperling/ Smith (2021). P. 92.

¹⁵² See Neumann (1999).

and societal structures. Even if we are talking about Europe here, this idea can also be applied to NATO, since so many NATO members ultimately also belong to the EU.

Russia's approach to *resilience* often downplays democratic values and Human Rights concerns in favour of stability and control. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Russia has been known to support authoritarian leaders in neighbouring countries who are aligned with the interests of the Russian government.¹⁵³ However, NATO and the new member states place a strong emphasis on democratic values and Human Rights as essential components of *resilience*. They view the promotion of democracy to enhance stability and security in the region. This is also discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

The *resilience* approach leads to blaming and attributing differences to an adversary, resulting in suspicion instead of trust. The parties are not entering an open dialogue, but rather resigning themselves to exploit and exacerbate the situation, rather than finding practical solutions. Strategic partnership is necessary, as Ryzhkov concludes, to end nearly ten years of conflict.¹⁵⁴ While there is hope that both sides will seek an alternative, the lack of trust impedes it, even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. If *resilience* remains the guiding approach, it will only promote further mistrust, resulting in an unhealthy relationship between Russia and the West.

Russia has been known to engage in disinformation campaigns and information warfare as part of its *resilience* strategy. It seeks to undermine Western institutions and sow discord. NATO and the new member states recognize the importance of countering disinformation and promoting media freedom as part of their *resilience* efforts. They aim to protect their populations from foreign influence campaigns. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that NATO member countries also conduct information campaigns to promote their own interests, even if this has a different level of intensity. Also, political forces, irrespective of their positioning within the political spectrum, which speak out against the NATO alliance, try to work against NATO through opinion making.

¹⁵³ See for example Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (2014).

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Ryzhkov (2019). P.159.

4.1 Russia's Resilience Narratives for Invasion Justification

Russia's approach to *resilience* can involve military interventions and coercive tactics to exert control over neighbouring countries. It has used military force in Georgia and Ukraine, challenging the territorial integrity of these states. Regarding Russian justification for the war of aggression against the Ukraine, it is interesting to examine this from the point of view of a Russian application of the *resilience* concept:

One point that has been discussed a lot is NATO's eastward enlargement. Concerns about NATO's eastward expansion have been known for a long time. In 2008, for example, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, President of Russia in the end of his second presidential term, expressed his concerns in a Press Statement and Answers to Journalists' Questions Following a Meeting of the Russia-NATO Council.¹⁵⁵ The statement stresses obstacles to improving relations between Russia and NATO, including aspects like NATO's expansion, military infrastructure in new member states, and the deployment of the US missile defense system in Europe. Putin highlighted that the presence of a powerful military block near Russia's borders, with some members subject to **Article 5** of the North Atlantic Treaty, is seen as a direct threat to Russia's security, since mere assurances that this is not directed against Russia are considered insufficient. In a recent interview Putin gave to the China Media Group in October 2023, he took up this issue again, addressing the question of whether there is any chance of building a common, shared, and indivisible security with China, in relation to the Ukrainian issue. In his answer, Putin emphasized the importance of equal security for all states and expressed concerns about Ukraine's potential inclusion in military blocs. He pointed out that despite assurances in 1991 that NATO would not expand further east – quoting NATO as follows: “Yes, we [NATO] promised you not to expand NATO eastwards, but those were verbal promises”¹⁵⁶ –, there have been multiple waves of NATO expansion, leading to mistrust. Putin also stressed the challenge of negotiating with countries that change their stance with each new administration,¹⁵⁷ thereby again taking up the idea of the evil other player who cannot be trusted. This perceived threats to security is one of the ways how Russia's justification for potential military action against Ukraine based on concerns about NATO's eastward enlargement can be explained by the *resilience* concept: 1) Putin's emphasis on NATO's eastward expansion is framed as a

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Presidential Executive Office (2008).

¹⁵⁶ Presidential Executive Office (2023).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*

threat to Russia's security. This framing aligns with the *resilience* concept by highlighting Russia's perceived vulnerabilities and the need to protect its interests. The presence of a powerful military block near Russia's borders is presented as a direct threat, reflecting Russia's concerns about its security in a changing geopolitical environment. 2) Putin's reference to past assurances made in 1991 regarding NATO's expansion echoes the *resilience* concept by drawing on historical agreements and perceived violations of those agreements. Russia's perception of a broken promise regarding NATO expansion contributes to a sense of historical grievance, which can drive its current actions. 3) Putin's mention of partners changing their stance with new administration underscores the idea of mistrust and the challenges of dealing with changing political landscapes. This aligns with the *resilience* concept, as it highlights the difficulty of building long-term cooperation and shared security when states believe that other actors cannot be trusted. 4) Putin's portrayal of NATO expansion as a threat and his reference to verbal promises contribute to the framing of NATO and Western countries as unreliable partners. This characterization of *the other* as untrustworthy aligns with the *resilience* concept's focus on the role of external actors in shaping a state's security perceptions. 5) The argument that NATO expansion is perceived as a direct threat to Russia's security reflects the *security dilemma*, a central concept within the *resilience* framework. The *security dilemma*¹⁵⁸ illustrates how actions by one state to enhance its security, such as building armaments or forming alliances, can reduce the security of other states.¹⁵⁹ This leads to reciprocal responses and escalates into a cycle of hostility, leaving neither side better off than before. Under this lens, Russia's actions may be seen as responses to perceived threats, leading to a cycle of security competition and *resilience*-building measures.

From this point of view, former US President Barack Obama's decision to refrain from supplying arms to Ukraine following the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, recognizing that arming Ukraine could escalate tensions by intensifying Russian apprehensions and potentially fueling Ukrainian ambitions to counter Russia's earlier actions, aligns with an understanding of the *security dilemma*.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Author's note: The security dilemma is a pivotal concept in the study of international politics. Coined by John Herz in 1950 and further analyzed by scholars like Robert Jervis and Charles Glaser.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Walt (2022).

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

The claims of *genocide*¹⁶¹ by Ukraine have also been voiced several times. For instance, during a telephone conversation with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in March 2022, “Vladimir Putin recalled that for eight years, the Western partners shut their eyes to the *genocide* of people of the Donbass republics perpetrated by the Kiev regime”¹⁶², while accusing the West “to ignore such violations of international humanitarian law”¹⁶³. From a *resilience* point of view, this justification can be explained in the following way: 1) Putin portrays the situation in Ukraine, particularly in the Donbass region, as a humanitarian crisis and a threat to the Russian-speaking population. Framing the actions of the Kiev regime as *genocide*, can be seen as an attempt to elicit international sympathy and support for their actions. Thus, the actions of the Kiev regime are framed as an external threat. 2) Additionally, Putin is building a narrative of vulnerability. Putin portrays Russia as a protector of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine, labeling them as vulnerable and oppressed. This narrative again aims to gain domestic and international support for any military intervention. 3) By accusing Western partners of ignoring the alleged *genocide* in Donbass, Putin is positioning Russia as the resilient actor responding to a humanitarian crisis. Taking action to protect the affected population, aligns with the concept of *resilience* as the ability to withstand and respond to challenges and threats. 4) Lastly, Putin deflects blame by accusing the West of ignoring violations of international humanitarian law. This tactic shifts the responsibility for the crisis onto Ukraine and its Western supporters, rather than acknowledging Russia's role in the conflict.

Another justification for the invasion is Putin's claim that that modern Ukraine is not a real country, but “entirely the product of the Soviet era [...] on the lands of historical Russia”¹⁶⁴. Before the attack, in the summer of 2021, Putin published an article entitled *On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*. There he underlines the historical and cultural bonds between Russians and Ukrainians, tracing their common heritage back to Ancient Rus.¹⁶⁵ He discusses the political and historical factors that led to Ukraine's separation from Russia over time, noting the complexity of Ukraine's development, regional identi-

¹⁶¹ Author's note: Coined by Raphaël Lemkin in 1944, *genocide* combines the Greek *genos* (race/ tribe) with the Latin *cide* (denoting killing). Lemkin's term emerged from the Holocaust's systematic extermination of Jewish people and historical targeting of specific groups. In 1946, the UN General Assembly acknowledged *genocide* as a crime, further formalizing it in the 1948 Genocide Convention. In the present Convention, genocide covers acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group. See UN (n.d.).

¹⁶² Presidential Executive Office (2022b).

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Putin (2021).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Ibid.

ties, and shifting borders. Putin emphasizes the deep-rooted unity and division between the two nations, shaped by linguistic, cultural, and religious connections. Furthermore, in his speech to the Russian people only a few days before the attack, on 21. February 2022, Putin emphasized “the fact that modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia”¹⁶⁶, thus creating the *fact* in the first place. Putin’s justification based on historical and cultural ties can be explained through the *resilience* concept as follows: 1) Putin’s emphasis on the historical and cultural bonds between Russians and Ukrainians serves to frame Russia’s actions as an attempt to restore unity within the historical context. This framing portrays Russia as the protector of common heritage and unity, invoking a sense of shared history and *resilience* in the face of past divisions. 2) By highlighting the historical and cultural connections between the two nations, Putin positions Russia as a resilient actor striving to overcome the divisions and separations that have occurred over time. This historical narrative portrays Russia’s actions as an effort to reunite and strengthen the shared cultural and historical bonds. 3) Putin’s statement that modern Ukraine was *entirely created by Russia* can be seen as an attempt to assert ownership over Ukraine’s historical development and its ties to Russia. This assertion implies that Ukraine’s existence is intrinsically linked to Russia, reinforcing the idea that Russia has a legitimate role in Ukraine’s future. 4) Putin’s narrative not only emphasizes the historical ties but also implies that Russia is acting to correct a historical injustice. This creates a justification for Russia’s potential military intervention, framing it as a response to the alleged historical separation imposed by external factors. 5) Putin’s historical unity narrative gain aims to shape public opinion both domestically and internationally. It seeks to garner support by framing Russia’s actions as an effort to restore a resilient historical connection, while also placing blame on external influences for Ukraine’s separation from Russia.

In summary, it can be said that protection from NATO plays a very important role for Russia, not only in relation to Ukraine, but generally to countries that are on the Russian border and in a positive NATO relationship, such as Finland.

4.1 Russia – NATO Relation

At the end of the Second World War in 1954, Russian forces occupied territories previously conquered by Germany. Some of these became part of the USSR, which thus became

¹⁶⁶ Presidential Executive Office (2022a).

more and more like the size of the former Russian Empire. As a Western response, European and North American countries joined together to form NATO. This in turn was answered 1955 by the founding of the Warsaw Pact, a union of communist states in Europe under Russian in the sense of Soviet leadership.¹⁶⁷ Like the SU, the Warsaw Pact disintegrated, but two years earlier in 1989 at the end of the 20th century, while NATO continued to grow. Thus, 15 years after the end of the Warsaw Pact, every former member of the Warsaw Pact, with the exception of Russia, was a member of the EU or NATO.¹⁶⁸ According to Tim Marshall, it would in no way be acceptable from a Russian security point of view if Ukraine were to join NATO, as Russia's access to the Black Sea port would then be at risk. And from the Russian side, Ukraine joining the EU would merely be a NATO membership in disguise. In his book *Prisoners of Geography* published in 2021, Marshall assumed that it could very well be a reason for war if Georgia, Moldova, or Ukraine would become part of EU or NATO.¹⁶⁹ However, Ukraine and its neighbours know that they cannot rely on American support if they are not in NATO.¹⁷⁰

According to George Robertson, a former Labour defence secretary who led NATO between 1999 and 2003, the newly officiated Putin wanted Russia to be included in Western Europe as part of a secure and prosperous alliance.¹⁷¹ In a 2000 interview with British television journalist David Frost, Vladimir Putin expressed his views on NATO, stating that he did not see NATO as an enemy but rather as an organization that Russia could potentially partner with.¹⁷² There he clearly stated that he could not imagine his "own country in isolation from Europe"¹⁷³. Putin believed that framing NATO as Russia's enemy would not be productive for Russia or the world. However, he emphasized that cooperation and partnership with NATO could only happen if Russia's views were considered on an equal footing with those of other NATO members. He stressed the importance of equitable relations and voiced opposition to NATO's eastward expansion.¹⁷⁴ It is said that Vladimir Putin expressed interest in Russia joining NATO, but he did not want to follow the standard application process and be treated as one of many nations applying for membership.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Marshall (2022). P.21.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Ibid. P.22.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Ibid. P.29.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Ibid. P.34.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Rankin (2021).

¹⁷² Cf. BBC Breakfast with Frost (2000).

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Rankin (2021).

The NATO-Russia Council was established on 28 May 2002, with the signing of the treaty in Rome. At that time, Putin had been in office for two years. The signing of the treaty was considered a major foreign policy success at the time. It was interpreted as the official end of the Cold War.¹⁷⁶ Thus, for a short time, Russia's membership in the EU or even NATO seemed to be a viable option. Putin's perspective on NATO evolved over time, with his suspicion of the West increasing, particularly after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 and NATO's expansion into Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁷⁷ Despite this, Putin initially viewed NATO as a potential partner for Russia. But over the years, the relationship became more and more acute. From provocative military exercises on both sides to actual military interventions, such as the war Russia waged in Georgia in 2008, NATO aircraft stationed in the Baltic States and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 - Russia has shown its willingness to intervene militarily when it feels pressured or needs to defend itself.¹⁷⁸ Then in 2015, the US, leading NATO, was designated as a threat to national security in the new Russian Navy Strategy Paper. This in turn unsettled NATO and led to talks about a permanent American base in Poland.¹⁷⁹

This again shows why Russia might assume an attack on its own country. While its own protective alliances crumbled, the formerly officially hostile alliance strengthened and moved closer to its own borders. However, China, which is also bordering and approaching, should also be briefly mentioned here as another threat: It can be assumed that China will eventually gain control over Siberia, due to the declining Russian birth rate and the influx of Chinese migrants.¹⁸⁰ At the moment, however, Russia still sees China more as a strategic partner that, like Russia, wants to counter NATO.

However, while the critique on NATO's post-Cold War topographical enlargement often finds supporters, Kimberly Marten challenges the fundamental claim that the downturn in Russia's relations with the West was damaged by NATO's enlargement. Marten states that the expansion of NATO had the unintended consequence of weakening the alliance. While Russia was aware of this fact, it refrained from a military response to perceived European threats until the annexation of Crimea in 2014.¹⁸¹ Additionally, Marten highlights that the deterioration in Russia's relations with the West was a complex issue with multiple con-

¹⁷⁶ Cf. SWR2 (2002).

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Rankin (2021).

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Marshall (2022). P.36&37.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Ibid. P.39.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Ibid. P.26.

¹⁸¹ Marten (2020). P.401.

tributing factors, with Russia's response to its diminishing global influence likely playing a central role.¹⁸² Marten claims that NATO behavior only exacerbated this situation, while not being the primary causal factor. Lastly, Marten says that Russia's negative response to NATO enlargement was present from the beginning. However, this reaction was skillfully manipulated and amplified by both nationalist opposition groups and Vladimir Putin's regime to serve their respective domestic political agendas.¹⁸³

On the one hand, it seems that Russia simply reacts and that these actions can be explained with *resilience*. NATO, on the other hand, is promoting the *resilience* concept very strongly, while also acting guided by the concept. When wondering why NATO places such importance on *resilience*, one could assume that NATO wants to commit itself less strongly to the member states and accession countries like Ukraine. With the *resilience* approach NATO urges its member states to take care of crisis situations on their own. NATO would only interfere when absolutely necessary, whereby it is not clear and nowhere defined when this case would be. Presumably this hold-back approach is driven by the United States of America since they do not want to put too much effort and money into Europe's safety and stability. The USA is the strongest ally of NATO and always in charge of military questions.¹⁸⁴ The USA prefers to take care of their own problems, while demanding more and more spending on rearmament from the other NATO members and Europe overall. The increase in military strength can clearly be explained under the *resilience* concept as preparing for the worst in order to be able to withstand it. It should be mentioned that Donald John Trump, who served as the 45th president of the United States from 2017 to 2021, dismissed the importance of NATO during the election campaign in 2016, while he took NATO seriously after being elected. Trump is not the only leader of a NATO country who spoke against NATO. The French Prime Minister Manuel Macron did the same in 2019, saying that ““we are currently experiencing [...] the brain death of NATO””¹⁸⁵.

NATO skepticism, but also the public and strongly driven *resilience* course might be why Russia started the Ukraine invasion in the first place - sensing an opportunity, with the feeling that NATO had abandoned Ukraine. The only problem was that Ukraine proved to be resilient in a NATO way of definition, even though it was not part of NATO. The ongoing relationship between NATO and Ukraine prepared Ukraine for the invasion. But to

¹⁸² Cf. Ibid.

¹⁸³ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Marshall (2022). P.96&97.

¹⁸⁵ BBC (2019).

pursue the idea that *resilience* in the military strategic sense is not just about preparing society, but also about projecting an image of strong *resilience* to potential attackers, Julian Reid asks why Russia considered Ukraine weak enough to dare attack: due to not strong enough Ukrainian *resilience*, a failure of NATO, or false Russian perception and calculation? According to Reid, the media experts have a clear answer regarding the situation: Ukrainians have shown immense *resilience*, and Putin miscalculated by assuming he could win by targeting their military infrastructure. When that approach did not work, Russia began to target civilians and their infrastructure, bombing residential areas and hospitals in several cities. This strategy has backfired, and, according to Reid, it is likely that Russia will be more likely to attack civilians and their infrastructure to undermine their adversary's *resilience* in the future. Reid draws two conclusions from this: Firstly, any state facing a Russian attack needs to prepare for a strategy that starts by targeting civilians and their infrastructure. Secondly, any democratic state turning to NATO for defence needs to accept that *resilience* is a necessary strategy for security. He warns that it is essential to be cautious about this development, as *resilience* makes society a more direct agent of war and a target in war. For him *resilience* does not equal security, it is social insecurity by state design.¹⁸⁶

Since both NATO and Russia include Ukraine in their respective *resilience* concepts, the approaches also overlap territorially. It seems almost too obvious to mention, but the invasion worsened the NATO-Russia relationship. A partnership between Russia and NATO seems less likely than ever before. The question whether Russia sees NATO's understanding of *resilience* as a weakness arises. It is difficult to judge this aspect, as no public statements can be found. Nevertheless, Russia has expressed concerns and criticisms regarding NATO's actions based on NATO's *resilience* concept, viewing it from its own, Russian, perspective. One of these points is the previously discussed eastward expansion of NATO. Another is the critique of NATO's efforts to strengthen its collective defense capabilities, potentially making it more difficult for Russia to achieve its military objectives in the event of a conflict. Since Russia has a history of engaging in asymmetric warfare and unconventional tactics, it may interpret NATO's *resilience* initiatives, including efforts to protect critical infrastructure and enhance cybersecurity, as potential defensive measures that could make it more challenging for Russia to exploit vulnerabilities in NATO member states. These approaches assume that Russia sees NATO's *resilience* strategy as a military

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Reid (2022).

threat that is directly directed against Russia, which in turn can be explained by Russia's history of aggression. It's important to note that perspectives on NATO's *resilience* measures can vary within Russia's leadership and among its experts.

Another question that arises is whether Russia would have attacked Ukraine if NATO had focused on **Article 5** rather than **Article 3** in recent years. From Russia's perspective, NATO's focus on **Article 3** could be seen as a proactive effort by NATO member states to prepare for and mitigate potential threats. Based on Russia's history and the first foundation reason for NATO it does make sense that Russia sees itself as this threat. While **Article 3** does not invoke the collective defense principle of **Article 5**, it does demonstrate NATO's commitment to addressing security challenges. Depending on Russia's trust in NATO's intentions, this could either be seen as a reasonable precaution or as a provocation. In contrast **Article 5** is often referred to as the *collective defense* clause. The activation of **Article 5** would be a clear indication that NATO member states perceive a direct military threat or attack. Russia might interpret this as a hostile act and a significant escalation. Invoking **Article 5** might carry significant consequences, potentially leading to a military conflict. Russia's response to such an activation would depend on its assessment of the situation and its own readiness for confrontation. In summary, whether Russia would have felt less threatened or attacked if NATO had focused on **Article 5** rather than **Article 3** in recent years depends on the specific context and the actions taken by NATO. **Article 3** is primarily about preparedness and *resilience*, while **Article 5** signifies a collective military response to an attack. In the end, Russia's perception of NATO's actions and intentions play the critical role in shaping its reactions.

4.2 Resilience as a Double-Edged Sword

One would hope that NATO and the new member states prioritize non-military measures for *resilience*, such as political and economic reforms, institution-building, and cooperation on security and defence. They seek to deter aggression through collective defence rather than offensive military actions.

In their article *Resilience in EU Discourse: A New Norm in Relations with Russia?*, Russian authors Elena B. Pavlova and Tatiana A. Romanova introduce *resilience* as a new

norm of the European Union that emphasizes threats rather than resources.¹⁸⁷ The ongoing political crisis between the EU and Russia has led the EU to use *resilience* to highlight Russia's *otherness* and defend its own status as a normative leader. Pavlova and Romanova suggest that this approach prevents Russia and the EU from overcoming the crisis in their relations.¹⁸⁸

Cristian Nitoiu and Florin Pasatoi, from the Center for Foreign Policy and Security Studies, further explore *resilience* in their article *Resilience and the World Order: The EU and the RIC States*.¹⁸⁹ They compare the understanding of *resilience* in the EU to that of the RIC states Russia, India, and China. In their view, external challenges have forced the EU to recognize the *resilience* of the liberal world order has been crippled due to the actions of so-called illiberal states such as China or Russia.¹⁹⁰ According to them, non-Western states, including the RIC ones, have integrated the concept of *resilience*, but in a less definite way. However, while Pavlova and Romanova see *resilience* as a tool for the EU to draw attention to Russia's *otherness*, Nitoiu and Pasatoi highlight that RIC states have also used the concept of *resilience* to portray Western countries as a threatening outside influence, particularly in Russia.¹⁹¹

Over the past few years, politicians and experts have been pessimistic about improving relations between Russia and the EU, as well as between Russia and the USA.¹⁹² The idea of a constructive relationship based on dialogue and cooperation seems out of reach, especially since both parties' resilient approaches are a barrier to trust-based dialogue. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, which threatened the global community, they failed to put aside their mistrust and work together. With both sides committed to maintaining their *resilience*, it seems that a promising and effective policy-making concept may prevent a breakthrough in their relationship. This can be particularly observed in the developments surrounding the Russian attack on Ukraine.

The continuing mistrust on both sides, which has led to wars like the one in Ukraine, can thus also be seen as a trigger for Human Rights violations. In particular, the perception of *otherness* does not seem to fit the concept of Human Rights, as the Universal Declaration

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Pavlova/ Romanova (2019).

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Nitoiu/ Pasatoi (2020).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. P.445.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Ibid. P.452.

¹⁹² Cf. Ryzhkov (2019). P.141.

of Human Rights (UDHR) states in its first Article: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."¹⁹³ Perception of *otherness* comes with a mistrust which in turn does not fit at all with the understanding of brotherhood and not with the idea to act towards each other. For this to happen, there must certainly be trust in all those involved, which is difficult if the participants see themselves as different and principally opponents. Furthermore, it could be assumed that the *resilience* approach is not conducive to the protection of Human Rights. This hypothesis will be explored in the following chapter, which introduces the concept of Human Rights and looks at how NATO and Russia apply *resilience* and Human Rights side by side and against each other.

¹⁹³ UN General Assembly (1948).

5 The Terms of Human Rights

After analyzing *resilience* in the context of the relationship between Russia and NATO, the impact of this interaction on Human Rights will now be examined. *Resilience* is presented by NATO as an important instrument for protecting Human Rights since “the foundation of [NATO’s] resilience lies in [NATO’s] shared commitment to the principles of individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.”¹⁹⁴ The following section examines, among other things, whether this is really the case.

Human Rights and *resilience* can be seen as two different but connected concepts. Both concepts hold large value, and both concepts have a complex relationship with social and respectively political science.¹⁹⁵ Looking at the question if one concept should be prioritized over the other, the specific context, goals, and values of a given individual, organization, or government for each concept need to be considered. Therefore, it can be stated that there is no complete answer to whether one is more important than the other. However, Human Rights should ideally be secured and emphasized everywhere and anytime. But the prioritization of one concept over the other will always lead to ethical and policy debates between individuals, parties, (non-governmental) organization and countries. On the one hand, Human Rights might be giving precedence to the belief that nothing should overcome those fundamental rights, even though this brings other challenges and exposes new limitations. On the other hand, *resilience* could be emphasized to maintain stability and security, even if this means certain restrictions on rights in emergencies or crises. In any case, both concepts influence each other a lot nowadays. Furthermore, not only the concept of *resilience* itself but especially the differing interpretations of *resilience* between Russia, NATO, and the new member states contribute to complex geopolitical dynamics that impact the Human Rights situation, in this case specifically in Eastern Europe. The clash of these perspectives leads to tensions and conflicts, with Human Rights often caught in the crossfire. Upholding both Human Rights and *resilience* at the same time seems to be the best approach from NATO’s point of view, with the hope that both concepts support each other and that it is possible to contribute to both individual freedoms and collective strength. However, in this case, this is not yet an answered question and can rather be seen

¹⁹⁴ NATO (2021b).

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Freeman (2022). P.3.

as an open thesis. In order to come closer to a possible answer to this aspect and the relationship of *resilience* and Human Rights, the concept of Human Rights will be introduced below. On this basis, the relationship between the two concepts is first examined at NATO and then at Russia.

5.1 The Concept of Human Rights

Before examining Human Rights, one must understand that the contemporary concept of Human Rights is a creation of history.¹⁹⁶ While the underlying ideas of the Human Rights concept are ancient, the present Human Rights concept finds its origins in the UN Charter of 1945 and the UN UDHR in 1948. These documents laid the foundation for an extensive body of both international and national Human Rights laws. They drew inspiration from the ideals of natural rights and the Rights of Man, which were articulated during the American and French revolutions of the 18th century.¹⁹⁷ Based on the UDHR or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a treaty, adopted in 1966, focusing on civil and political rights, such as the right to life, freedom of expression, and equality before the law, Human Rights are fundamental principles that protect individuals' inherent dignity and worth. They encompass civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, such as freedom of expression, the right to life, equality before the law, and access to education and healthcare. The values such as dignity, equality, and justice of the modern Human Rights concept can also be drawn from the preamble of the UDHR: "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world"¹⁹⁸.

In his introductory text on Human Rights, Michael Freeman provides an overview of the historical course of Human Rights, offering a nuanced perspective that addresses critics who underscore the predominant Western influence in shaping the concept.¹⁹⁹ While Samuel Moyn, for instance, contends that the notion of Human Rights gained substantial prominence only in the 1970s, Freeman points to the ancient Greeks, who had already articulated ideas concerning power and its potential for abuse.²⁰⁰ This can be seen as an essential basis for the development of the concept of rights and protection of vulnerable persons,

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Ibid. P.15.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Ibid. P.vi.

¹⁹⁸ UN General Assembly (1948).

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Freeman (2022). P.15.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Ibid. P.15-18.

which in turn led to Human Rights. Nevertheless, the first reference to ancient Greece naturally supports the thesis that Human Rights originated in the West, like the concept of *resilience*.

Freeman also highlights that the Human Rights concept is universal,²⁰¹ which also is stated in the title of the UN Declaration. Within the framework of this paper, it is not possible to shed sufficient light on the debate as to whether Human Rights are anchored in the West and thus whether their universality could be called into question. While it is highly desirable that Human Rights are universal throughout the world and for everyone, it should not be forgotten that certain countries and governments may feel attacked and patronized by this approach. However, this could also simply be an evasive action to oppose those same Human Rights with impunity. Nevertheless, Human Rights, as well as the *resilience* concept, are used by governance for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Preventing conflicts in return can help protect Human Rights and promote *resilience* by reducing instability and violence. To return briefly to universality: One could say that the concept of *resilience* also is universal, as it can be applied to various aspects of life, ranging from individual to community, and, for example, societal *resilience* to ecological and economic *resilience*.

The study and practice of Human Rights were traditionally dominated by lawyers.²⁰² When focusing solely on the concept of rights, it closely aligns with the distinction between right and wrong, where wrong contrasts with right based on the “standard of rightness”²⁰³. The question of right and wrong underscores the intrinsic connection between Human Rights and the realm of law. It essentially delineates two distinct types of situations for humans: one in which Human Rights are respected, resulting in a right situation, and another where Human Rights are violated, rendering the situation wrong. In essence, it boils down to a dichotomy where either Human Rights are upheld, signifying a morally sound situation, or they are infringed upon, leading to a morally deficient one. The concept of *resilience* also recognizes the importance of the rule of law. One can say that the rule of law is a fundamental principle in both Human Rights and *resilience* efforts. On the one hand, the contemporary concept of Human Rights is grounded in legal principles, with the rule of law being essential for upholding those rights. On the other hand, *resilience* strategies often

²⁰¹ Cf. Ibid. P.15.

²⁰² Cf. Ibid. P.13.

²⁰³ Cf. Ibid. P.6.

involve maintaining the rule of law even during challenging times to protect individual rights. Both Human Rights and *resilience* strategies share an interest in preventing Human Rights abuses and violence during crises. In this case, for example, *resilience* initiatives may include early warning systems and conflict prevention measures.

Since the end of the Cold War, Human Rights norms have gained prominence not only in international law but also in national constitutions and domestic legal systems of various countries.²⁰⁴ The number of countries participating in Human Rights treaties has increased, despite a perceived decline in global Human Rights, without this text being able to go into more detail on this decline due to the focus of this work. While many governments declare Human Rights, they have very different levels of success in the actual implementation of those.²⁰⁵ Like the *resilience* concept Human Rights recognize the importance of holding governments and individuals accountable for Human Rights violations. Efforts to seek justice and reconciliation in post-conflict or post-crisis situations are important in both Human Rights and *resilience* contexts. These justice and reconciliation efforts can help to address past Human Rights abuses and promote stability and recovery.

However, an exclusive focus on Human Rights only from a legal perspective does not do justice to the concept. Human Rights have a history marked by philosophical debates and controversies, like the one mentioned earlier in ancient Greece, which are crucial for understanding the current state of Human Rights. While Human Rights have become a significant part of international and national law since the end of World War II, they have also been central to political conflicts.²⁰⁶ Nowadays, they are especially important in the political context, as they are used by countries and governments to put other countries and governments in their place and to distinguish themselves. Regardless of subsequent indictments, public statements by political figures condemning or defending actions because of Human Rights can be found in the media. For example, did the Russian news agency TASS publish a short report in November 2022 which declares that Russian officials condemn Ukrainian authorities for urging violence against Russian journalists during the military operation:²⁰⁷ Grigory Lukyantsev of the Russian Foreign Ministry highlighted their consistent efforts at the UN and OSCE to prioritize journalists' safety, emphasizing repeat-

²⁰⁴ Cf. Regilme (2019). P.279.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Freeman (2022). P.5.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Ibid. P.13.

²⁰⁷ Cf. TASS (2022).

ed proposals for resolutions. Lukyantsev labeled these calls for violence and bounties on journalists as flagrant Human Rights violations that demand urgent attention and action.²⁰⁸

According to Freeman, a comprehensive understanding of Human Rights necessitates an exploration of both their legal and political dimensions. However, Human Rights extend beyond just law and politics: Other social sciences, like sociology, anthropology, international relations, and economics are for a holistic understanding of Human Rights issues and potential solutions.²⁰⁹ This can be seen as a parallel to the concept of *resilience*, which is also found in many different disciplines and is sometimes understood and interpreted very differently there. For decades the social sciences took little notice of the “anti-social and unscientific”²¹⁰ concept of Human Rights. According to Freeman, social sciences began only to take a deeper interest in the study of Human Rights in the 1970s, when Human Rights movements emerged and started to challenge authoritarian regimes in various parts of the world. This also marks the starting point for real attention to the contemporary Human Rights for Samuel Moyn. Initially, these early social science studies primarily focused on U.S. foreign policy and the impact of international Human Rights law, often leading to skeptical conclusions about both.²¹¹ This undercuts the criticism of the Western coinage of Human Rights. While studies have reached more nuanced conclusions, one can find renewed skepticism about the concept as well. Moreover, a new generation of Human Rights historians has challenged what they see as a simplistic and overly triumphalist schoolbook like history of Human Rights, shaped above all by a Western history and interpretation.²¹² They put emphasis on the need to acknowledge the evolving nature of rights concepts.

The Human Rights concept is an interdisciplinary concept that requires a multi-faceted approach to fully grasp potential complexities. The concept inherits a history which is “characterized by continuity, diversity and change”²¹³, full of struggles for “freedom, autonomy and resistance to oppression”²¹⁴. For Michael Freeman the concept of Human Rights provides a way of thinking about events when people become victims of any kind of governmental and non-governmental violence.²¹⁵ According to Freeman the concept is

²⁰⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.* P.vii.

²¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

²¹² Cf. *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.* P.38.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.* P.3.

important for ordinary people without security, making Human Rights most needed when they are lacking or violated.

There is a debate in political science about whether global or domestic factors are more influential in shaping Human Rights outcomes.²¹⁶ Philosophers and political theorists, on the other hand, are exploring ways to achieve Human Rights on a global scale, drawing inspiration from moral, normative, political, and legal justifications.²¹⁷

According to the Human Development Report 2021/2022 of the UN Development Programme “we live in a world of worry”²¹⁸, which is very reminiscent of a *resilience* focused point of view. The report addresses directly the “war in Ukraine and elsewhere”²¹⁹, which is causing more human suffering amid a changing geopolitical order and a strained multi-lateral system, highlighting the threat to Human Rights. The report also stresses that “the interaction of uncertainties casts doubt on the effectiveness of some of the *resilience* strategies that have historically been pursued.”²²⁰ While the common goals as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are inextricably linked, many people are losing faith in the collective ability to achieve them.²²¹ Human Rights and human development are closely connected, as they share a common motivation. While both encompass the idea of rights to capabilities, Human Rights focus on the freedom to choose among alternatives (process freedoms), whereas capabilities are more about the opportunity to make those choices (opportunity freedoms).²²²

For the Human Development Report 2021/2022, Hans Sell, Michelle O’Reilly and Dagomar Degroot developed a map of the five pathways to *resilience* in the light of climate pressure, where climate pressure can be seen as a threat to Human Rights (see Figure 4). The graphic can be read as a map to *resilience* in the light of endangered Human Rights.

²¹⁶ Cf. Regilme (2019). P.280.

²¹⁷ Cf. Ibid.

²¹⁸ UN Development Programme (2022). P.3.

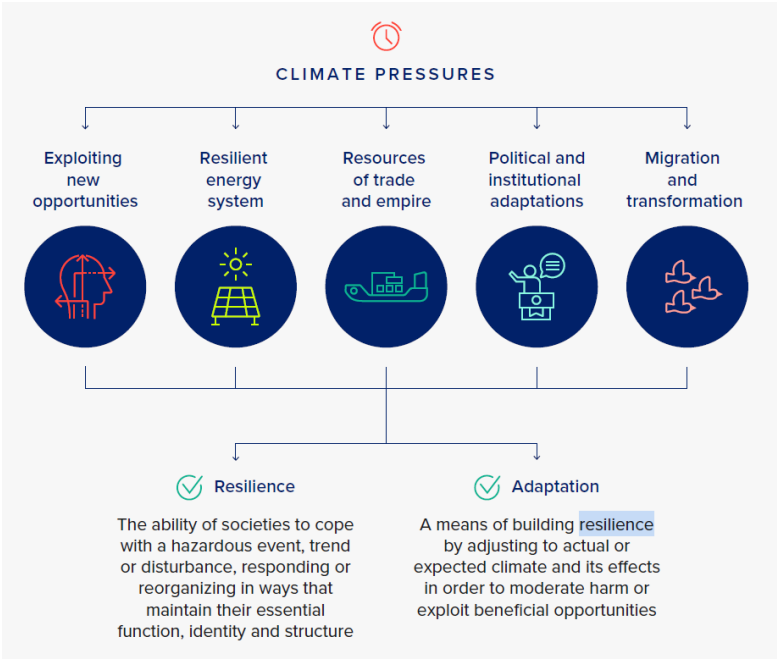
²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid. P.49.

²²¹ Cf. Ibid.

²²² UN Development Programme (2022). P.185.

Figure 4) The Five Pathways to Resilience in the Light of Climate Pressure



Source: UN Development Programme (2022). P.53.
 Created by Hans Sell, Michelle O’Reilly and Dagomar Degroot.

But while NATO and its partners have prioritized *resilience* in the last decades, progress in human development has regressed, marked by deteriorating trends in poverty, food insecurity, forced displacement, and increasing inequalities.²²³ Notably, the global Human Development Index (HDI) has experienced a consecutive two-year decline, bringing the world’s development status back to a level like the period just after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.²²⁴ This may also be related to the deterioration of global Human Rights. In the following, the interplay of Human Rights and *resilience* in NATO is examined in more detail, with an attempt to understand how the decline of Human Rights is related to the *resilience* approach.

5.2 NATO, Human Rights and Resilience

In today’s world, great power competition, terrorism, conflict, cyber threats and climate change threaten the security of individuals and communities. For more than 70 years, NATO has ensured the freedom and security of Allies. Today, we remain steadfast in our resolve to protect our one billion citizens, defend our territory and safeguard our freedom and democracy. We want to live in a world where sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected.

NATO (2022c).

²²³ Cf. Ibid. P.29.
²²⁴ Cf. Ibid.

NATO and its new member states place a significant emphasis on Human Rights as a fundamental element of their *resilience* initiatives. While the NATO Charter does not mention Human Rights directly, the preface of the charter expresses a commitment to certain principles that are generally aligned with Human Rights, such as the “desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments”²²⁵, „democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law”²²⁶. As stated by NATO: “Freedom, equality, human rights – these are the values that bind us together.”²²⁷ However, it is important to note that this does not necessarily imply that NATO serves as the guardian of Human Rights. NATO’s primary mission is “collective defence and [...] the preservation of peace and security”²²⁸ in the North Atlantic area. This involves deterring and defending against military threats and aggression. While NATO members are supposed to uphold Human Rights within their own borders, the alliance’s primary function is to ensure the security and sovereignty of its members. This assignment is based on shared democratic values of the members, including the protection of Human Rights, which, however, is not always successful.

For instance, in 2009, on the eve of NATO’s 60th-anniversary Summit, organizations like the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) raised questions regarding the nature and extent of NATO’s commitment to international Human Rights and the rule of law.²²⁹ They called for increased transparency and access to information concerning all NATO activities that may have resulted in Human Rights and humanitarian law violations. Their argument stemmed from the belief that a lack of transparency and information can give rise to suspicions within affected societies about the objectives and intentions behind NATO’s actions. This opacity can also hinder appropriate investigations and prosecution of crimes. Furthermore, these organizations emphasized the need for accountability in cases where human rights and humanitarian law had been violated. They argued that this accountability is essential not only for the sake of justice and reparations for victims but also to aid in the restoration of the rule of law and democracy in

²²⁵ NATO (1949).

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ NATO (2022c).

²²⁸ NATO (1949).

²²⁹ Cf. International Federation For Human Rights (2009).

affected societies. Ultimately, accountability serves as a crucial deterrent against future Human Rights violations.²³⁰

After a NATO campaign in Libya in 2014, with the first air campaign in NATO history where only precision-guided munitions were used, NATO felt compelled to make a statement after the Libyan authorities informed the UN of their actions to review incidents affecting civilians: “NATO did everything possible to minimize risks to civilians, but in a complex military campaign, that risk can never be zero. We deeply regret any instance of civilian casualties for which NATO may have been responsible.”²³¹

NATO advocate for democratic governance, rule of law, and the protection of individual freedoms. Membership in these organizations often comes with expectations of upholding these values. Nevertheless, prioritizing *resilience* under **Article 3** may cause many people to suffer and lose their lives. This can be seen in the example of the war in Ukraine, where fighting has been going on for months, with many victims on both sides.

In summary, both Human Rights and *resilience* are important concepts to NATO, but they serve different roles and are not necessarily in direct competition with each other. NATO’s core mission is collective defense and security, while Human Rights are a foundational value of the alliance. *Resilience* is a practical aspect of ensuring the ability to fulfill NATO’s security mission, including the protection of Human Rights within member states. Ultimately, NATO seeks to strike a balance between safeguarding security and upholding democratic values and Human Rights.

There is a potential link between NATO’s *resilience* approach and the general decline in Human Rights, but this link is not deterministic. It depends on how NATO and its member states balance their security imperatives with their commitment to democratic values and Human Rights. While NATO promotes democratic values and individual freedoms among its member states, NATO generally respects the principle of national sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of member countries. This means that NATO may not directly intervene in member states’ internal Human Rights matters, which can contribute to a decline in Human Rights if such issues are not addressed by individual member governments. The link also depends on the specific actions and policies of individual member states, as well as the oversight, transparency, and accountability mechanisms in place. In

²³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

²³¹ NATO (2012).

some cases, strengthening security measures or institutions can have unintended consequences for Human Rights. For example, increased security measures could lead to a decrease in individual freedoms and civil liberties if not balanced with respect for Human Rights. Furthermore, the lack of transparency and accountability can contribute to a decline in Human Rights if violations go unaddressed. NATO's involvement in external military operations, such as the campaign in Libya, can have significant Human Rights implications. In the end, the link between NATO's *resilience* approach and the decline in Human Rights can also be influenced by the broader geopolitical context. Factors such as international conflicts, shifting alliances, and geopolitical interests can affect the ability of NATO and its member states to promote Human Rights. Ultimately one can say, the extent of the link between NATO's *resilience* approach and the decline in Human Rights again is context-dependent and requires careful analysis of specific situations and actions. To conclude, it is important to remember that the Human Rights situation can theoretically deteriorate or improve independently of NATO, since NATO covers only part of the world.

5.3 Russia, Human Rights and Resilience

We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation, united by a common fate on our land, establishing human rights and freedoms, civil peace and accord, preserving the historically established State unity, proceeding from universally acknowledged principles of equality and self-determination of peoples, revering the memory of ancestors who have passed on to us their love for the Fatherland and faith in good and justice, reviving the sovereign statehood of Russia and asserting the firmness of its democratic basis, striving to ensure the well-being and prosperity of Russia, proceeding from the responsibility for our Fatherland before present and future generations, recognizing ourselves to be a part of the world community, do hereby adopt THE CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation, 25 December 1993.

In 1948, the SU, within which Russia was included, stood as one of the original signatories of the UDHR, together with 47 other member countries of the UN at that time. Ratified by the UN General Assembly on December 10th of that year, the adoption of the UDHR received affirmative votes from the SU and for example the United States, China, France, the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, Russia's Human Rights situation is a subject of ongoing international concern and debate. While some positive developments have occurred, there are continuing challenges related to freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as well as the independence of the judiciary and the protection of political and civil rights. The country's Human Rights record remains a topic of international scrutiny and discussion. In the current Human Rights Watch World Report from 2022, which covers the event

up to 2021, the following issues regarding the Human Rights situation are highlighted:²³²

- 1) Harassment of foreign and domestic Human Rights defenders
- 2) Restriction of freedom of expression by, for example, branding non-governmental confirm individual as *foreign agents* or expelling or deporting foreigners in vengeance for their reporting, criticism, or activism.
- 3) Restriction of freedom of assembly, as new legislative amendments entered into force, that further curtailed already restricted freedom of assembly, authorities continued to hand down criminal penalties for peaceful protest, and the usage of excessive force to disperse crowds by police.
- 4) Restriction of freedom of association, when Russia passed two laws to expand its *foreign agents* legislation, targeting individuals and unregistered groups, broadening funding definitions, and increasing inspections. Two additional laws addressed *undesirable* organizations, prohibiting Russian involvement with such groups abroad and lowering the threshold for criminal liability for their perceived supporters.
- 5) Torture, Ill-Treatment in Custody, Police Accountability, as Russian authorities frequently ignored allegations of cruel treatment, torture, and suspicious deaths in custody, often justifying their refusal to open criminal cases by citing statutory limitations. Despite assurances, torture and ill-treatment persisted in Russia's penitentiary system.
- 6) Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity by the as the Russian and the failure to investigate threats and attacks against LGBT people, in which their sexual orientation or gender identity was considered a motive.
- 7) Gender-Based Violence, as Russia's ongoing failure to effectively address domestic violence has tragic consequences due to inadequate legislation, poor police response, and limited support services, including shelter access.
- 8) Digital rights and right to privacy because Russia escalated its control over online expression and limited information access. New laws compelled social media platforms to remove content on government request and banned censorship of Russian state-affiliated accounts. Foreign websites and apps were mandated to establish offices in Russia, risking fines and blocking for noncompliance. Authorities also pressured social media companies to censor protest-related content, resulting in significant fines throughout the year for not complying with content blocking and data localization rules. Meanwhile, public surveillance systems with facial recognition technology continued to be integrated nationwide, raising privacy concerns without proper regulation, oversight, or data protection.
- 9) In addition, the Human Rights situation in relation to Chechnya, the Ukraine and Syria was explicitly criticized.

²³² Human Rights Watch (2022).

This exemplary summary of the report clearly shows that Human Rights in Russia are not always respected and protected by the government as the constitution would implement. It should be noted that the report does not yet include the years 2022 and 2023, as 2022 was the year in which Russia invaded the Ukraine. During this invasion, not only were the Human Rights of Ukrainian citizens violated, but also those of Russians, as military service was expanded and, among other things, migrants were illegally conscripted, or soldiers were sent into battle unprepared and unprotected. As previously stated, the invasion can be seen as *resilience* driven. In line with this idea, Human Rights violations were not only accepted on the Russian side in order to assert their own stately interests, but also on the NATO side. If NATO had not adhered to its *resilience* approach, binding Ukraine more and more to itself and thus further stimulating Russia's security needs, Russia would probably not have attacked according to the idea of the *resilience* concept. If NATO had not branded Russia as *the other* and if both Russia and NATO had taken serious steps to build trust, there might not have been this alienation and thus the perceived need for an attack.

As stated earlier, Russia's history is marked by conflicts, especially military conflicts, which have always emanated from Russia. It stands to reason that one of the main goals of the Russian government is to maintain stability in the country, its national security and sovereignty, which is not easy in such a large and vast country. To achieve this, the government under Putin chooses firm rules and little room for dissent, with severe penalties and many restrictions. This alone is not in line with the basic idea of Human Rights. While Russia's emphasis on stability in its own country and neighbouring countries, control can lead to the suppression of Human Rights and democratic values in Russia itself and in neighbouring countries under its influence. This can result in violations of civil liberties, media censorship, and restrictions on political opposition as shown above.

Nevertheless, Russia does have a constitution that includes provisions for Human Rights and individual freedoms.²³³ In the preface of the constitution, which can be found at the beginning of this subchapter, Human Rights are clearly mentioned, together with human freedoms, civil peace, and consensus, with the goal to preserve the historically established State unity. The second chapter of the constitution is even called "Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen"²³⁴, whereas the Russian term *čelovek*, which is translated here as *man*, can also be translated as *human*. Without going into the individual articles of the constitu-

²³³ See The Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993).

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

tion, it can be summarized that the constitution clearly mentions Human Rights and also means to protect them. The question remains why the Russian government still violates so many Human Rights or does not sufficiently protect them. At this point one should refer to **Article 17** of the Constitution, the first article of the second chapter, which states:²³⁵

In the Russian Federation recognition and guarantees shall be provided for the rights and freedoms of man and citizen according to the universally recognized principles and norms of international law and according to the present Constitution.

Here it is said that international law and universal principles are recognized as a cornerstone for Human Rights. But in the constitution, it is also stated that recognition and guarantees shall be provided according to the present constitution. Thus, the country's own constitution is in competition with international law. And indeed, in 2015, president Putin signed a law allowing the Russian Constitutional Court to decide whether or not to implement the judgements of international Human Rights courts.²³⁶ The law enables the Russian court to overturn decisions of the European Court of Human Rights if it considers them to be unconstitutional. This called into question the primacy of international Human Rights law in Russia. Additionally, in 2020, president Putin signed a bill into law that prioritizes the Russian constitution over international treaties, amending Russian law to prevent the implementation of international treaties conflicting with the constitution.²³⁷ This was the third time in four years that Russian authorities have sought precedence for Russian law over international law. Thus, the Russian government is allowed to act in its own interest, justifying Human Rights violations based on its own constitution, regardless of international law. However, in September 2023, for example, Russia stood before the International Court of Justice in The Hague to answer the Ukrainian charge over violations of the 1948 Genocide Convention, which shows that Russia still recognizes the court as a legal authority.²³⁸

But in summary, the Russian government tends to prioritize national security, stability, and *resilience* over Human Rights concerns, especially when it believes that these priorities are threatened. This can lead to a situation where Human Rights are sometimes subordinated to what the government perceives as the greater good of the state. However, it's important to

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Cf. Reuters (2015).

²³⁷ Cf. Brokaw (2020).

²³⁸ Cf. euronews (2023).

note that views on these issues can vary within Russian society, and there are individuals and groups within Russia that advocate for Human Rights and civil liberties, even if the Russian government opposes this.

To conclude this chapter, it can be said that both NATO and Russia prioritize national security, *resilience*, and Human Rights, but they do so within different contexts and with differing points of emphasis. While NATO places a significant focus on Human Rights as a foundational value and part of its shared democratic values, it still grapples with the challenges of balancing *resilience* and security. Russia, on the other hand, tends to prioritize national security, stability, and *resilience* over Human Rights concerns, often justifying its actions based on its constitution and national interests.

The primary difference lies in how NATO and Russia approach the relationship between *resilience* and Human Rights. NATO aims to balance these interests and acknowledges the need for accountability in cases of Human Rights violations, whereas Russia's actions sometimes directly conflict with Human Rights principles. Again, it should be noted that the dynamics between these elements are complex and context-dependent, and that the Human Rights situation can deteriorate or improve independently of NATO or Russia, as they each cover only part of the world. Regarding the Russian attack on Ukraine, which, to put it bluntly, was accepted by NATO, it can definitely be said that the civilian population in Ukraine and their Human Rights are the victims in this political interplay. They were attacked by Russia after NATO lobbied in an intense way for them to adopt a pro-Western orientation. Now they are receiving support from NATO, especially military support, but are basically on their own in the fight against the invaders. It can be assumed that the war will go on and on without really coming to an end soon, as all parties are too entrenched in their positions. Experts such as Gustav Gressel, Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Affairs in Berlin, are also in support of this theory.²³⁹ Gressel predicts that the war is likely to last until 2025 in any case. According to Gressel, there is a possibility that if Donald Trump is re-elected US President in November 2024, he will offer a deal in January 2025 that is advantageous from the Russian point of view. Spring 2025 could therefore be the earliest time at which the war could be ended on Russian terms.²⁴⁰ However, if Biden were to win the election, the war would have to be expected to last beyond 2025, according to Gressel. The Ukrainians will not give up - the Russians cannot

²³⁹ Cf. tagesschau (2023).

²⁴⁰ Cf. Ibid.

withdraw and suddenly end the war, which would contradict the concept of *resilience*. And NATO will do everything it can to ensure that the situation does not escalate. Seen in this light, the situation follows NATO's intention because it indirectly weakens Russia. In that sense, Russia's aggression has ensured that NATO once again has a task in its original sphere of action.

6 Discussion

This thesis aimed to answer the following research question: **In what ways does Russia's interpretation of resilience differ from that of NATO and the new member states, and how does this impact relations between these actors and Human Rights?**

To this purpose, *resilience* was presented as a political concept, whereby it was shown that the term has been adopted from other scientific fields and that there is no universal definition. The understanding of *resilience* among key entities such as NATO, potential accession countries, the EU, and Russia as a counterpart was analyzed. NATO, established post-WWII, evolved its focus to include *resilience* against multiple shocks. This expanded view includes military and civilian preparedness, reflecting in statements and summits since 2014. The EU's concern for *resilience* post-2016 mirrors NATO's shift, with a focus on countering Russian threats and energy security. Finland's *resilience* perspective, also influenced by historical tensions with Russia, emphasizes societal readiness akin to NATO's evolving stance, evident in actions taken against hybrid threats. Sweden's path to potential NATO membership faces hurdles, yet its *resilience* approach involves active participation in NATO meetings and a Total Defense policy. Ukraine's partnership with NATO intensified post-Crimea annexation, focusing on defense reforms and countering Russian aggression. NATO condemned Russia's actions and emphasized bolstering Ukraine's *resilience*. Russia lacks a direct translation for the term *resilience* but demonstrates adaptability in historical conflicts and crises. Though not explicitly political, Russia displays *resilience* in sovereignty, defense, economics, social cohesion, and disaster management.

Contrasting views on *resilience* among NATO, new member states, and Russia were explored. NATO prioritizes democratic institutions and collective defense, while accession countries focus on military strength, fueling tensions over Russia's perception. NATO aims to secure Eastern Europe while championing democratic values, whereas Russia's approach emphasizes control of neighbors and stability, sidelining democratic principles. This divide breeds mistrust, hindering dialogue. Russia's disinformation campaigns clash with NATO's defense against it. Viewing Russia's interventions through the *resilience* lens shows its security concerns. NATO-Russia relations, already complex and strained, worsened post-Crimea's annexation. NATO's measures, meant for protection, provoke Russia due to historical grievances. *Resilience* inadvertently escalates tensions due to the intrinsic prominence of *otherness* in its conceptual core. As such, the variance in interpretation of

resilience is symptomatic of the fact that *resilience*, when applied in a political or Human Rights context, requires one party to view the other party as *other*. This work questions the *resilience* approach as a whole and based on the performed analysis postulates that *resilience* in fact hampers dialogue and Human Rights, opposing the spirit of brotherhood outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The exploration of Human Rights and *resilience* as concepts underlines their intricate relationship. While Human Rights emphasize universal fundamental rights, *resilience* prioritizes stability, even if it means imposing restrictions during emergencies. This clash, evident in varied interpretations between Russia, NATO, and new member states, impacts, for example, Human Rights in Eastern Europe. NATO strives to uphold both, but it remains an ongoing issue. Despite Human Rights being considered universal, debates persist about their Western origins and global applicability. Some scholars emphasize that Human Rights go beyond law and politics, demanding a multidisciplinary approach for comprehension, while other scholars aim for global Human Rights. The decline in global Human Rights, evident in indices like the HDI, challenges interconnected human development goals. In NATO, Human Rights are fundamental, yet the alliance's primary focus is on collective defense and security, thus calling for a delicate balance. NATO's *resilience* approach, crucial for security, can inadvertently affect Human Rights, especially in conflicts. The link between NATO's *resilience* and the decline in Human Rights involves security measures, sovereignty, transparency, and geopolitical contexts. The relationship between NATO's *resilience* approach and Human Rights is intricate, varying across contexts and actions. NATO's impact on global Human Rights is limited due to its regional focus, necessitating careful analysis of situations. Ultimately, the evolution of Human Rights can happen independently of NATO, given its regional scope.

The Human Rights situation in Russia is subject to international scrutiny for persistent issues like curbed freedoms and constitutional contradictions. The invasion of Ukraine in 2022 intensified violations, influenced by Russia's historical focus on stability at the cost of liberties. Despite diverse societal views, the government prioritizes national security, sometimes justifying violations based on its constitution. In contrast, NATO prioritizes Human Rights as foundational but faces difficulties balancing *resilience* and security. Russia's approach often clashes with Human Rights, creating a challenging dynamic between the two. The conflict, notably the Russian invasion of Ukraine, affects Ukrainian civilians as geopolitical pawns. NATO's support sustains the conflict, lacking immediate resolution and perpetuating its involvement, indirectly impacting Russia.

To address the research question once again, one can say that even though the *resilience* interpretation may not differ strongly from each other, the involved parties focus on different aspects of the *resilience* concept. In the end not the interpretations hinder a good relationship but the *resilience* concept itself causes the already present tensions to escalate even further, mainly due to *otherness* in its conceptual core. Based on its own history and the development of the relationship between Russia and NATO, it can be assumed that Russia sees NATO's *resilience* approach as a threat. Many of NATO's *resilience*-building actions and efforts target Russia as the predominant threat. In turn, Russia sees itself as being directly addressed and also directly attacked by these actions and efforts. The more NATO strengthens its own border, the more Russia opposes it, thus creating a vicious circle.

To conclude this work, it is important to note that first and foremost, only a specific time frame was considered for the analysis. Hence, circumstances and events which occurred outside of this time frame may not have been sufficiently discussed, even though they may have had a non-negligible impact on the situation at hand. Additionally, the subject is highly topical and is also influenced by other world events, such as Israel's current war against Hamas and Palestine. Furthermore, the literature consulted for this time frame originates mainly from the USA and Great Britain. Therefore, a clear Western influence is present in this work. Literature from Russia was considered only little, while literature from Ukraine and in Ukrainian language was not considered. With respect to the Russian publications, it should be noted that Russian is not the author's native language.

To expand on the findings presented here, future studies could examine how Russia could allow itself to attack Ukraine in the first place. As discussed earlier, Julian Reid also wondered why Russia even considered launching an attack. Possible reasons may be the assumption that Ukraine would not display sufficient *resilience*, a failure of NATO, or false Russian perception and calculation. While Reid does not give a clear answer to this question himself, he writes that the media is sure it was because of Russia's false perception. Additionally, one could examine why NATO places such strong emphasis on *resilience* and investigate possible correlations to US political interests. Finally, one could research if and in what context it is possible to implement the *resilience* concept to improve Human Rights.

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List of Abbreviations

bn.	-	billion
cf.	-	confer (compare)
EU	-	European Union
ibid.	-	ibidem (in the same place)
i.e.	-	id est (namely)
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
n.d.	-	no date
RIC	-	Russia, India, China
SU	-	Soviet Union
SWIFT	-	Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication
UDHR	-	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UN	-	United Nations
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	-	United States
USA	-	United States of America