

SECURITY CULTURE ON THE EASTERN FLANK

Vlad DUMITRACHE*, Brindusa POPA*

*DRESMARA, "Carol I" National Defense University, Brasov, Romania

Abstract: *Following the Crimean Invasion in 2014, and the Russian War on Ukraine in 2022, states on the Eastern Flank have increased their defense expenditures, prioritizing development of national armed forces in the face of different other social policies and public expenditures. In this context, the current paper aims to study if increased defense expenditures have helped develop a security culture in the last decade in states that are close to the border of war. For this reason we aim to study the impact of defense policies in developing a security culture in countries like Romania, Poland and the Baltic States. We also try to put in context and compare defense expenditures with other civilian public expenditures, in the so called guns and butter effect, in an effort to understand how societies from countries on the Eastern Flank agree or not with defense policies that are prioritized in front of other social policies*

Keywords: *security culture; defense expenditure; social policies; public expenditures; guns and butter effect*

1. INTRODUCTION

Security culture focuses on a broader scope: the ideas, customs and social behaviors, values of a group that influences the group and also society security at large level (Felea, 2018). While after the end of the Cold War public expenditures concerning security policies decreased, recent developments throughout the last decade have seen a rise in defense budgets. The cause is mainly the Russian Federation's aggression towards Ukraine that started in 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea and has culminated with the military invasion in February 2022. With investments in defense increasing following these new threats that have risen in Europe, a question must be asked concerning the willingness of European citizens of seeing a development of security policies. To better understand the need for security policies one has to analyze the security culture that European countries have. Security Culture in itself is a way of thinking, of addressing defense policies in connection the community needs and national desires. It is a way of analyzing and putting in balance what are the fundamental interests of a nation. Each state has its one founding myths, common values, traditions and aspirations. The question is how many of these can be correlated with security policies and how many cannot (Ostahie, 2022). US literature has introduced in accordance with this principle of guns and butter

effect. In macroeconomics, the guns versus butter model is an example of a simple production–possibility frontier. It demonstrates the relationship between a nation's investment in defense and civilian goods. The "guns or butter" model is used generally as a simplification of national spending as a part of GDP (Biernat, 2011). In other words there are simply not enough resources available for a nation to invest in both social policies like healthcare, education, the pension system, etc. respectively security policies in the same manner. By organizing and managing the available national resources, each country has to choose between them. A security culture is therefore a model that implies critical thinking and individual understanding of what national security means as well as what global security means, in an increased interdependent community. The essence of security culture has to be the sum of information and knowledge about the national values and needs regarding security, which if understood will generate the development and promotion of such behavior in individuals of a nation that are needed to defend against internal and external threats.

To analyze the development of security culture we have chosen countries from the Eastern Flank of NATO, countries that find themselves in the face of increasing defense expenditure, following the Russian Federation's actions in Ukraine.

As a methodology we have chosen descriptive analysis as a means to compare the different

engage that the chosen states have with the concept of security culture. As a data base in this paper we aim to use Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. The result of that analysis will be present in Chapter III of our paper. In the following chapter we aim to analyse the impact and shape that increased defense expenditures have taken on the Eastern Flank of NATO.

2. INVESTING 2% OF THE GDP IN DEFENSE

2.1 The general assessment of an increased defense budget in NATO. The consensus of investing 2% of the national GDP on defense was taken by NATO countries in the Wales Summit that NATO held in 2014, following the Crimean Invasion from the Russian Federation. The adoption of such a commitment was not a straightforward step as not all states from the alliance hurried to this percent. In 2022 only 7 out of 30 members have met this objective as can be seen in Figure 1.

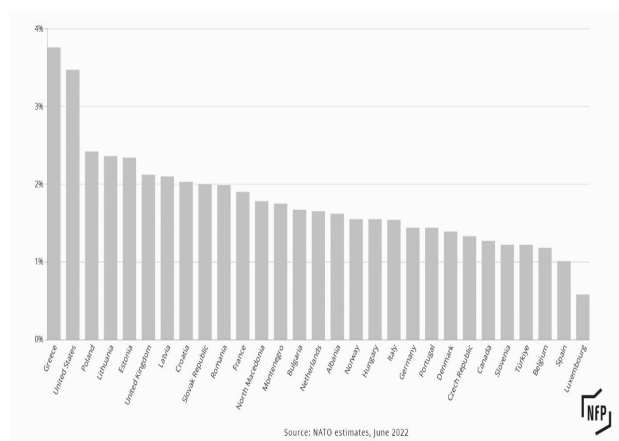


Fig 1. NATO spending 2022 (Ptak, 2023)

Currently, only Greece, United States of America, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, United Kingdom spend the assumed amount of the national budget on defense, with Romania coming close to that value, or even passing the percentage in a number of years starting with 2017.

Specialized literature (Grand, 2023) has tried to study and understand why many European states have come short of the 2% and the conclusion has been the different assessment of existing risk and threats. As can be seen from Figure 1 most of the countries that have chosen to invest more in defense spending are countries from the Eastern Flank. These countries feel a bigger threat in terms of the Russian Federation’s potential actions, while western European countries do not have same

perception of risk and challenges concerning security. It is here where the security culture comes into play. For countries like Spain, Portugal and Italy public expenditures like healthcare and education weigh more in the guns and butter effect balance and security is not seen as an overwhelming priority.

This mindset has been changed however starting with 2022. The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has completely changed the dynamic of how NATO member states perceive the relevance of investing more in the defense budget. The emerging risk of a military threat from the east has made western countries including Germany determined to finally increase their budget to the desired 2% value. For countries on the Eastern Flank the increased risk represents a change in strategy and these countries find themselves in a situation where even more than 2% of the budget might be necessary in order to obtain the desired goals in terms of national security and deterrence. It must be noted that ever since the beginning, the idea behind the 2% assessment was that NATO countries should be able to create powerful national armies capable of resisting themselves on a potential battlefield for a number of days before NATO’s article 5 can be put into practice and help from allies can be present on any NATO member territory. For this, the importance of developing national militaries became a must and as an effect of these, a second decision was taken in Wales in 2014, that from the 2% allocated from the national budget, at least 20% would go to investments in acquisition, necessary for modernizing national capabilities in the army by procuring modern and new equipment. When we address the importance of security culture, it is in this sector of acquisition where the guns and butter effect is most present, as public opinion and the media are going to compare and put into balance the budget allocation for acquisition of military equipment in report with other social policies that might or might not be overlooked. It is therefore necessary that defense decision making authorities analyze their prospects of investment in a cost-benefit analysis in order to make sure that from an opportunity cost point of view the best alternatives are chosen that can be both efficient and effective in a competitive market and therefore no room is left for those that might contest whether allocated funds are spent wisely on developing national armies and security forces. Here security culture will matter in the way that nations respond to these types of investment. These type of responses will be studied in Chapter 3 of our paper. Before that,

however, another assessment must be addressed, as in 2023 NATO has changed its take on the 2% of the budget allocation.

2.2 The 2% becomes a floor not a ceiling. Following the previous idea, NATO has changed its assessment from 2014 in the Wales Summit and because of emerging threats resulted from the Russian Federation invasion of Ukraine, a decision has been made to make the 2% a floor, rather than a ceiling, allowing NATO members or actually encouraging them to invest even more than this former limit in defense spending. The decision is supposed to be acknowledged in the NATO Summit in Vilnius that will take place in the Summer of 2023. Some experts consider this change problematic as there is a risk that the guns and butter effect will increase even more, as spending defense resources in a smart and efficient manner is a complex process. Those who understand the life cycle cost process know that investing in defense doesn't mean only to procure military equipment but to integrate, train personnel and develop effective capabilities that are able to answer to the national security goals. NATO's secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg addressed these issue to the member states, approving Germany's decision to hit the 2% former ceiling in 2024 while agreeing with NATO member states on the Eastern Flank that want to invest more in their defense systems (Ptak, 2023). Poland aims to reach a percentage for defense of 4% for the 2023-2024 budget, while Romania has already approved in parliament a 2.5% percent of the budget for 2023. These countries realize they have a gap in terms of building a modern ready army, that can answer to new risk and threats that have emerged in their region and therefore are obligated to increase their available resources. The different in security culture between these state and western European ones are clear. The increased investment in defense have been meat with minimum backlash, while similar measures would receive negative responses in countries like Germany, Netherlands, Denmark or Spain. The reason for this difference between the west and east block from the European continent also comes from the different development of security culture in these two regions.

If we analyze the western flank of Europe, here limited risk and threats that have manifested in the post-cold war environment in terrorist counter measures and reduction of worldwide weapons of mass destruction has meant an emphasis on developing soft power types of states that are first and first most interested in economic development,

contrary to the hard power concept where investment in defense in considered mandatory for developing a powerful state. Before the Crimean invasion for more than twenty years no clear military threats were visible for countries that are part of the Western European continent. Security culture is therefore diminished in these states, who have been mostly focused on economic growth and developing welfare states where social policies mainly go to education, healthcare, social assistance and the welfare system.

The situation is very different on the Eastern Flank. The group of countries situated on this part of the continent are states that have exited the communist regime following a long and intense cold war. Security culture like other social policies have been treated and developed different on the other side of the iron curtain. There has never been a complete transition for these states from a hard power type of mentality to well established soft power states where economic growth is the main priority of the entire nation. Investing in defense is not seen as a negative objective and due to limited procurement a balance between social and military policies is rarely made. Practically, before the Crimean invasion, the guns and butter effect was non-existent in these countries This has changed after major investments in defense have been implement following 2014 and the public opinion has become interested in how the budget is allocated for military procurement. The main concern and issue has been whether countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and the Baltics have the financial potential of acquiring modern military equipment or are they going to buy former, older western equipment that was available on the market. Another issue concerning an increased security culture was whether these defense investments would help the national economy or not. In order to cope with this challenge the off-set rule was created. This legislative decision means that for each major procurement of equipment in the military, the national economy must be involved in the production process. This decision has the aim of reducing the guns and butter effect as public opinion is likely to support investments that have a positive impact on national economies. With this in mind countries like Poland and Romania have tried to integrate their own defense industries into partially producing part of the acquired foreign military equipment by using local defense industry capacities.

It is therefore clear that investment on defense are to continue to increase in Europe, especially on the Eastern Flank. For this reason the security

culture in countries in this region becomes extremely relevant. It is the aim of the following chapter to analyze how this culture is manifested in a group of countries. Conclusions concerning this approach can then be taken in order to understand what are the effects of this strategy in NATO.

3. HOW SECURITY CULTURE DIFFERS ON THE EASTERN FLANK

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communication, developed by Geert Hofstede. It shows the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior, using a structure derived from factor analysis. (Adeoye, 2014) Basically, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory represents a database model that allows analysts to compare how different countries relate on some typical factors and compare them to one another. For the purpose of our paper, continuing the idea of the previous chapter, we aim to study from a cultural point of view countries that are on the Eastern Flank of NATO and how they perceive security in the context of increased defence expenditures. We have chosen countries that are willing to increase their defence budget in the context of the war in Ukraine, countries like Romania and Poland, that are also interested in adding military aid to the Ukrainian side. We have chosen one of the Baltic states namely Estonia, which finds itself in the same situation, however with different available resources to spare compared to Romania and Poland. We have also chosen to analyse a country like Hungary which shows reluctance in allocating more defence funds in the current complicated regional context, preferring to invest in other social policies. Hungary has also manifested in its internal policies a restraint in helping the Ukrainian side unlike the other countries on the Eastern Flank introduced in this model. Finally, we have added to the analysis Bulgaria, a country that has shown interest in developing its defense capabilities and therefore investing more in its security assets, but unlike the other countries on the Eastern Flank has failed to do so for the moment. The social factors on which the countries are going to be compared, or rather the social dimensions are as follows:

1. Power distance
2. Individualism
3. Masculinity
4. Uncertainty avoidance
5. Long term orientation
6. Indulgence

In order to respect the format of this paper we have split the comparison in two figures as follows, Figure 2 and 3:

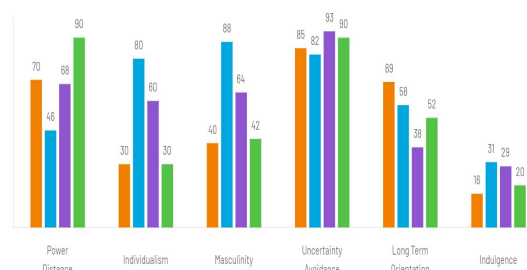


Fig 2. Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Eastern Flank), I

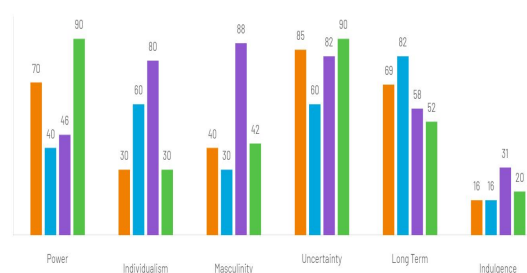


Fig 3. Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Eastern Flank), II

We consider that in order to determine a security culture two of the 6 dimensions are necessary and we aim to analyse those results concerning the Power Distance and Long Term Orientation. Based on the observed data from Figures 2 and 3 the following conclusions can be taken. When it comes to Power Distance, a dimension that is supposed to represent the idea that individuals of a society are not equal and how those inequalities affect social relations and whether they create social tensions or not, as can be seen Hungary scores low in this dimension, with a number of 46 which means considering the Hofstede model that the following can be acknowledged by the Hungarian model in accordance with the factor: a tendency to being independent, hierarchy for convenience only, relevancy of equal rights, a desire that superiors are accessible. Employees expect to be consulted.

Control is disliked and attitude towards managers are informal and on first name basis. Communication is direct and participative. In terms of the dimension entitled Long Term Orientation this is supposed to describe how every society tries to create and maintain links with its own past while trying to mitigate the emerging challenges of the present and future. The idea of this dimension is that societies prioritize these two existential goals in a different manner. Usually, countries that score low in this dimension are more conservative and tend to maintain traditions and core values more, being reluctant to changes in society. On the other hand, those that score high are more progressive and use social policies like education as a mean to evolve faster towards the future. Scoring 58 in this dimension, Hungary presents itself as pragmatic country, where people tend to believe that truth depends on the current event, context and time. This show a balance in the desire of a country to adapt accordingly to the changing environment while trying to maintain traditions, under a model that promotes prosperity, investing and perseverance in achieving national goals.

In Romania's case the value of the Power Distance is 90, while the Long Term Orientation score is 52. Romania scores high on the first dimension which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. Romania has an intermediate score on the second dimension, meaning that just like Hungary it is willing to change its policies as long as it maintains part of its tradition and core values.

The next country analyzed is Bulgaria, which scores 70 in terms of Power Distance and 69 in Long Term Orientation. Like Romania, Bulgaria also scores high on the first dimension and therefore the same conclusions can be observed. These scores are normal for countries that have lived for a long time under a communist regime and are adapting to new democratic regimes which lack in theory the presence of an autocrat, though in real life such leadership models are still present and even looked up to. These are countries in transition that need to reduce the gap in terms of what aligning to dialog between the political leadership and the civil society actually means. With a score of 69, Bulgaria has a Pragmatic culture according to the second dimension studied.

Just like in the previous cases of other Eastern Flank countries this comes as no surprise as even though all three countries Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary like to adopt their social model to a modern one, their progression towards this model is not going to be a really fast one, but rather a slow one, that takes into consideration the importance of national values and tradition that the society considers necessary in order for the national state model to exist and develop.

In the current model studied, Poland is the first state analyzed to be different then the others studied. While in terms of Power Distance, Poland scores high 68, not as high as Romania however, this means that even though Poland is in search for strong leadership, it still has its national interest in a high priority. Romania's higher scores might show why the Romanian state is highly dependent on other organization and alliances, seeking the power that the European Union, NATO and the strategic partnership provide. While Poland also seeks this protection, its slightly lower score demonstrates an interest in also achieving security by it own measures. It is therefore of no surprise why from the countries presented so far Poland is the first willing to jump way above the 2% defense budget ceiling and propose an intermediate budget of 4%, going so far as to perhaps 5% in the future.

Interestingly Poland scores just 38 in its Long Term Orientation. Poland's low score of 38 in this dimension means that it is more normative than pragmatic. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results. This does not mean that Poland does not want to take progressive measures, but rather that it wishes to progress in its own terms and is even more willingly then the other states presented to keep and maintain its national values before changing due to current events.

Finally, in the case of Estonia this country scores just 40 in Power Distribution and 82 in Long Term Orientation. These two scores combined can present the idea that Estonia has reached a democratic level the fastest and while the first dimension means that even though Estonia is aware of its means but not willing to look only for outside solutions in its security policies, the high score from the second dimension studied shows that Estonia is willing to integrate much easily in democratic relations, even through high demanding progressive measure and cooperate in this manner with other partners, alliances and organizations..

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study from the previous chapter is useful if put in accordance with the idea that the countries analyzed are willing or not to invest more in their military and if they have a security culture on which the foundation for such investments can exist without the guns and butter effect triggering debates in the society whether such investments are necessary or not.

In the case of the eastern flank countries presented earlier it can be seen from the dimensions studied that such a security culture exists and these countries know their national interest and even if the means are different the objective to protect the sovereignty of the state remains the same. While Estonia might score different on both dimensions than the other states, and while Poland seems to be even more conservative when compared by the second dimension the result remains the same.

Countries on the Eastern Flank have developed a security culture, mostly due to their past and their shift towards democracy in the last 30 years has not changed their perception on existing and emerging security threats. Therefore the willingness in the Eastern Flank to invest in defense in order to obtain deterrence in front of potential enemies is high.

Our conclusion is that the security culture in these countries enables them to invest in increasing defense budget, whether on short, medium or long term with the main objective of protecting the national values of the country.

These investments are not seen as competing with other government investments be it social policies in the form of public expenditures but are rather seen as complementary. Therefore the guns and butter effect is not likely to be a major challenge in these countries, isolated debates in the society might happen on this topic, but it will not

be of overriding importance, in such a manner that it might affect the national decision making process of investing in defense.

If the guns and butter effect were to manifest itself in these countries it would probably be an effect of the Russian informational warfare and because of a lack of the security culture existing on the Eastern Flank.

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