



Transformation of the Security Environment

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Role

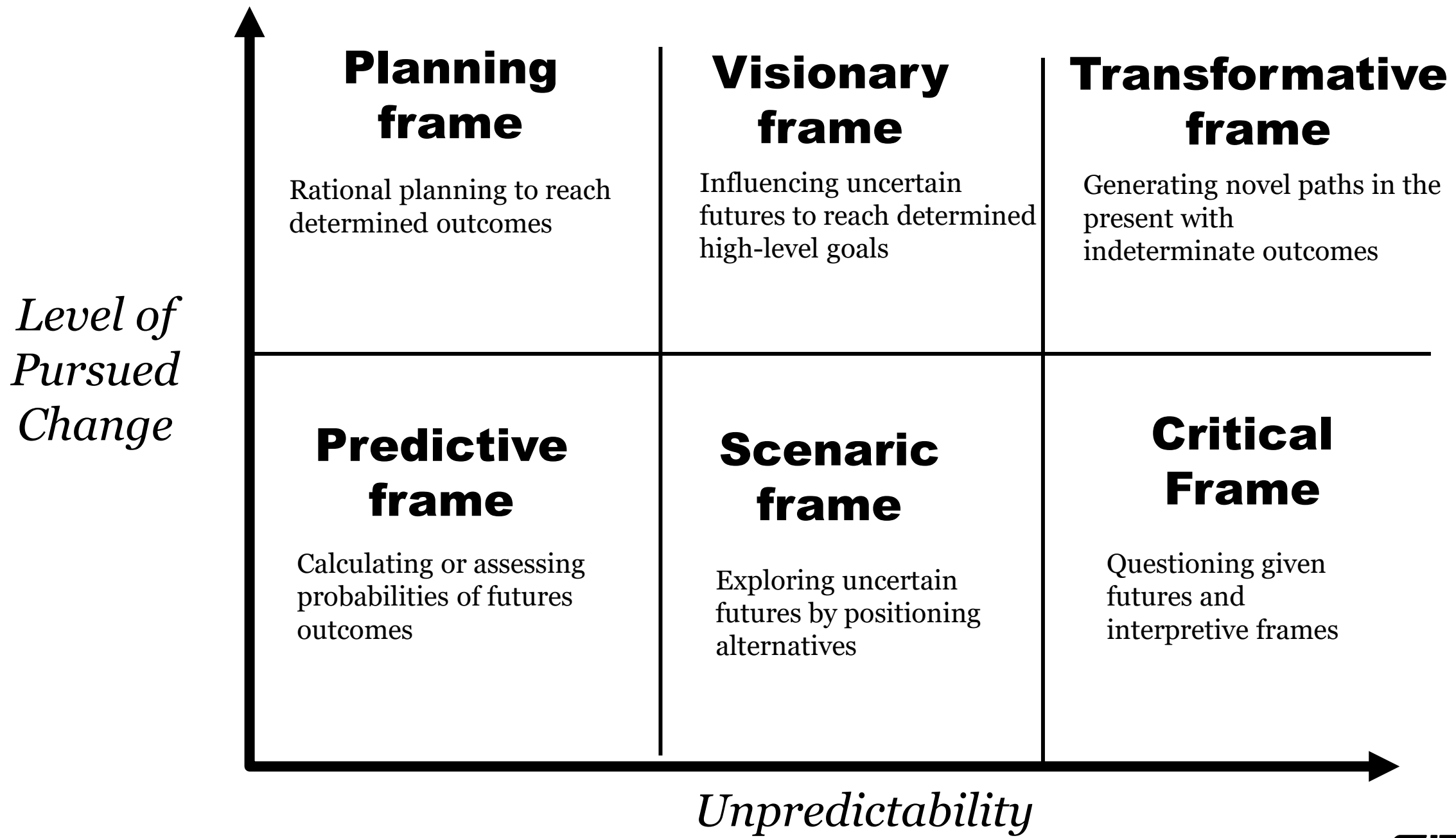
Our role

We anticipate the future, drive change and accelerate solutions to major challenges in our society in collaboration with other actors. We're a

Futurist
Innovation partner
Funding partner



Foresight at Sitra



**Future is
surprisingly
surprising**

Business | The theory of permanent involution
The brutal fight to dominate Chinese carmaking
Pity Ford, VW and other Western manufacturers

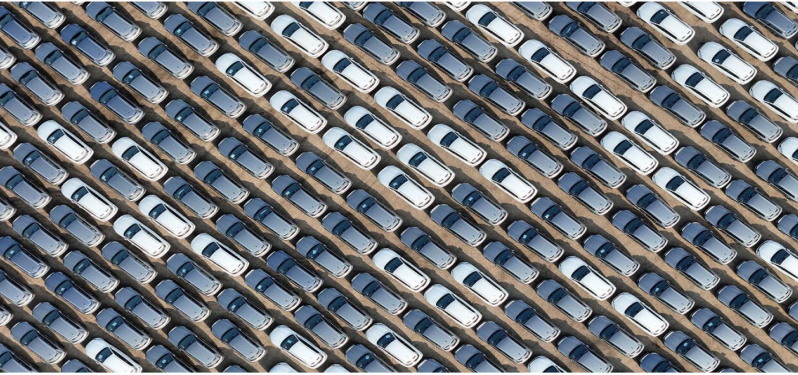


Illustration by The Atlantic. Source: ThomasVo
Getty; Yevgen Romanenko / G
AI Is Grown, Not Built
Nobody knows exactly what an AI will become. That's very bad.

WIRED



Explained, in charts
Is “radical-left” violence really on the rise in America?
The killing of Charlie Kirk is part of a grim pattern of political violence. This is what the data show



HS Zapadissa | Venäjän armeija järjesti uhmakkaan näytöksen EU:n rajalla, mutta voima hiipuu
Sotaharjoitus korostaa Valko-Venäjän ja Venäjän liittolaisuutta. Aiempi harjoitus toimi Ukrainan-



Chronik der US-Präsidentschaft
Die wichtigsten Entscheidungen Donald Trumps im Überblick
Trump entlässt die Fed-Gouverneurin Lisa Cook. Das Verbrennen der US-Flagge soll in Zukunft strafrechtlich konsequent verfolgt werden. Unsere Chronik der Entscheidungen
1.645

Start Audio Mein Abo Ausgabe Spiele

13.05

Featured Stories

Illustration by Akshita Chandra / The Atlantic. Sources: Nordin Catic / Getty; traffic_analyzer / Getty.

A New and Dangerous Kind of Fame
Charlie Kirk was a content creator—a job

Future

**The Present is
surprisingly
surprising**

Hyper-rapid change is the new normal: From reactivity to strategic decision-making through foresight

- The challenges are great, and policy-makers at both national and EU levels have to deal with them when the operating environment is constantly subject to rapid changes and surprising situations.
- The setting paves the way to short-term and reactive policy- and decision-making in the face of endless "necessities", which leaves little or no room for societal, multi-perspective discussion.



Hyper-rapid change is the new normal: From reactivity to strategic decision-making through foresight

- We can no longer be passive and reactive. We must be able to examine different developments in parallel.
- Hyper-rapid change requires a strategic and visionary ability to perceive future opportunities to help us cope with this turbulence.
- It is important that we actively strive to build the desired futures while preparing for, avoiding and handling crises.



TRANSFORMATION OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Overview of changes



WORKING GROUP

Otto Tähkää, Jukka Vahti, Rosa-Maria Mäkelä

Approach and methods

Multi-perspective analysis

Understanding the transformation of the security environment and its impacts requires a multi-perspective approach. **That's why we've examined the topic through the PESTE framework, considering the perspectives of power, the economy, technology, nature and people.**

Overall picture of changes

In the midst of transformation, understanding the big picture becomes crucial. **We have analysed what we interpret as the most significant developments defining the transformation of the security environment as a whole**, using the framework familiar from Sitra's megatrend reports.

Critical and transformative foresight

The transformation of the security environment requires Finland not only to prepare but also to engage in comprehensive societal renewal. **This demands critical and transformative foresight, which emphasises the identification and challenging of current assumptions, as well as the exploration of new opportunities and futures.**

Security as a societal question

National security

Preparedness for acute crises and disruptions

Focus on "security of the state"

Forecasting the future, scenario work,
preparing for the future

Consensus as a resource

Acute resilience/operational capacity in crises

Trust as a prerequisite for social resilience

Societal security

Anticipating surprising futures, influencing futures

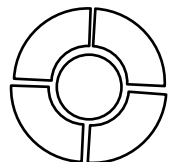
Focus on "security of communities and individuals"

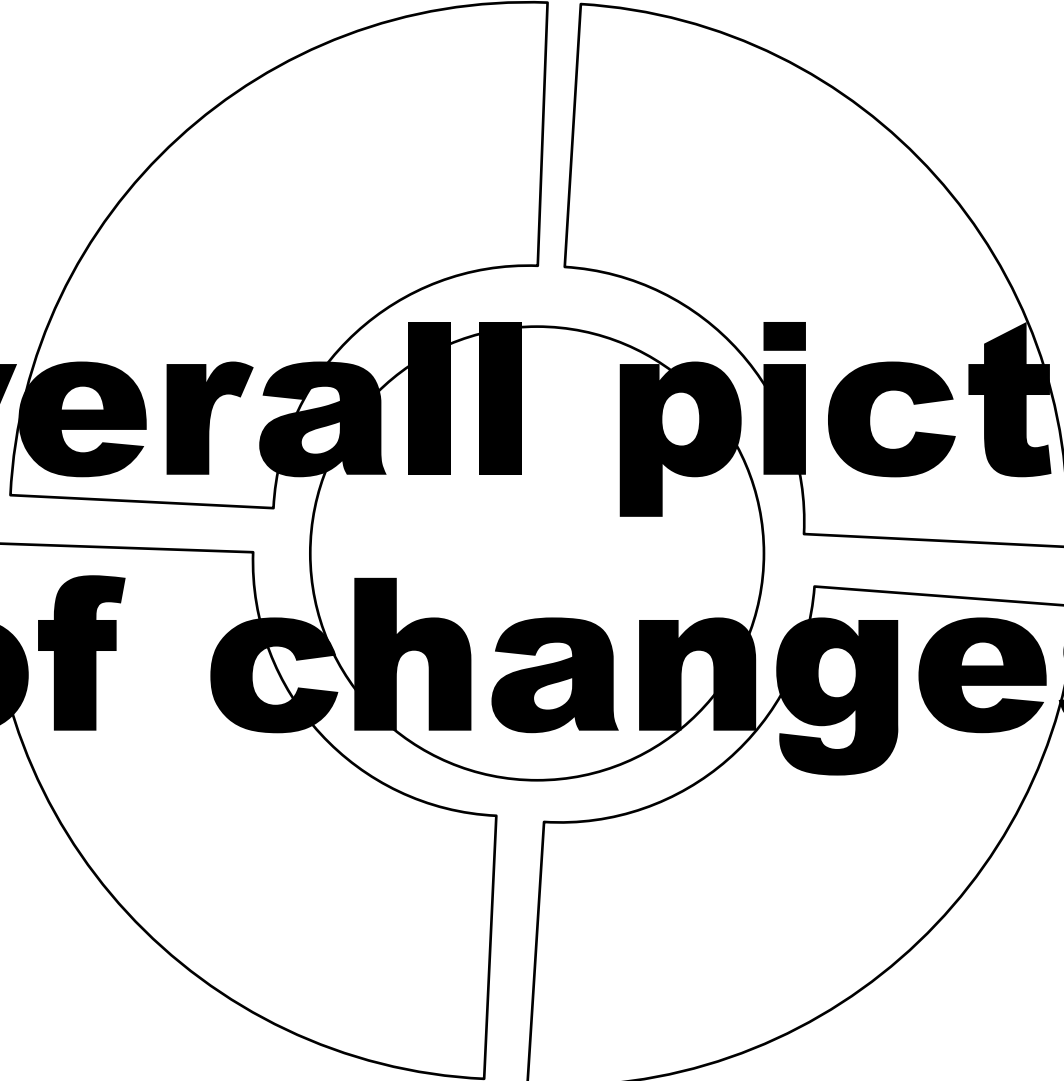
Challenging assumptions, anticipating and influencing
surprising futures, and preparing for crises through
imagination

Diversity and criticism as a resource

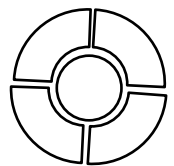
Basic resilience/operational capacity in everyday life

Trust as a prerequisite for social resilience





Overall picture of changes



TECHNOLOGY

Technology intertwining with security

ECONOMY

Economic power politics intensify

POWER

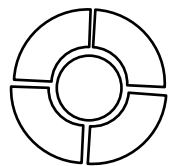
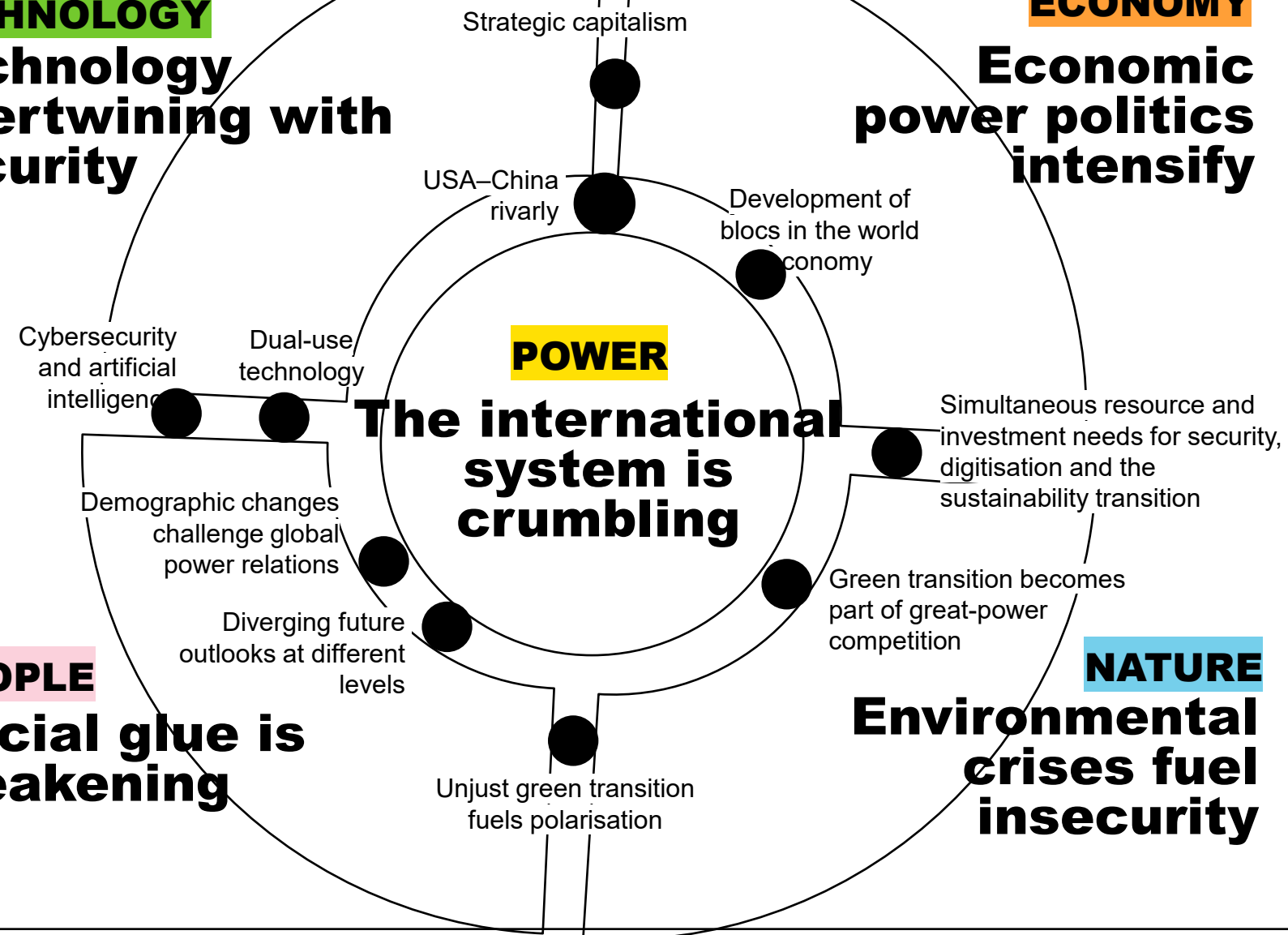
The international system is crumbling

PEOPLE

Social glue is weakening

NATURE

Environmental crises fuel insecurity



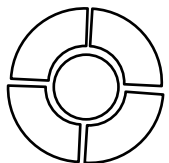
Overarching tensions 1/2

Short term vs long term

Actions taken in the midst of an acute crisis to respond to changes in the security environment and enhance security in the short term may create new problems, undermine the foundations of security or establish harmful path dependences in the long run.

Preservative preparedness vs transformative preparedness

Preparedness for security threats is often preservative in nature. However, as the security environment is changing, it is insufficient to merely aim at preserving the current state. Addressing the challenge requires a more comprehensive and long-term societal renewal.



Overarching tensions 2/2

Certainty vs uncertainty

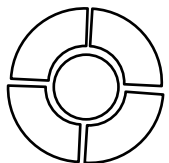
The era of overlapping crises has in many ways both increased uncertainty about the future and, conversely, reduced it.

For example, Russia's war of aggression has diminished uncertainty about the nature of the Russian state. The pandemic, in turn, provided us with a wealth of information about how society functions under exceptional circumstances.

Inevitability vs alternatives

The emphasis on security threats easily leads to the rhetoric and policies of necessity and the absence of alternatives.

On the other hand, the inherent uncertainty and unpredictability of the future require the ability to imagine and consider alternatives – and to make deliberate choices between them.

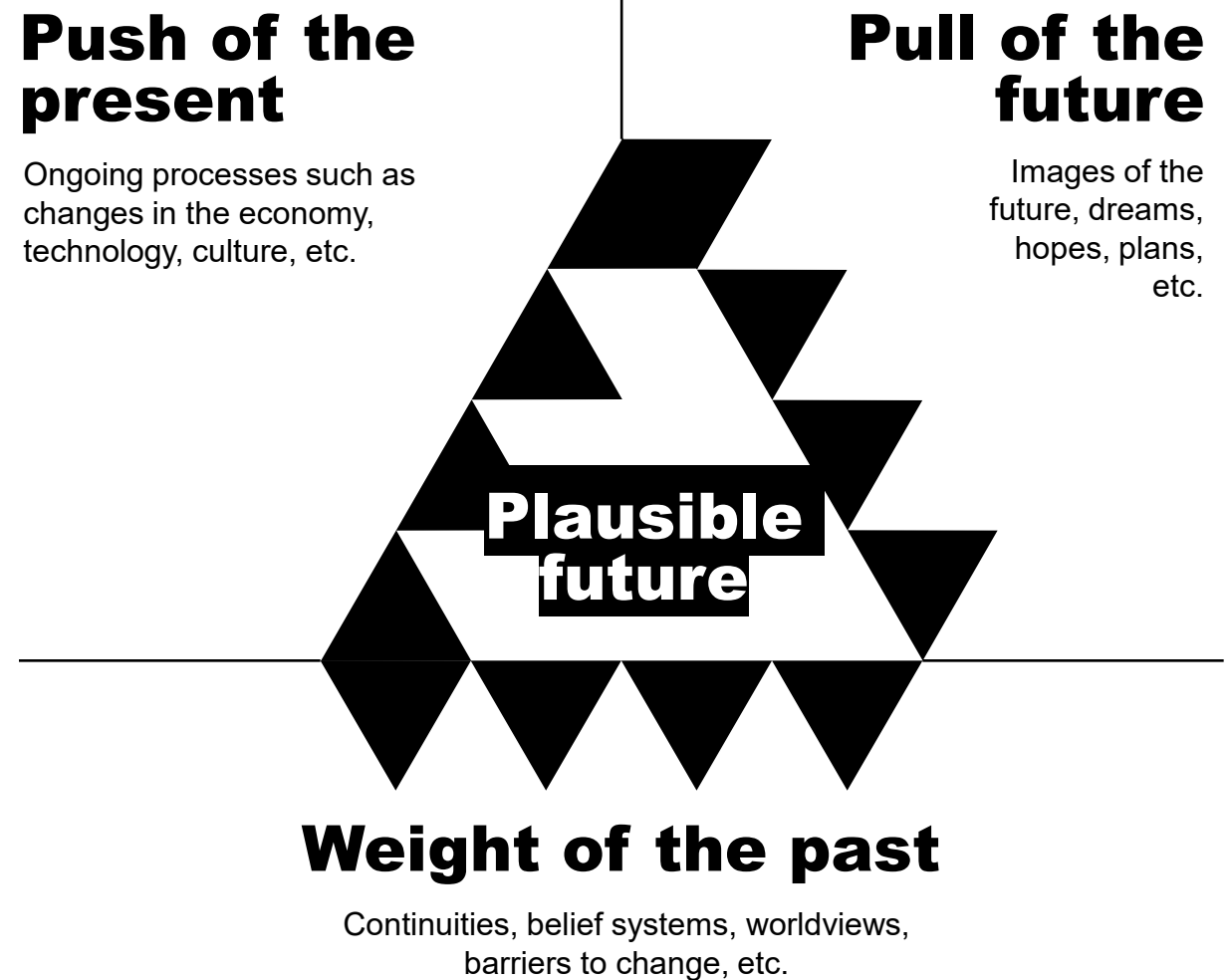


Futures triangle

We have applied the futures triangle method to analyse the developments defining the transformation of the security environment. This method considers ongoing changes and trends, as well as path dependences, mindsets and various visions of the future.

In this review, we will focus on the “push of the present” and the “weight of the past”. We will touch upon the “pull of the future” which we will revisit more systematically as the project progresses.

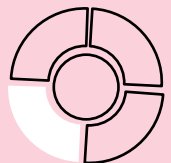
The futures triangle method is described in more detail in the “Methods” section at the end of the review.



Futures triangle. Adapted from Inayatullah 2008.

PEOPLE

**The social glue is
losing grip**

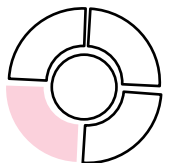


PEOPLE



Weight of the past

- Is national unity a myth or reality?
- Consensus has been an important tradition, particularly in foreign and security policy.
- Has high societal trust been taken for granted?

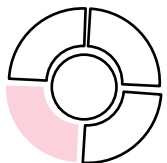


PEOPLE



Push of the present

- Indicators of trust and social cohesion are declining.
- Social interaction between people and their integration into society are in transition.
- Future outlooks are becoming increasingly fragmented.
- Cultural conflicts are being stoked, and affective polarisation reduces people's willingness to participate.
- Our political culture is shifting.
- Society's information integrity is under growing pressure, e.g. through information warfare.

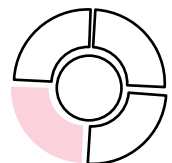


PEOPLE



Pull of the future

- Demographic diversity is increasing.
- People and regions can use their unique strengths.
- Perceived intergenerational fairness will become stronger.
- New communities and networks will foster trust.



Glimpses into alternative futures

WHAT IF social media transforms how young people integrate into society to the extent that it threatens societal continuity management?

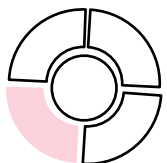
HOW do increasingly divergent perceptions of reality affect the ability to make decisions that concern society?

WHAT IF inequality within society grows so large that it divides the nation in two?

HOW can we bridge the widening gaps in societal participation and inclusion?

WHAT IF young people's desire for collective participation was taken seriously?

HOW can Finland create a culture in which young people are not merely the target of policy measures but active participants and influencers?



Concluding observations

1

The transformation of the international security environment represents a kind of rupture in historical continuity whereby **many of the defining features and principles of the security environment are eroding** – and being deliberately dismantled.

2

Currently, an intensifying struggle is taking place over the direction of the future of the security environment, and it concerns not only traditional geopolitics **but also increasingly the economy, politics, technology and people's minds.**

3

As a pioneer in foresight, preparedness and comprehensive security, **Finland is well-positioned to safeguard society's ability to function, its security of supply and continuity management in the midst of various challenges, crises and surprises.**

4

Beyond preparedness, **Finland and Finnish society will also need the capacity for renewal.** However, renewal cannot be solely based on risks and threats – it also requires a vision of the future and prospects of desirable and secure futures.

Why is it important to look to the future?



The future can and must be influenced.

There are many futures.

Trends can be changed and reversed through action.

