

Abstract

This thesis examines what circumstances led Finland to decide to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The analysis assesses the period from 1991 to 2023, using a process tracing research method suitable for describing political and social phenomena. The analysis is mainly based on qualitative data in the form of existing academic studies or media articles and statements by politicians. These are additionally supplemented with opinion poll data. The main finding is that Finland's accession to NATO cannot be explained solely by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Finland's path to NATO has been shaped over a much longer period of time and has been influenced by a number of factors, the most significant of which, apart from the aforementioned invasion, were primarily the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, together with the 2019 Finnish parliamentary elections and the country's subsequent political set-up.