



## **Influence of Social and Economic Factors on Recruitment: A Country Comparison**

**Commander Marcus Fröhling**

### **JCSP 50**

#### **Exercise Solo Flight**

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### **PCEMI n° 50**

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE - COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 50 - PCEMI n 50  
2023 - 2024

Exercise Solo Flight – Exercice Solo Flight

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# INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS ON RECRUITMENT: A COUNTRY COMPARISON

## INTRODUCTION

We must get fit for war again<sup>1</sup>. This phrase was coined for the first time by the German Minister of Defense, Boris Pistorius, on October 29, 2023. Not only did he receive a great deal of support for it from almost the entire political spectrum and from international partners, but it also provoked at least as much domestic opposition, not least from within his own party. Even if the choice of words - "fit for war" instead of "fit for defense" - was unusual for the German debate, the content of the demand should not have come as a surprise, as it is only logical in view of the "Zeitenwende" proclaimed by Chancellor Olaf Scholz<sup>2</sup>.

But what is currently lacking in order to be fit for war? Many things could be mentioned here - for example, a change in the mentality of the population, infrastructure and material. While the debate triggered not least by the choice of words is certainly contributing to a change in social mentality, and the 100 billion in special funds will make many material and infrastructural advances possible, another problem remains - personnel.

Since the end of conscription more than a decade ago, the number of active soldiers has hovered around 180,000<sup>3</sup>, always below the planned level. Not only that, but according to personnel plans, the number should have risen to 198,000 this year and 203,000<sup>4</sup> next year - all plans that date back to before 2022 and do not take into account additional requirements in light of the war in Ukraine - for example, for the new German brigade to be deployed in Lithuania. And yet the number of applicants is barely enough to replace the 20,000 to 30,000 soldiers who leave the service each year<sup>5</sup>. If this trend continues, Germany will find it difficult to fulfill its security tasks and international obligations in the long term.

Against this background, I would like to compare several countries and examine whether there is a discernible correlation between influencing factors such as the

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<sup>1</sup> "Dokumentation – Pistorius: „Wir Müssen Kriegstüchtig Werden“ (m. Ergänzung) – Augen Geradeaus!," accessed May 6, 2024, <https://augengeradeaus.net/2023/10/dokumentation-pistorius-wir-muessen-kriegstuechtig-werden/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Deutscher Bundestag - Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz: Wir erleben eine Zeitenwende," Deutscher Bundestag, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2022/kw08-sondersitzung-882198>.

<sup>3</sup> "Personalbestand der Bundeswehr bis 2023," Statista, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/38401/umfrage/personalbestand-der-bundeswehr-seit-2000/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Personalplanung: 203.000 Soldaten sind das Ziel - 1800 zusätzliche zivile Posten," accessed February 19, 2024, <https://www.dbwv.de/aktuelle-themen/blickpunkt/beitrag/personalplanung-wichtiger-zwischenschritt-auf-dem-weg-der-trendwende>.

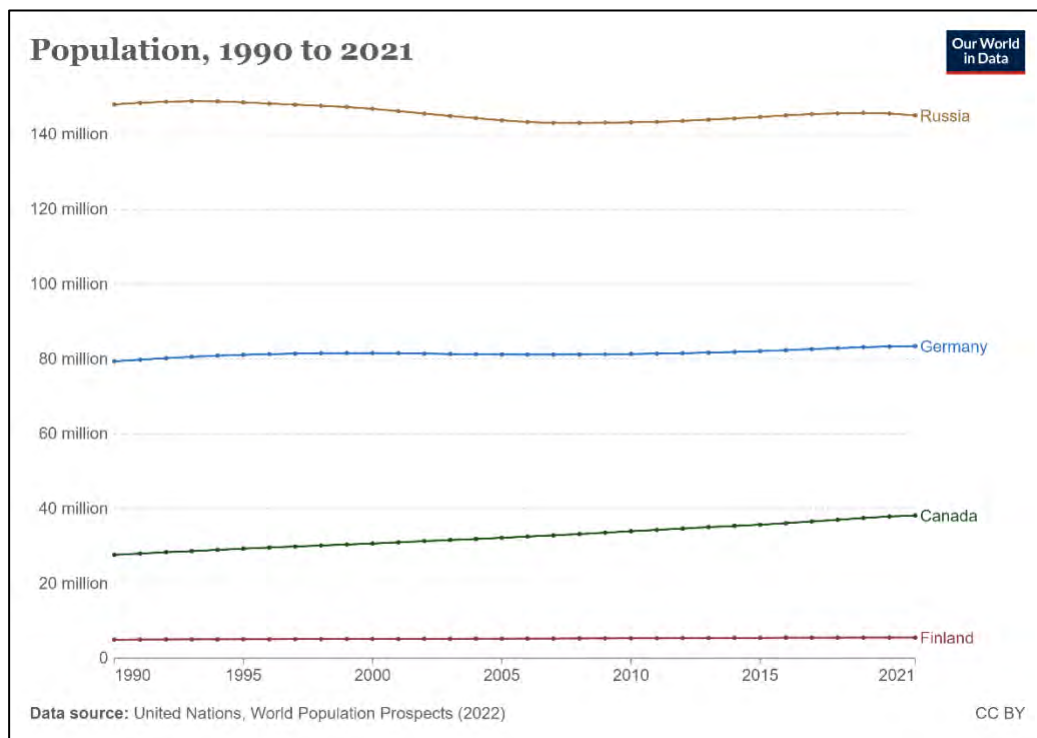
<sup>5</sup> Matthias Gebauer and Marius Mestermann, "Podcast: Wer der Bundeswehr wirklich fehlt," *Der Spiegel*, February 1, 2024, sec. Politik, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/boris-pistorius-in-personalnot-wer-der-bundeswehr-wirklich-fehlt-a-c357cdce-8d79-4a52-9558-c603f2fe07d3>.

perceived security situation, the economic situation, demographics or pay on the one hand and the personnel situation on the other.

## COUNTRIES SURVEYED

Due to the scope of this work, it was necessary to limit the number of countries considered and to make a selection that had comparable, yet different, conditions. Consequently, the paper is limited to Germany, Finland, Russia, and Canada.

The Federal Republic of Germany<sup>6</sup> is a parliamentary democracy in the heart of Europe. As one of the largest economies in the world, Germany plays an important role on the international stage and in international organizations such as NATO, the EU, and the G7. The government is led by a Chancellor, who is elected by parliament—the Bundestag. The approximately 84 million inhabitants live on a good 357,000 km<sup>2</sup>.



**Figure 1 - Population 1990 to 2021**

Hannah Ritchie et al., “Population Growth,” *Our World in Data*, July 11, 2023, <https://ourworldindata.org/population-growth>.

Finland<sup>7</sup> is a parliamentary republic in Northern Europe. The constitution, which was amended on March 1, 2000, shifted power from the previously dominant president to

<sup>6</sup> “Germany,” in *Wikipedia*, May 7, 2024, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Germany&oldid=1222646250>.

<sup>7</sup> “Finland,” in *Wikipedia*, May 7, 2024, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Finland&oldid=1222646117>.

parliament and government. The approximately 5.5 million inhabitants live on a land area of approximately 338,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The country shares a 1,344 km border with Russia and joined NATO in 2023 following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has been a member of the European Union since 1995.

Russia's<sup>8</sup> form of government is officially a federal semi-presidential republic, but there has been a noticeable shift towards authoritarianism since the beginning of the 21st century which led international observers, such as Freedom House, to classify Russia as "not free"<sup>9</sup>. With a land area of approximately 17 million square kilometers, Russia is the largest country in the world. Despite having a population of approximately 145 million, the population density is only 8 inhabitants per square kilometer, making it the 179th most densely populated country in the world. Russia is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, was a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) as of 1994, and a member of the G7 (then G8) as of 1998. Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia was formally excluded from the G8, while the PfP was merely suspended and formally continues to exist.

Canada<sup>10</sup> is a federal parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy, with King Charles III as head of state. The Canadian government is characterized by a bicameral parliament and the comparatively strong position of the prime minister. Of the 38 million inhabitants of the second largest country in the world in terms of area, 4.2 inhabitants are distributed over one of the almost 10 million square kilometers. Canada is a founding member of NATO and a member of the G7.

The United Nations Human Development Index<sup>11,12</sup> (HDI) ranks Russia 52nd while Germany, Finland and Canada are ninth, 11th, and 15th, respectively.

The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project of the University of Gothenburg in Sweden<sup>13</sup>, which compiles an index of political civil liberties ranging from 0 (least rights) to 1 (most rights), indicates that political civil liberties are strong in Germany, Finland, and Canada, with values between 0.93 and 0.97 in the period under review from 1990. In contrast, Russia has never achieved a value of more than 0.73, and most recently fell to 0.12.

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<sup>8</sup> "Russia," in *Wikipedia*, May 6, 2024, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Russia&oldid=1222603263>.

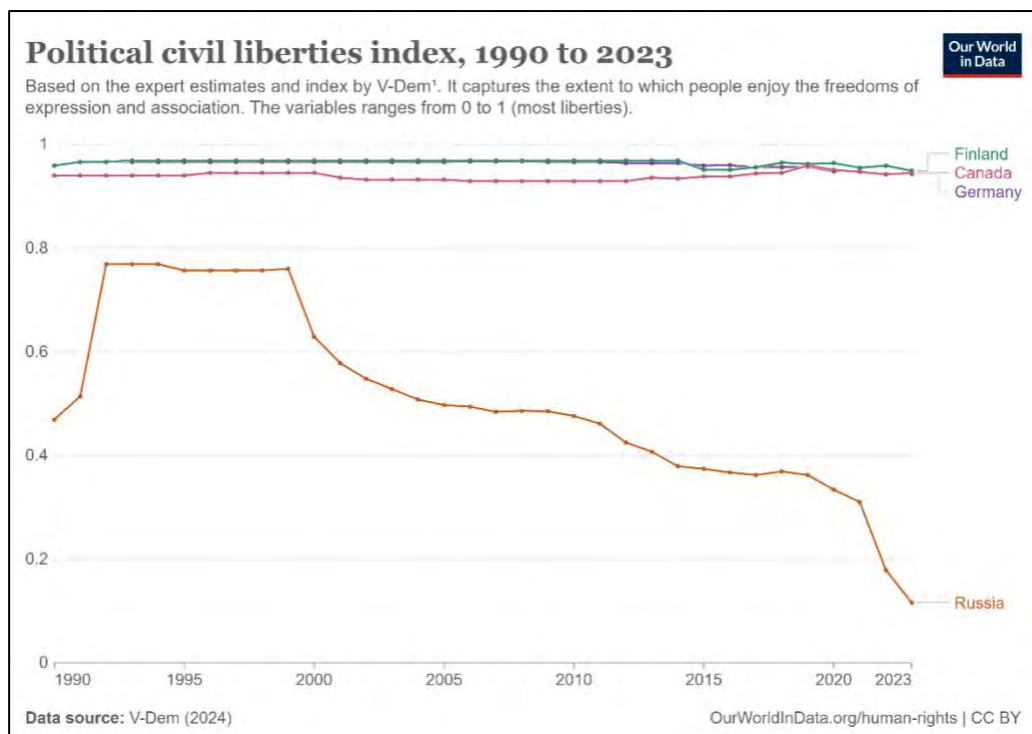
<sup>9</sup> "Russia Downgraded to 'Not Free' | Freedom House," accessed May 7, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170101001014/https://freedomhouse.org/article/russia-downgraded-not-free?page=70&release=242>.

<sup>10</sup> "Canada," in *Wikipedia*, May 6, 2024, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Canada&oldid=1222453229>.

<sup>11</sup> The HDI is an index of average performance in the most important dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge, and an adequate standard of living.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, "Data Center," *Human Development Reports* (United Nations), accessed May 7, 2024, <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center>.

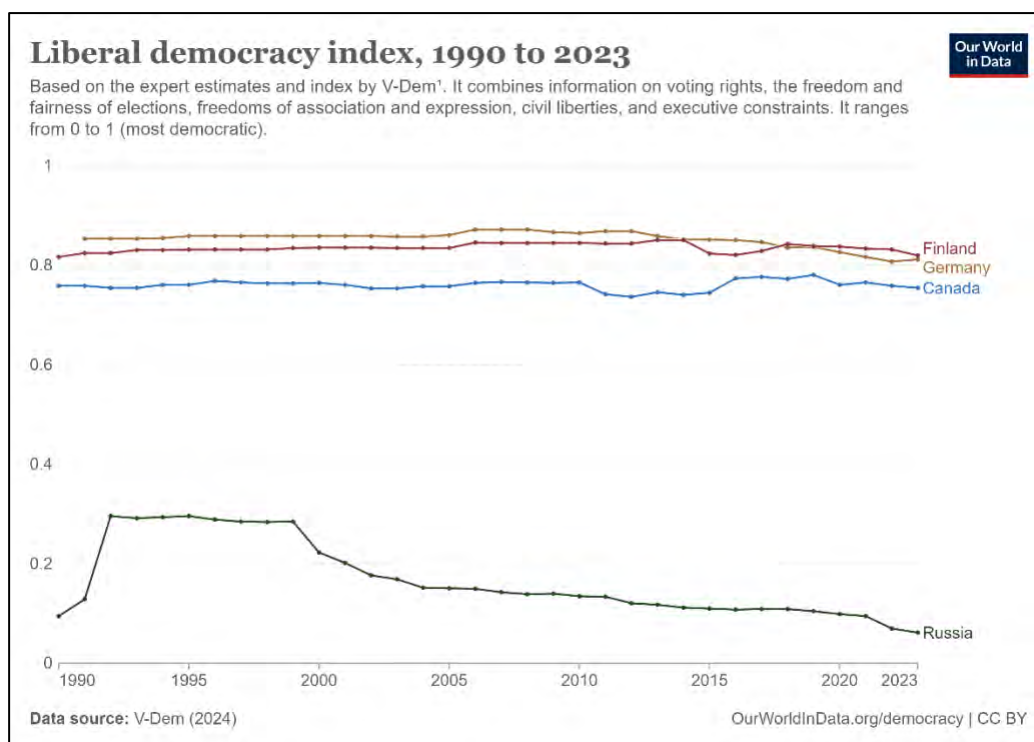
<sup>13</sup> Bastian Herre and Max Roser, "The 'Varieties of Democracy' Data: How Do Researchers Measure Human Rights?," *Our World in Data*, December 28, 2023, <https://ourworldindata.org/vdem-human-rights-data>.



**Figure 2 - Political civil liberties index, 1990 to 2023**

“Political Civil Liberties Index,” Our World in Data, accessed May 7, 2024,  
<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/political-civil-liberties-index?tab=chart&time=1990..latest&country=CAN~RUS~DEU~FIN>.

A comparable distribution can be observed in the Liberal Democracy Index of the same project. During the same period, the three Western countries exhibited values between 0.74 and 0.87, while Russia exhibited a value of 0.06.



**Figure 3 - Liberal democracy index, 1990 to 2023**

Bastian Herre et al., “Democracy,” *Our World in Data*, February 26, 2024, <https://ourworldindata.org/democracy>.

In its 2024 press freedom ranking<sup>14</sup>, the internationally active non-governmental organization Reporters Without Borders ranks Russia 162nd out of a total of 180 countries. Finland, Germany, and Canada are at the top end of the list, ranking fifth, tenth, and 14th, respectively.

Of the countries examined in this paper, all but Canada have compulsory military service. In Germany, however, compulsory military service was suspended in 2011 and the armed forces were transformed into a purely professional army. In both Germany and Canada, the reactivation or introduction of compulsory military service would only require the passing of a law, not a constitutional amendment. While Germany is currently debating the reintroduction of compulsory military service or general compulsory service, there is no such debate in Canada. The concept of conscription is a highly unpopular one in Canada, with the only instances of its application occurring during the two world wars, and even then only at a relatively late stage and with considerable caution<sup>15</sup>. In contrast, the concept of conscription is not questioned in Russia or Finland. In Finland, conscription remains a central part of the country's defense strategy, obligating all male

<sup>14</sup> “Index | RSF,” accessed May 7, 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/index>.

<sup>15</sup> “Conscription in Canada,” accessed May 7, 2024, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/conscription>.



Finnish citizens between the ages of 18 and 60 to perform military service.<sup>16,17</sup> There have been discussions in the political sphere about extending compulsory military service to women, but these have not yet been implemented.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, women can serve voluntarily.<sup>19</sup> In Russia, conscription remains an integral part of the military system. Following the raising of the upper age limit on January 1 of this year, all male citizens between the ages of 18 and 30 are obliged to complete twelve months of military service<sup>20</sup>, after which they are transferred to the reserves. However, numerous members of the middle class and above are able to evade military service through a multitude of illicit means, thereby primarily affecting the impoverished and working classes.<sup>21</sup>

Upon initial observation, the selection of countries may appear imbalanced; however, this was a deliberate decision. A comparison of the proportion of armed forces in the population, both in relation to the total population and to the working-age population, reveals that authoritarian states have the highest values, indicating that they are more successful at recruiting. This is evident because, on the one hand, the military is often accorded a higher priority by those in power than in liberal democracies, and, on the other hand, there are fewer obstacles to recruiting soldiers. It thus appears sufficient to consider only one authoritarian state, Russia. The other countries represent both large and small economies, conscript and professional armies, as well as varying geographical proximity to a potential adversary.

## NUMBERS

Of the countries under consideration, Russia has the largest armed forces. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Russia had 1.45 million military personnel on active duty in 2019, in addition to approximately 2 million reservists<sup>22</sup>. Given the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the associated casualties on the one hand, and the mobilization on the other, it is likely that the figures will fluctuate significantly in the current context.

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<sup>16</sup> “Finnish Conscription System,” Puolustusvoimat, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/en/finnish-conscription-system>.

<sup>17</sup> “Wehrpflicht in Finnland: Verteidigung Als Aufgabe Der Ganzen Gesellschaft – Augen Geradeaus!,” accessed May 6, 2024, <https://augengeradeaus.net/2024/03/wehrpflicht-in-finnland-verteidigung-als-aufgabe-der-ganzen-gesellschaft/>.

<sup>18</sup> “Sanna Marin’s SDP in Favour of Expanding Conscription to Women,” News, February 23, 2023, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20019397>.

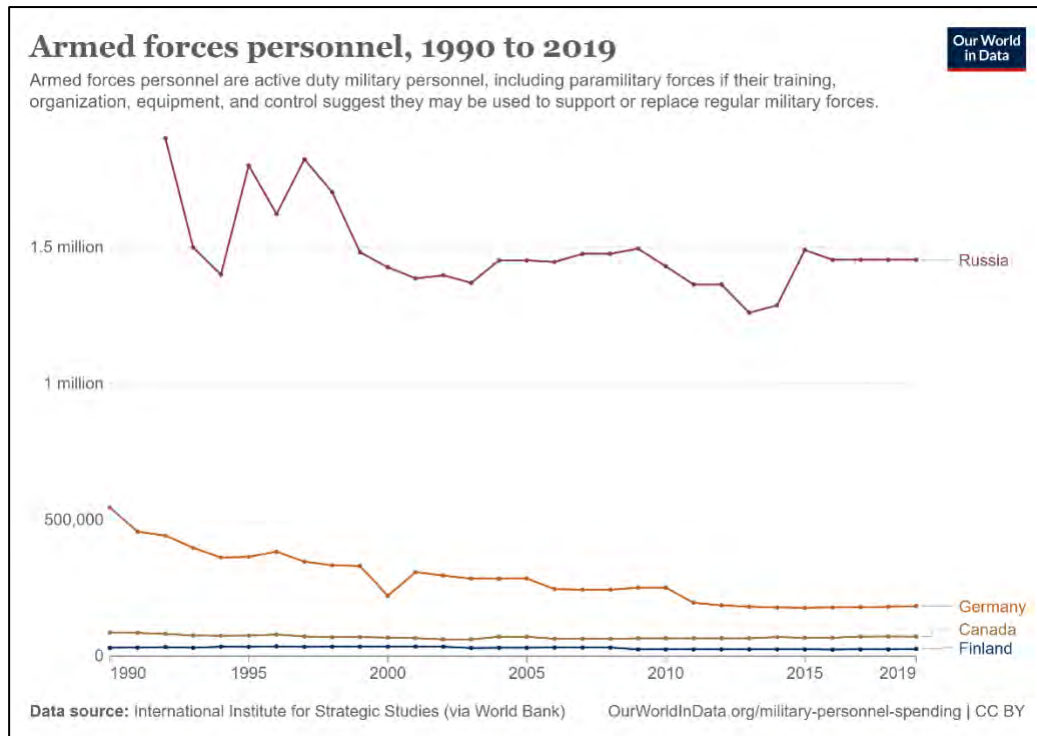
<sup>19</sup> “1555 Women Applied to Voluntary Military Service -,” Puolustusvoimat, accessed April 23, 2024, <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/en/-/1950813/1555-women-applied-to-voluntary-military-service>.

<sup>20</sup> “Russland: Wladimir Putin unterschreibt Gesetz zur Anhebung des Wehrpflichtalters,” *Der Spiegel*, August 4, 2023, sec. Ausland, <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/russland-wladimir-putin-unterschreibt-gesetz-zur-anhebung-des-wehrpflichtalters-a-8f3060ae-a463-404f-b366-142a8a3db592>.

<sup>21</sup> Elisabeth Braw, “Finns Show Up for Conscription. Russians Dodge It.,” *Foreign Policy* (blog), May 14, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/16/finland-conscription-russia-military/>.

<sup>22</sup> “2024 Russia Military Strength,” accessed May 7, 2024, [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country\\_id=russia](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=russia).





**Figure 4 - Armed forces personnel, 1990 to 2019**

“Armed Forces Personnel,” Our World in Data, accessed May 7, 2024, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/armed-forces-personnel?tab=chart&country=~KEN>.

Germany is the second most heavily armed nation, with approximately 184,000 active military personnel. However, this figure is quickly put into perspective when one considers the reserves. While Germany currently has only 34,000 reservists<sup>23</sup>, Finland can draw on approximately 870,000 reserve forces<sup>24</sup>. This places Finland in ninth place worldwide in terms of the size of its reserves, ahead of the United States. The Finnish armed forces conduct training for approximately 22,000 reservists annually, with a total of 27,000 active military personnel. This figure is equivalent to the number of reservists in the Canadian Armed Forces, who are available to reinforce the 72,000 active soldiers if necessary<sup>25</sup>.

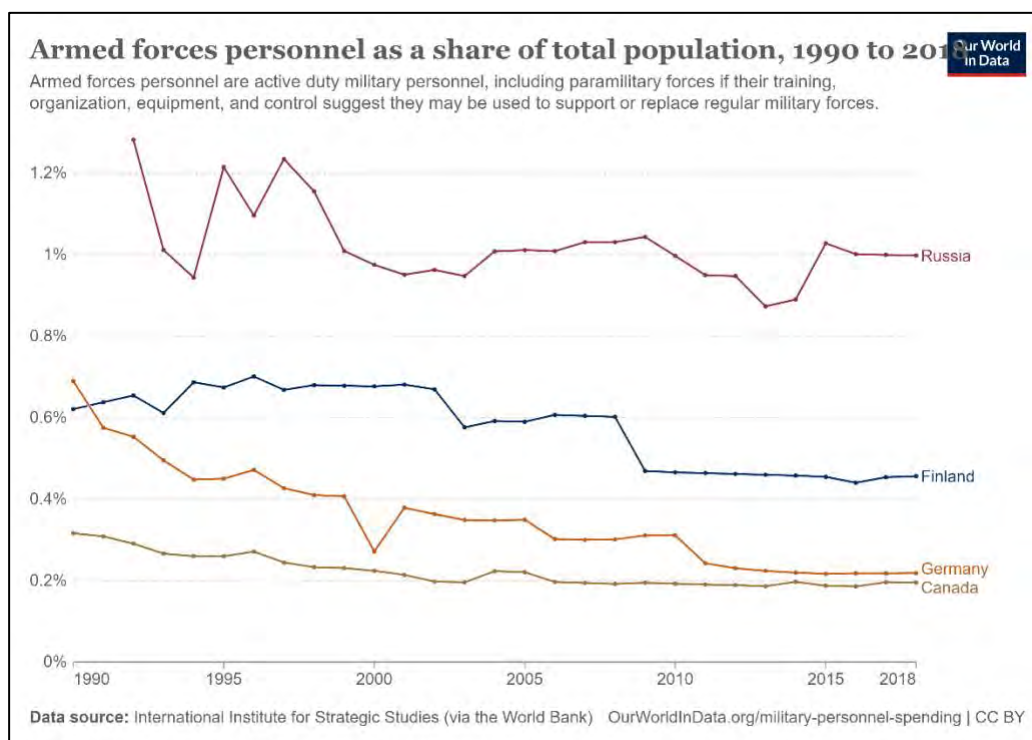
These numbers have declined significantly since the end of the Cold War, particularly in Russia and Germany, where the number of active soldiers has fallen by about two-thirds from 3.9 million and 545,000, respectively. The magnitude of the decline becomes even clearer when viewed in relation to the population, both the total population (Figure 5) and, more importantly, the working-age population relevant to recruitment (Figure 6). This indicates that the demographic structure of the population has

<sup>23</sup> “2024 Germany Military Strength,” accessed May 7, 2024, [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country\\_id=germany](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=germany).

<sup>24</sup> “2024 Finland Military Strength,” accessed May 7, 2024, [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country\\_id=finland](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=finland).

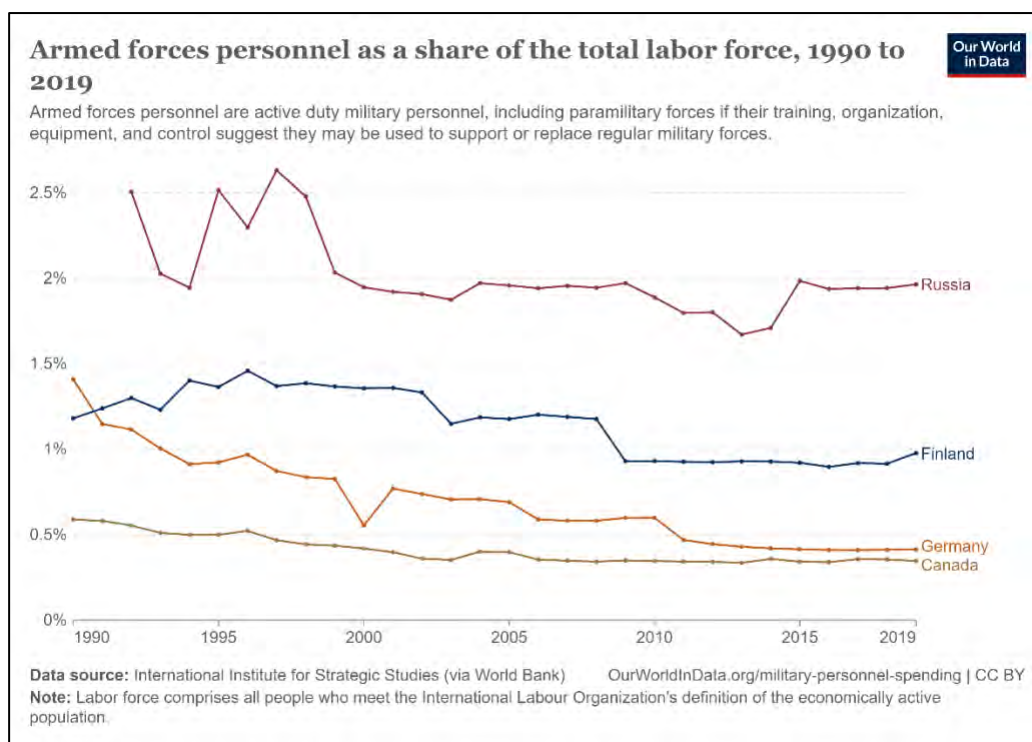
<sup>25</sup> “2024 Canada Military Strength,” accessed May 7, 2024, [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country\\_id=canada](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=canada).

changed during this period.



**Figure 5 - Armed forces personnel as a share of total population, 1990 to 2018**

“Armed Forces Personnel as a Share of Total Population,” Our World in Data, accessed May 7, 2024, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/armed-forces-personnel-percent>.

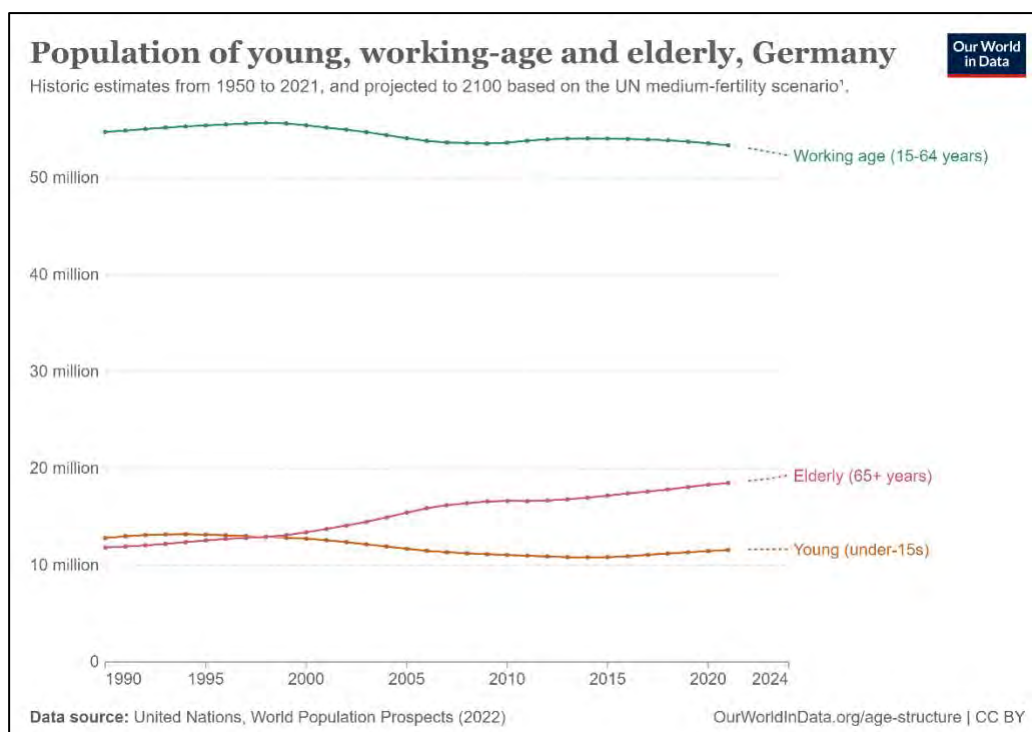


**Figure 6 - Armed forces personnel as a share of total labor force, 1990 to 2019**

“Armed Forces Personnel as a Share of the Total Labor Force,” Our World in Data, accessed May 7, 2024, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/armed-forces-personnel-of-total-labor-force>.

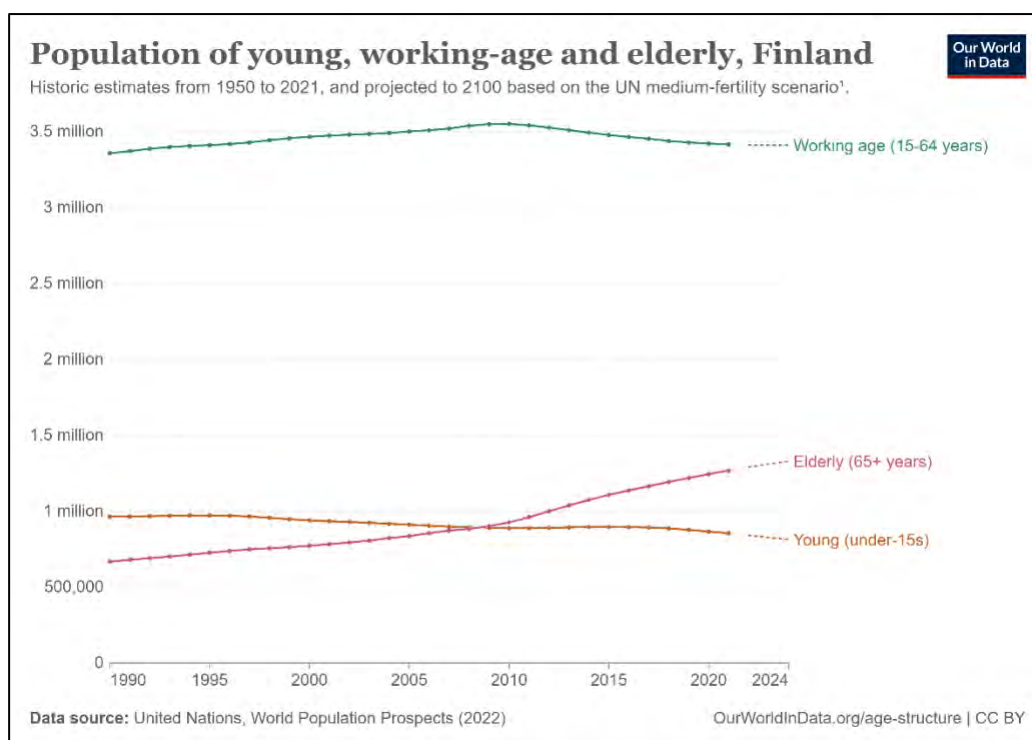
This is indeed the case. According to data from the United Nations, Russia has experienced a population decline of approximately 2% since 1990, while the populations of other countries have grown significantly during the same period<sup>26</sup>. All of the countries under consideration are subject to demographic change. With the exception of Russia, the number of individuals over the age of 65 has surpassed the number of individuals under the age of 15 in all countries over the past 20 years.

<sup>26</sup> Hannah Ritchie et al., “Population Growth,” *Our World in Data*, July 11, 2023, <https://ourworldindata.org/population-growth>, (see Figure 1)

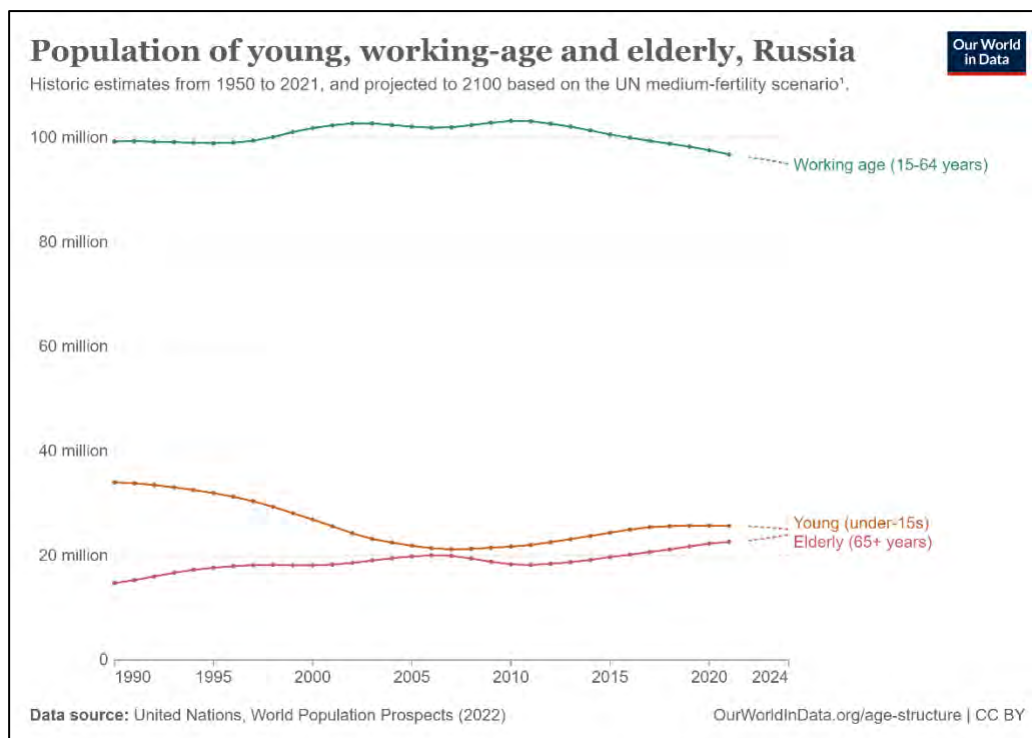


**Figure 7 - Population of young, working-age and elderly, Germany**

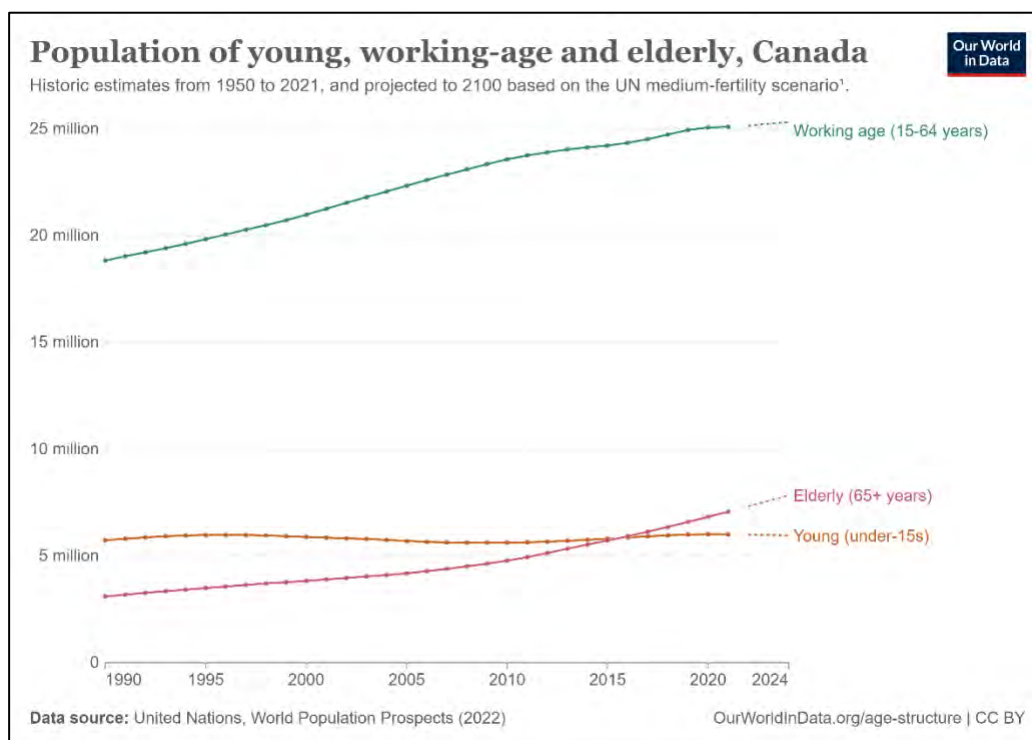
“Population of Young, Working-Age and Elderly,” Our World in Data, accessed May 7, 2024, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/population-young-working-elderly-with-projections>.



**Figure 8 - - Population of young, working-age and elderly, Finland**



**Figure 9 - Population of young, working-age and elderly, Russia**

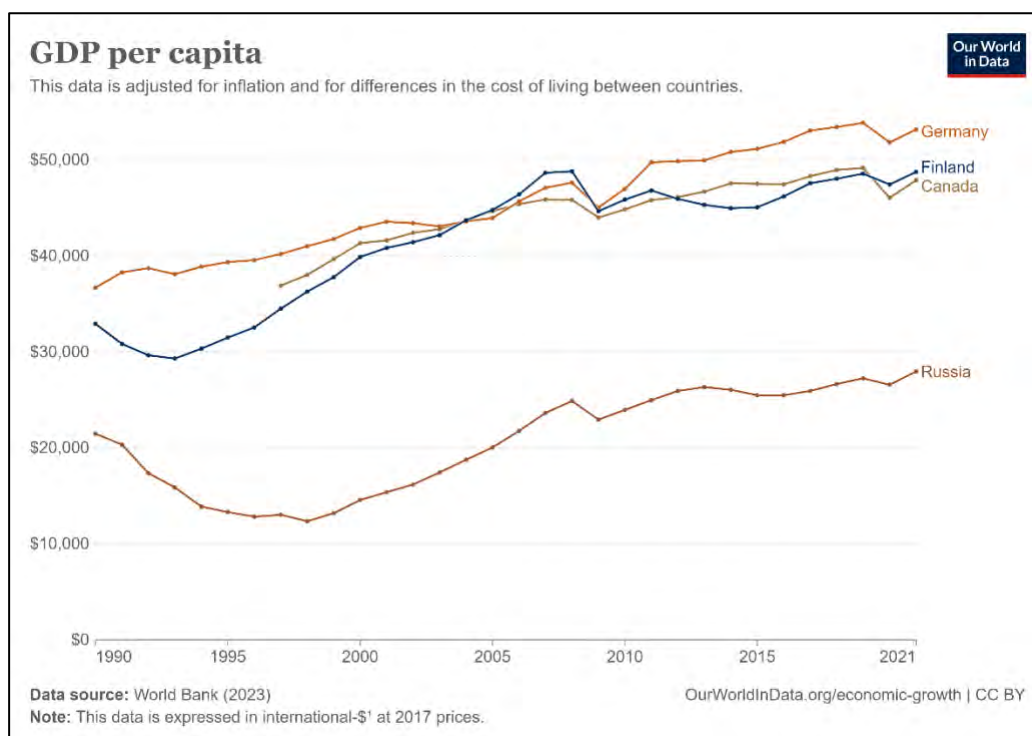


**Figure 10 - Population of young, working-age and elderly, Canada**

The population of working age is declining most rapidly in Russia. In Finland and

Germany, the decline in the working-age population is being offset by population growth. In Canada, the population of this demographic is expanding due to a combination of factors, including a robust immigration-related population growth.

However, it is important to note that service in the armed forces is associated with higher hurdles in terms of citizenship and security checks, which may exclude many immigrants. Although Canada has opened its armed forces to permanent residents<sup>27</sup> and Germany is also debating opening it up to EU citizens<sup>28</sup>, the associated challenges are not trivial and do not necessarily lead to large increases in personnel quickly, as Canada's experience shows<sup>29</sup>.



**Figure 11 - GDP per capita**

“GDP per Capita,” Our World in Data, accessed May 7, 2024, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/gdp-per-capita-worldbank>.

Concurrently, demographic shifts have been accompanied by a nearly uninterrupted period of economic expansion since 1990. This growth was only

<sup>27</sup> National Defence, “Minister of National Defence Announces That Permanent Residents Are Welcome to Apply Now to Join the Canadian Armed Forces,” news releases, December 5, 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/news/2022/12/minister-of-national-defence-announces-that-permanent-residents-are-welcome-to-apply-now-to-join-the-canadian-armed-forces.html>.

<sup>28</sup> “Pistorius-Vorstoß: Debatte über Ausländer in der Bundeswehr,” ZDFheute, January 23, 2024, <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/deutschland/bundeswehr-pistorius-soldaten-ausland-100.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Ashley Burke · CBC News ·, “Vast Majority of Permanent Residents Lost Interest in Joining Military amid Security Check Delays | CBC News,” CBC, February 19, 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/permanent-resident-military-applications-enrolment-1.7116469>.



temporarily disrupted by the effects of the 2008 financial crisis and the 2020 pandemic. Only Finland in the first half of the 1990s and Russia until the second half of the decade had to contend with a temporary economic downturn.

While the 1990s were characterised by a belief in "the end of history" and comprehensive disarmament, meaning there was little need for recruitment, efforts to increase the size of the armed forces from the 2010s onwards were met with a combination of economic growth, an ageing population and a shrinking recruitment pool. Against this background, it is evident that not only Germany, but also Canada, has not succeeded in reversing its conscious decision in 1990 to reduce troop numbers and begin to increase its armed forces. Among the countries under review, only Finland currently has no significant problems in achieving its target strength. Despite the difficulty in obtaining current and reliable figures on Russia's recruitment successes, there are numerous indications that Russia is also unable to compensate for the losses incurred in Ukraine and increase the number of troops as planned, despite the existence of compulsory military service.<sup>30</sup>

The question then arises as to whether service in the Armed Forces is financially attractive, especially in relation to the income conditions in the country.

Since the taxation of income depends on individual factors, pre-tax amounts are used in the following, and figures are given for an NCO (OR-7<sup>31</sup>) and an officer (OF-3) whenever possible.

According to the Statista, the average annual income of a person working full time in 2021 was 49,200 Euros<sup>32</sup>. Since soldiers, like all civil servants, do not pay pension or health insurance contributions, unlike other employees in Germany, these must be deducted from the average income. This results in an adjusted average income of 41,032.80 Euros. This compares to an annual salary of 37,084.32 Euros (OR-7) or 50,314.08 Euros (OF-3) in 2021<sup>33</sup>. The income is therefore 90.4% (OR-7) or 122.6% (OF-3) of the average income. In addition, there are supplements for spouses and children, increases for more experience and other benefits.

According to Statistics Finland, the average annual income in 2019 was 37,680.00 Euros<sup>34</sup>. The Finnish salary system is made up of several components, depending on the specific post and individual performance, among other things. Furthermore, the official

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<sup>30</sup> "Mobilisierungswelle in Russland: Putin gehen die Soldaten aus," January 31, 2024, <https://www.merkur.de/politik/mangel-ukraine-krieg-schatten-mobilisierungswelle-putin-soldaten-russland-zr-92803552.html>.

<sup>31</sup> "NATO-Rangcode," in *Wikipedia*, April 7, 2024, <https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=NATO-Rangcode&oldid=243843443>.

<sup>32</sup> "Themenseite: Durchschnittseinkommen," Statista, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://de.statista.com/themen/293/durchschnittseinkommen/>.

<sup>33</sup> "Besoldungstabelle Beamte Bund 2021," accessed May 6, 2024, <https://oeffentlicher-dienst.info/c/t/rechner/beamte/bund/a?id=beamte-bund-2021&matrix=1>.

<sup>34</sup> Sampo Pehkonen, "Statistics Finland -" (Statistics Finland), accessed May 6, 2024, [https://stat.fi/til/pra/2019/pra\\_2019\\_2020-08-31\\_tau\\_001\\_en.html](https://stat.fi/til/pra/2019/pra_2019_2020-08-31_tau_001_en.html).



information is only available in Finnish<sup>35</sup>. Therefore, I use information from a working paper of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs on Comparison of Salaries of European Armed Forces from 2019<sup>36</sup>. According to this, the annual salary in 2019 was 31,200.00 Euros (OR-7) and 54,600.00 Euros (OF-3). The income of the sample cases was therefore 82.8% (OR-7) or 144.9% (OF-3) of the average income.

It is more difficult to find official figures for Russia - partly because the whole system has become even more confusing in the course of the war. According to Statista, the average annual salary in Russia in 2024 is 884,500.00 Rubles<sup>37</sup>. In January 2024, Forces.net reported that the starting salary for an ordinary soldier is now 160,000.00 Rubles per month<sup>38</sup>, i.e. 216% of the average salary. Earlier, in August 2023, the UK Defense Intelligence Agency posted on X that for many lower ranks fighting in Ukraine, the salary is already 195,000.00 Rubles per month (264%)<sup>39</sup>. There are also reports that individual cities and regions are paying substantial bonuses in some cases<sup>40</sup>. For comparison, before the invasion of Ukraine, the monthly salary for a lieutenant was 81,200.00 Rubles, just above the average income.

According to Statistics Canada, the average total income in 2022 was \$80,500.00 CAD<sup>41</sup>. Based on the salary scales valid from April 1, 2022, the annual income at the lowest level and without allowances was \$86,880.00 CAD (OR-7) and \$120,816.00 CAD (OF-3)<sup>42</sup>. The income was thus 107.9% (OR-7) or 150.1% (OF-3) of the average income. Additional benefits and allowances can also be added here.

A comparative analysis shows that Canada pays its military personnel particularly well. Finland and Germany are about the same, although officers in Finland appear to be paid slightly more. The figures for Russia, on the other hand, are almost meaningless, as it seems that ever higher payments are needed to keep the war going.

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<sup>35</sup> "Edut ja palkkaus," Puolustusvoimat, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/tyo-ja-koulutus/edut-palkkaus>.

<sup>36</sup> René Schulz, "Comparison of the Salary of European Armed Forces," n.d.

<sup>37</sup> "Average Salary in Russia," Statista, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1010660/russia-average-monthly-nominal-wage/>.

<sup>38</sup> Simon Newton, "How Much Are Russian Soldiers Being Paid to Fight Putin's War?," Forces Network, January 25, 2024, <https://www.forces.net/russia/what-are-russian-soldiers-being-paid-fight-putins-war>.

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Defence GB [@DefenceHQ], "Latest Defence Intelligence Update on the Situation in Ukraine – 29 August 2023 Find out More about Defence Intelligence's Use of Language: <https://Ow.Ly/BCyE50PFgvt> UA #StandWithUkraine UA <https://T.Co/I7HUGt2OsV>," Tweet, Twitter, August 29, 2023, <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1696394754865455170>.

<sup>40</sup> FOCUS online, "Studie gibt tiefe Einblicke in das perverse Sold-System der Putin-Armee - Video," FOCUS online, accessed May 7, 2024, [https://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/ukraine-krise/gigantische-gehaltsunterschiede-bei-der-besoldung-seiner-soldaten-wird-das-menschenbild-putins-deutlich\\_id\\_204877349.html](https://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/ukraine-krise/gigantische-gehaltsunterschiede-bei-der-besoldung-seiner-soldaten-wird-das-menschenbild-putins-deutlich_id_204877349.html).

<sup>41</sup> Statistics Canada Government of Canada, "Market Income, Government Transfers, Total Income, Income Tax and after-Tax Income by Economic Family Type," July 8, 2015, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110019001>.

<sup>42</sup> "Previous Military Pay Rates," April 3, 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/pay-pension-benefits/pay/previous-pay-rates.html>.

## SOCIETY

In Germany, the question of what are the most pressing problems seems to be very much influenced by day-to-day politics, and external security is not always relevant there. For example, a survey conducted by Infratest Dimap in September 2023<sup>43</sup> showed that the proportion of the population who considered the Russian invasion and war in Ukraine to be one of the most important problems had fallen from 25%<sup>44</sup> to 9%, far behind the economy, immigration and environmental protection. However, the same survey in April 2024<sup>45</sup> showed an increase to 21%, possibly because cases of Russian espionage and influence peddling in Germany had just been uncovered. In addition, 74% of Germans are in favor of increasing defense spending<sup>46</sup>.

The question of how to organize the military establishment and national defence has been a high priority in Finland since the independency of the state in 1917. This priority is primarily due to the geostrategic position of Finland close to strategically important areas of the Russian Federation and its predecessors. Actually, Until 2022, Finland has been the only non-NATO European Union state bordering Russia. . . . Finland had chosen to be a neutral and non-aligned state and was also willing to keep its non-alignment policy . . . Therefore, there have been needs for Finland to be ready to defend its territory against any aggression with its own capabilities.<sup>47</sup>

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that the Russian invasion of Ukraine caused fears in Finland and prompted the country to abandon its neutrality. As the January Citizens' Pulse survey shows in comparison with the results from the second half of 2012, the Finnish population's concerns about Russia have continued to grow<sup>48</sup>. About four out of five respondents said they were worried about the escalation of the war in Ukraine. Fears that Russia might take military action against Finland have also increased. Some 68 per cent of respondents are now at least somewhat concerned about this

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<sup>43</sup> "September," [www.infratest-dimap.de](https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2023/september/), February 1, 2024, <https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2023/september/>.

<sup>44</sup> "April," [www.infratest-dimap.de](https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2023/april/), February 1, 2024, <https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2023/april/>.

<sup>45</sup> "April," [www.infratest-dimap.de](https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2024/april/), February 1, 2024, <https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2024/april/>.

<sup>46</sup> "März," [www.infratest-dimap.de](https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2024/maerz/), February 1, 2024, <https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2024/maerz/>.

<sup>47</sup> Jarkko Kosonen and Juha Mälkki, "The Finnish Model of Conscription: A Successful Policy to Organize National Defence," in *Successful Public Policy in the Nordic Countries: Cases, Lessons, Challenges*, ed. Caroline de la Porte et al. (Oxford University Press, 2022), 0, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192856296.003.0022>.

<sup>48</sup> "Citizens' Pulse: Finns Now More Concerned about Escalation of War in Ukraine," Finnish Government, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/10616/citizens-pulse-finns-now-more-concerned-about-escalation-of-war-in-ukraine>.

possibility, compared with 63 per cent in December.

In Russia, the view that the country is moving in the right direction has increased significantly since the start of the war of aggression against Ukraine, according to the Levada Center<sup>49</sup>. While in January 2022 half of Russians shared this view, in April this year it was 71 percent, and the approval rating of President Putin is 85 percent<sup>50</sup>. At the same time, views of the West have deteriorated significantly. While in November 2011 a narrow majority had a positive view of the United States, today the negative view predominates by 68% to 16%. The same is true of the EU, although before the start of the war there was a clear majority in favor of the EU (+10%)<sup>51</sup>.

According to the February 2024 Leger Report, 58% of Canadians believe the conflict between Ukraine and Russia has the potential to escalate into a global conflict<sup>52</sup>. This is a significant drop of 16 percentage points from March 2022. Although the proportion of Canadians who want to provide more arms and ammunition to Ukraine has increased in this poll, the country as a whole is divided on both military and financial support, as well as Ukraine's prospects for victory. Several polls from March 2024 show an increasing willingness among Canadians to spend more money on defense<sup>53</sup>. However, this does not necessarily seem to be due to fear of Russia, but rather a mixture of a sense that Canada is losing its international reputation and as a result of Donal Trump's threat to withhold aid from NATO members that do not meet the 2 percent target.

## CONCLUSION

*When Joonas Korpišalo, goalie for the NHL's Columbus Blue Jackets, realized he'd have to report for duty to the Finnish military, he was annoyed—but his reaction was simply to bellyache a bit about it cutting into the NHL season. "I should have done this when I was 18," the 28-year-old Finnish ice hockey star said. The year they turn 18, Finnish men are assessed for military service, which lasts from about six months for soldiers to around 12 months for officers. They can put off serving but only until they're 28.*

*Despite his annoyance at not having completed his service 10 years ago,*

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<sup>49</sup> "Assessment of Situation in the Country," accessed May 7, 2024,

<https://www.levada.ru/en/ratings/assessment-of-situation-in-the-country/>.

<sup>50</sup> "Approval of the Authorities," accessed May 7, 2024, <https://www.levada.ru/en/ratings/approval-of-the-authorities/>.

<sup>51</sup> "Attitudes towards Countries," accessed May 7, 2024, <https://www.levada.ru/en/ratings/attitudes-towards-countries/>.

<sup>52</sup> Jason Anthony, "Ukraine-Russia Conflict : 2 Years Later," Leger, February 22, 2024, <https://leger360.com/ukraine-russia-conflict-2-years-later/>.

<sup>53</sup> Murray Brewster, "Three New Polls Suggest a Growing Number of Canadians Want More Money Spent on Defence," *CBC News*, March 5, 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/polls-canadians-defence-spending-trump-1.7133640>.

*Korpisalo, like the other 97 sports stars, packed his bags—even though six months, let alone a year, is an awfully long time in a sporting career<sup>54</sup>.*

This excerpt from a Foreign Policy article from May 2022 expresses what I identify as the most important factor as a result of my research - the socially perceived need and the social, shared will to defend.

Finland, almost as large as Germany in terms of area but with only a fifteenth of the population and a border with Russia that is almost the distance from Toronto to Winnipeg, manages to recruit about five times as many soldiers as the largest economy in Europe. Neither differences in demography or economy, nor in pay can explain this. On the contrary, the bulk of the Finnish armed forces are conscripts, only about 8,000 are professional soldiers, and even these are not paid above average. But, as Kosonen and Mälkki write, military service is not only a necessity, it is deeply rooted in society. It is therefore not surprising that the European Commission has commissioned a former Finnish president of all people to draw up a report on improving civil and military preparedness in Europe.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, it is clear that Germany's "never again war" belief, which has been practiced for decades, and Canada's saying that it is "a fireproof house, far from inflammable materials" still have an effect today. Although the willingness to spend more money on defense is increasing in both countries - at least for the time being - this is not leading to significantly more recruitment, despite good pay. In the end, money alone does not replace the willingness to fight and die for one's country.

This is also clear from the example of Russia, which is unable to recruit enough troops despite its huge resources, an authoritarian, if not dictatorial, system of rule and enormous monetary incentives. Against this backdrop, the results of the Levada Center, which is considered independent, should also be viewed with a healthy degree of skepticism.

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<sup>54</sup> Elisabeth Braw, "Finns Show Up for Conscription. Russians Dodge It.," *Foreign Policy* (blog), May 14, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/16/finland-conscription-russia-military/>.

<sup>55</sup> "Von Der Leyen Asks Finland to Prepare the EU for War," POLITICO, March 20, 2024, <https://www.politico.eu/article/von-der-leyen-asks-finland-to-prepare-the-eu-for-war/>.

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