

## TVORBA STRATEGICKÝCH A KONCEPČNÍCH DOKUMENTŮ V RESORTU OBRANY ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY

### CREATION OF STRATEGIC AND CONCEPTUAL DOCUMENTS IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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#### Abstrakt

Hlavním předmětem článku jsou metody využívané při realizaci strategické analýzy během zpracování strategických dokumentů v resortu obrany České republiky. Článek pokrývá výstupy z rozhovorů se zpracovateli těchto dokumentů. Na základě rozhovorů byla zpracována původní teorie tvorby strategických a koncepčních dokumentů pomocí metodologie zakotvené teorie. Tato nová teorie obsahuje všechny zjištěné problémy a nedostatky, jejich pravděpodobné příčiny a možná řešení a zlepšení. Teorie může sloužit jako výchozí bod pro analýzu strategického plánování v dalších organizacích.

#### Abstract

The main focus of this paper consists in the methods applicable to the implementation of strategic analysis with processing strategic documents of the Czech Defence Department. The article covers the interviews with processors of those documents. Based on the interviews, an original theory of strategic and conceptual documents creation was elaborated using the methodology of grounded theory. This new theory contains all the identified problems and shortcomings, their possible causes and possible solutions or improvements. The theory can serve as a starting point for the analysis of strategic planning in other organizations.

#### Klíčová slova

Strategie; strategické a koncepční dokumenty; metody strategické analýzy; resort obrany; obranné plánování; aplikace zakotvené teorie.

#### Keywords

Strategy; strategic and conceptual documents; strategic analysis methods; Ministry of Defence; defence planning; grounded theory application.

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## INTRODUCTION

The article presents partial outputs of a long-term research project Strategic Analysis Methods applicable within the Defence Department of the Czech Republic (STRATEGAN), which is realised at the University of Defence, the Czech Republic. The research area is a complex body of all military and non-military divisions of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and Czech Armed Forces (CAF). These divisions are further referred to in general as the Defence Department. The addressed problem within the research is discussed also in terms of international context. However, article is focused on a detailed analysis of the situation in the Czech setting.

The STRATEGAN research is aimed at devising an application of methods for realisation of strategic analysis of an external and internal environment of the Czech Defence Department. The prime expected output is a design of methods applicable to the realisation of strategic analysis, particularly with processing strategic documents of the Czech Defence Department, e.g. a development concept. With the suggested methods the following shall be defined: procedures of their application, time demanded for the application, major principles of the use and advantages and disadvantages of the given method. The work procedure of the project is as follows:

- Identification of deficiencies and problem areas when using the methods of strategic analysis and creating strategic documents in the Czech Defence Department.
- Comparison of strategic documents, processed within the Czech Defence Department, NATO and some of the Ministries of the Czech Republic, selected in order to find out the level and way of the application of strategic analysis methods.
- Suggestion of methods of strategic analysis with creating strategic documents in the Czech Defence Department, and their theoretical and application description.
- Suggestion for applying the methods with processing strategic documents.

As for the first step of the research, a content analysis of existing strategic documents was carried out, and the processors of those documents were interviewed. The subject of this article is design of the theory of strategic and conceptual documents (SCD) creation. The major researched area is the process of creating SCD documents and the use of methods of strategic analysis during this process. The goal of the article is to identify the main problematic areas in the processing of the SCD which can cause, from the perspective of strategic analysis, lower their quality and to suggest possible solutions. The authors particularly attempt to clarify the problem of applied procedures and process standards with document processing, also the methodology of data processing and methodological use of the suggested methods of strategic analysis. The output of the article is an overview of constraints in this process, supplemented with probable causes. Based on the most frequently identified causes, potential general recommendations are formulated in order to use strategic analysis when creating documents.

Documents of a national level, which deal with a problem of strategic (conceptual) documents within the Czech Republic, mention possible methods for document processing but they do not describe a procedure of their application nor their possible modification for specific conditions such as Ministries' strategic documents. The documents include a formal structure of mid-term conceptions, consisting of a current state analysis and the

conception itself. Among the applied methods there is mentioned a SWOT analysis, external and internal environment analysis and prognostic methods.

Very little research is being done on public strategy elaboration, most of the research is focused on business strategy and performance.<sup>1</sup> Hence there is very small base for assessment and comparison of defence planning methodology. Within NATO methodology, the issue of strategic analysis is included in the defence planning process in several places and forms. The strategic analysis methodology appears in the form of an assessment of the current environment, cost-benefit analysis, concurrency analysis and future scenarios elaboration. Basically, it is a top-down-oriented capability planning and the general model corresponds to the best practice approach.<sup>2</sup> The actual form of strategic and conceptual documents of the CAF is based mainly on various partial methodologies for the creation of public strategies at the national level. Legal regulations are also included in these methodologies. These normative acts do not address the use of concrete analytical methods and tools.<sup>3</sup>

In 2018 a new Methodology for creating conceptual documents of the Ministry of Defence was introduced by the Defence Policy and Strategy Division under the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic.<sup>4</sup> This methodology includes a carefully formulated framework and structure of conceptual and strategic documents in the Defence Department, and principles of document processing from the process perspective. The process stage is described in detail from the identification phase and analytical support phase to the phase of suggesting implementation and authorisation. A part of the methodology is an overview of methods of strategic analysis that shall be used with the particular phases of document processing. Each method is provided with a relevant step in the process and in a particular activity, a brief method description and its classification in a general group of analytical methods. However, there is a complete absence of particular information about a purpose and output of the methods, processing principles, methodological procedure and relevant resources. Interestingly, the newest methodological aid includes directions for using the methods but yet it does not provide information how to apply the given methods on the created SCD correctly. Nevertheless, it is important document in the department that is binding for the creation of future SCD. Using the methodology should result in higher quality SCD.

The another important document in this area is the Methodology for the Preparation of Public Strategies, approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in January 2019. According to Government Resolution No. 71 of 28/1 2019, the document is currently binding for the members of the government and heads of other central administrative

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<sup>1</sup> JOHANSON, Jan-Erik. *Strategy Formation in Public Agencies*. *Public Administration*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. 2009, 87, 872 - 891. ISSN 1467-9299 DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9299.2009.01767.x.

<sup>2</sup> BAKKEN, Bent Erik. *Handbook on Long Term Defence Planning (Manuel sur la planification de defense a long terme)*. Ottawa: St. Joseph Print Group Inc, 2003. ISBN: 92-837-1098-3.

<sup>3</sup> ŽIŽKA, Miroslav - ZŮNA, Pavel. Příprava veřejných strategií v podmínkách rezortu obrany: Koncepce výstavby armády. *Vojenské rozhledy*. Brno, Univerzita obrany, 2013, vol. 22 (54), no. 3, pp. 15-26, ISSN 1210-3292, DOI: 10.3849/2336-2995.22.2013.03.015-26.

<sup>4</sup> PROCHÁZKA, Josef - MELICHAR, Josef - BAXA, Fabian - PROCHÁZKA, Dalibor - RICHTER, Jiří - PETRÁŠ, Zdeněk - HODICKÝ, Jan. *Metodická pomůcka pro tvorbu koncepčních dokumentů rezortu Ministerstva obrany*. Metodika. 2018.

authorities in creating and implementing strategic documents. The document defines the strategy, process (phases) and principles of its creation as well as aspects of strategy implementation.

The preceding research showed that the current level of application of strategic analysis methods is very low in terms of their total quantity, the number of different methods and the depth of their execution. In terms of a purpose the most frequently used methods are those for obtaining information necessary for problem solving and/or for determination of variant impacts based on the experts' estimates. Then there are methods for generating alternatives in problem solving by a group of people with the use of creative or systematic-analytic thinking. In addition to that, there are methods for specifying the goals and strategies of the future organisation's development, their "strategic units" and functional areas. As the fourth purpose for using methods the respondents mentioned assessment of variants based on qualitative, quantitative or mixed assessment criteria.<sup>5</sup>

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This chapter defines basic characteristics of the realised research, particularly its goal, research set, applied methods and collection procedures, analyses and data interpretations.

The paper's goal is to identify the main problematic areas in the processing of the SCD, which can cause, from the perspective of strategic analysis, lower their quality and to suggest possible solutions.

### **Methodology**

The chosen research design is a qualitative paradigm whose prime purpose is to discover new knowledge, patterns and information, instead of a mere verification of assumed interrelations (hypotheses). The purpose of a qualitative research is not to achieve a high level of generalisation, but rather to acquire new comprehension and in-depth information which is at the moment of its origin valid only for the researched units, but after that it shall be the subject of a subsequent examination or verification within a larger sample. By means of this gradual examining, the validity of the new theory is either proved or disproved within relatively large sets, or even a population (by means of quantitative but also other qualitative researches).

The qualitative approach has its special characteristics - examination of a small number of cases is balanced by collecting a large amount of data and related information. This approach is also typical for rather low reliability but high validity. It is based on an inductive approach.<sup>6,7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> GRASSEOVÁ-MOTYČKOVÁ, Monika - Štěpánková, Eva. *Metody využívané pro řešení problémů v rezortu obrany české republiky. Obrana a strategie*. Brno, Univerzita obrany, 2015, 15/2, pp. 31-50. ISSN 1214-6463, DOI: 10.3849/1802-7199.15.2015.02.031-050.

<sup>6</sup> BLAIKIE, Norman. *Approaches to social enquiry: advancing knowledge*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Polity, 2007. ISBN: 978-0745634494.

<sup>7</sup> HENDL, Jan. *Kvalitativní výzkum: základní teorie, metody a aplikace*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Praha: Portál, 2016. ISBN: 978-80-262-0982-9.

The fundamental framework of the realised research is a case study - the research focused on a selected organisation and characteristics of its one particular area. The results of the case study cannot be generalised for a population (statistical generalisation) but they can be generalised for a theory (analytical generalisation) - i.e., its aim is to extend and generalise a theory.<sup>8</sup>

### *Organisational aspects*

Case studies are typical for their focus on a clearly defined case with a researcher being interested in many variables. In this case the organisation is the Defence Department of the Czech Republic, as it was defined in Chapter 1. The Defence Department of the Czech Republic employs approximately 30,000 employees, out of which 22,000 are a part of Czech Armed Forces. The overall structure of the Department is not clearly defined, and it cannot be easily structured. In brief, it is a complex of the following organisational units:<sup>9</sup>

- Organisational units constituted under the legislation - the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, military administration bodies, military colleges.
- Organisational elements constituted by the Ministry of Defence - the main unit here is a part of armed forces, military units and military facilities; also, various state-owned enterprises and institutions under the State Budget contributions.
- Other organisational elements - for example, Military Police.

According to the Act N.222/1999 Coll., among the defence segments there is planning of operations, mobilisation planning, preparation planning of rescue and humanitarian tasks, planning of the defence system readiness and defence planning. Within the strategic management this planning is performed as building up, training and use of the armed forces, setting the defence policy, managing the material resources, financial resources and human resources. The SCD, which are the subjects of this research, are created in these strategic areas mentioned above.

The above mentioned organisational units are controlled by several top administrative bodies, among them there is the Minister of Defence, General Staff of Czech Armed Forces, Military Intelligence and Military Police. In terms of creating SCD of the Department the key role is also played by the Defence Policy and Strategy Division of the Ministry of Defence which is under the Deputy Minister for Defence Policy and Strategy. The respondents and their interviews processed here in this paper come from among these top organisational units.

The Defence Department's major scope of authority is to secure the defence of the Czech Republic, management of Czech Armed Forces and administration of Military Regions. The Ministry of Defence secures preparation and realisation of the conception of armed forces enhancement, suggests strategic measures for national defence, and secures also

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<sup>8</sup> YIN, Robert K. *Case study research: design and methods*. (5th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1452242569.

<sup>9</sup> KRULÍK, Vladimír. Organizační členění rezortu Ministerstva obrany a realizace záměrů Bílé knihy o obraně. *Vojenské rozhledy*. Brno: Univerzita obrany, 2012, vol. 21 (53), no. 2, pp. 3-16, ISSN 1210-3292.

cooperation with the defence departments of NATO's allies and other foreign armed forces.

The particular area, which is examined within the defined organisation, is the creation of conceptual and strategic documents. At the collection phase a large amount of varied data and information of a qualitative type was found, and this can be summarised into the following areas:

- Key process characteristics of creating SCD.
- Problem areas of creating SCD - causes, evidences and consequences.

### *Methodology of interviews*

The data collection was carried out by means of designing a semi-structured questionnaire and subsequent personal interviews with the members of the mentioned organisation. The questionnaire includes a fairly wide range of questions, but for the needs of this paper the following selected questionnaire areas (except for the identification questions) were analysed:

- The process of creating SCD - key characteristics, process course, outputs, organisational and personnel requirements, application of methodological apparatus.
- The problem areas in the process of creating SCD.

Within the above mentioned areas the questionnaire contains 9 open questions and 2 semi-closed questions in total. The complete questionnaire is attached. The questionnaire was presented to two respondents at first in terms of the so called pilot studies. Then, based on the suggestions from the pilot study, the questionnaire was modified to its final version.

The advantage of personal interviews is in the possibility of using the so called inquiries, when the researcher can ask follow-up questions to obtain specification and explanation from the respondent.<sup>10</sup> The interviews were carried out in the form of personal interviews during 2017 (3 interviews) and in the first half of 2018 (15 interviews). The length of the interviews ranged from one to three hours.

Sampling of the research is defined according to the target group (what kind of respondents are selected), technique of sampling (how respondents are selected) and sample size (how many respondents are included in the research).<sup>11</sup>

The key criterion for including a respondent into an unbiased sample within the presented research is their participation in creating strategic and/or conceptual documents of the Defence Department of the Czech Republic, and this participation is further specified by the following requirement: The respondent is/was an independent processor or a member of a team that was active in creating SCD for a certain time during the past ten years.

Major sample characteristics are: out of the total of 18 respondents 10 of them are civil employees and 8 active military personnel (2 generals, the others colonels, 6 senior

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<sup>10</sup> MIOVSKÝ, Michal. *Kvalitativní přístup a metody v psychologickém výzkumu*. Praha: Grada, 2006. ISBN: 8024713624.

<sup>11</sup> KOZEL, Roman. *Moderní marketingový výzkum: nové trendy, kvantitativní a kvalitativní metody a techniky, průběh a organizace, aplikace v praxi, přínosy a možnosti*. Praha: Grada, 2006. ISBN 80-247-0966-X.

officers). All those respondents were/have been in the Defence Department - at least for 4 years (1 respondent), 5 respondents have been working in the Department for between 10 to 30 years, and 12 respondents of the researched sample have been active there for more than 30 years. Another important criterion is the time spent on a particular position whose responsibility is the creation of SCD. 13 respondents worked on such positions for between 2 to 10 years and 4 respondents more than 10 years (the longest time was 15 years).

The respondents were presented with a compact and complete list of SCD of the Defence Department of the Czech Republic since 2003 where they indicated the documents they had processed or had participated in their processing.

The method of intentional (purposive) sampling was chosen as the sampling method - one of the types of non-probability sampling.<sup>12</sup>

In qualitative research, it is not possible to unambiguously determine whether the size of the sample, i.e., the number of respondents (or other sources of data) is "sufficient" so that a rich enough database is created and quality theory achieved. Moreover, qualitative approach allows not only for a previously fixed sample structure but also gradual determination (specification) of the sampling structure - the size and structure of a sample is decided by a researcher in the course of data collection according to the given circumstances. In this respect the method of grounded theory allows the data collection to be finished after having reached the so called theoretical saturation,<sup>13,14</sup> when from the researcher's point of view the theory is fully developed and it is anticipated that other cases shall not bring any new findings but only prove those found out in the previous cases.

In the research presented here a total of 22 respondents were invited to participate, and eventually 18 of them agreed with the personal interviews. In the final phases of analysing and interpreting the information the theoretical saturation was reached within the researched data, when they were only repeating (and thus proving) the previous findings and so any further data collecting appeared to be purposeless.

#### *The methodology of data processing, analysing and interpreting*

There are numbers of methods intended for the purpose of qualitative approach - e.g., grounded theory, ethnomethodology, ethnography and narrative analysis. Because of the objective's character and the specifics of the intention as it was determined, we have chosen the grounded theory method and its principles of working with data. There are two main attitudes to grounded theory, the most famous authors are Barney Glaser<sup>15</sup> and

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<sup>12</sup> BABBIE, Earl R. *The practice of social research*. (14th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-1305104945.

<sup>13</sup> MIOVSKÝ, Michal. *Kvalitativní přístup a metody v psychologickém výzkumu*. Praha: Grada, 2006. ISBN: 8024713624.

<sup>14</sup> HENDL, Jan. *Kvalitativní výzkum: základní teorie, metody a aplikace*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Praha: Portál, 2016. ISBN: 978-80-262-0982-9.

<sup>15</sup> GLASER, Barney G., STRAUSS Anselm, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1999. ISBN 978-0203793206.

Anselm Strauss with Juliet Corbin.<sup>16</sup> The basic point of view is similar, but the coding process conception is different. In the article, the latter approach (Strauss and Corbin) is applied.

In the course of the interviews the data was recorded in the form of written notes that were consequently reworked into a written text. Then, the procedures of the grounded theory were applied in order to process and analyse the text. A grounded theory can be characterised as a strategy of conducting a qualitative research, a way of analysis and interpretation of the obtained data at the same time. In terms of this method the assumed hypothesis (theory) is not verified by the subsequent data collection, but the opposite way - it begins with collecting the data about the researched problem, and it is examined which significant subjects appear within that problem.<sup>17</sup> Evidently the method tends to suggest a new theory by means of the data which the researcher collects, using various methods and techniques.<sup>18</sup>

The fundamental principle of a grounded theory is systematisation of qualitative data by means of applying a set of specific approaches of text coding which are called and determined by their authors<sup>19</sup> as follows:

- Open coding - identification and categorisation of concepts, their properties and dimensions of these properties (dimensionalising).
- Axial coding - a process of placing the main categories and subcategories into interrelations through the so called paradigm model (determinants - phenomenon - context - intervening conditions - strategic action - consequences).

The above mentioned types of text coding are based primarily on constant comparing, question asking, finding similarities and differences, searching for properties and dimensionalised properties of individual categories and subcategories. The outcome of grounded theory is the finding of key categories and subcategories of concepts according to their accentuation made by the respondents. The key categories are those that receive a high degree of respondents' attention (high occurrence frequency) and also high significance. When the text is rich enough, then it is possible to divide particularly the major discovered categories into subcategories. Evidently the systematisation of a large number of qualitative data is mainly based on the data categorisation and subsequently finding their interrelations.

Among the procedures of grounded theory there is also selective coding. The authors of grounded theory tolerate the option of omitting this phase.<sup>20</sup> In the presented research, there was no need to apply this particular part of grounded theory because of the nature of the problem and the researchers' intention.

When applying the procedures of grounded theory one has to bear in mind that the created paradigm model as well as the suggested theory reflect the conception of a

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<sup>16</sup> CORBIN, Juliet - STRAUSS, Anselm. *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1412997461.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> HENDL, Jan. *Kvalitativní výzkum: základní teorie, metody a aplikace*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Praha: Portál, 2016. ISBN: 978-80-262-0982-9.

<sup>19</sup> CORBIN, Juliet - STRAUSS, Anselm. *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1412997461.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

particular researcher. Same data can lead different researchers to create different categories and subcategories depending on what criteria a given researcher grounds the data categorisation (assigns concepts to categories). The resulting paradigm model, or the categories' interrelations identification, can also take different forms under the influence of concepts by individual researchers.

## RESULTS

The interviews, or rather the data obtained from them, were analysed by means of text coding under the principles of grounded theory as described above. First, open coding of the qualitative texts was carried out - assigning concepts was followed by the search for similarities of the found concepts and identification of the key categories related to the researched subject. After discovering several key accentuated categories of the process characteristics of creating strategic documents, the interrelations of those categories are examined (axial coding), or more precisely the paradigm model is used (in a slightly modified form) which observes the recommendations made by the authors of the grounded theory.

This chapter describes the results that are based on the professional experience of the Defence Department's members with creating SCD. The basic found categories shall be determined, as well as their conceptual content and specific context within the researched organisation, as it was described by the respondents. The proposal of a theory based on the grounded theory procedures is dealt with in the following chapter.

The text analysis has found the following categories and subcategories (in italic letters and indicated with a code of [%category%-%subcategory%]) of the characteristics of creating SCD in the researched organisation.

### Procedure and process of creating strategic documents

The interviews have generated a large amount of information related to the course of the process of creating SCD in the researched organisation. The respondents commented extensively and particularly on the specifics, characteristics and key or problem areas of this process.

Within the given organisation this process takes place in a very wide scope in a form of presenting a proposal for a strategic/conceptual document, following by comment and approving procedures. The phase of the document processing itself can proceed in two organisational ways:

- The team members process individual parts of a document. Then these parts are handed over to the manager of the whole process of the given document creating who integrates the individual parts and present them again to the processors for their comments.
- The manager processes the first version of a document themselves, hands it over to the process team whose members revise the document and thus create a base for a final document version.
- In both mentioned cases, it is problematic when the manager (submitter) is insufficiently involved in the process of creating an SCD. There are several reasons for

this and they are elaborated in the following text in connection with the problematic consequences of this phenomenon.

In both cases the final document version is presented to approvers who initiate a comment procedure, whose result is a final version of a strategic or conceptual document.

The document proposal itself is (can be modified, depending on specifics of individual documents) a sequence of the following steps in general: An assignment - solutions - setting up a team and time schedule - creating a document structure - an analytical part (not always carried out) - defining objectives, deviations and searching for solutions.

The following text is focused on some of the further characteristics of the phases above, specifically an *assignment [1-1]*, *solutions [1-2]*, *time schedule [1-3]*, *document structure [1-4]*, and *analytical phase [1-5]*. In accordance with the procedure of grounded theory we can understand these phases as subcategories and it is suitable to determine their properties as well as dimensions of these properties. The significant subjects, the subcategories, which received (in terms of this category) high frequency and high importance comments by the respondents, can be defined as follows.

*An Assignment [1-1]* is to various degrees directed by an assigner, or it is left up to the consideration of authorised processors. The respondents view both approaches as acceptable, and as long as they are efficient in terms of conditions for creating and specifics of the given document, then it is fairly possible to cope with either situation. However, a problem can occur when together with an assignment there is also a required outcome defined with no preceding analysis. Then the respondents perceive this to be problematic when their work is narrowed down just to find reasons for the output required by the assigner, or more precisely to accomplish particular steps leading to the assigned outcome. As a result, the analysis phase is omitted (see below) and the result is already given, which defies the logic of the procedure of creating strategic documents as it is codified in the binding Department's methodology.<sup>21</sup> Other problem areas that occur within this phase are:

- A too general, unclear and vague assignment (due to the assigner's intention or even incapability to formulate an assignment intelligibly). As a rule, the more general assignment, the more intuitive creating of the document structure follows.
- Too vague, unclear assignment may be intentional or unintentional. There are several reasons - already mentioned low engagement of the submitter, their inability or unwillingness to concretize the vision specifically enough, etc.
- Excessive and groundless concreteness of an assignment (the opposite of the former one). All-too-clear and detailed assignment binds the processing team's hands and considerably limits innovation - even where it would bring the benefits.

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<sup>21</sup> PROCHÁZKA, Josef - MELICHAR, Josef - BAXA, Fabian - PROCHÁZKA, Dalibor - RICHTER, Jiří - PETRÁŠ, Zdeněk - HODICKÝ, Jan. *Metodická pomůcka pro tvorbu koncepčních dokumentů rezortu Ministerstva obrany*. Metodika. 2018.

*Solutions [1-2]* for creating strategic documents in the researched organisation are primarily the previous versions of the currently processed document and other documents that are hierarchically superior. This is absolutely agreed by all the respondents, considering it also as effective. Interestingly, one of the respondents even suggests contacting the authors of the previous document version and taking their experience into consideration (with their consent). However, this can logically cause two problematic situations, which also the respondents mention:

- The non-existence of the previous document version - resulting in a high degree of intuitive working with a completely new processed document.
- The non-existence of the superior document version - similar consequence as the former point. Moreover, if there is an assignment to create a strategic document only for a selected partial area of an organisation's activity, then it is not possible to relate it to a general strategy. As a result, a partial conception lacks purpose, or it is even created without the context of other organisation's activities.

As for other solutions - sources and materials - the respondents vary in comments - they are most frequently inspired by foreign documents (NATO documents, strategic documents of countries comparable to the Czech Republic and/or more advanced), next they use internal organisational sources (human resources, economic sections etc.), available methodologies (e.g., of different Departments), public sources - internet, libraries, professional journals, etc. There is a fairly wide variability within these answers.

The specifics of setting up a team of processors are included in one separate category *Personnel [3]*, because this has proved to be among the essential ones in terms of frequency and perceived importance.

Now there are some aspects of the related subcategory - *time schedule [1-3]* of creating strategic documents in the researched organisation. The congruence among the respondents is of a high degree (variance in statements is minimal) in terms of the following. The time schedule of SCD of the Defence Department of the Czech Republic is directly related to a document type and its extent, but in general it can be estimated in terms of months up to a year. The approving procedure usually takes months, sometimes the same time as the document creation itself. Typical problems related to the allocated time are (presented in intensity order as the respondents quoted):

- Lack of time (impossible deadlines) that influences, according to the respondents, the quality of documents (e.g., also due to omitted analytical phase, as mentioned above).
- Negative perceptions are also related to very general schedules (minimum specific set deadlines).
- The time, which is saved during the document creation phase, must be used then for additional adjusting of the document.

The *document structure [1-4]*, which is another identified subcategory of document creation, is always based on the assignment. As it was mentioned, too vague assignments increase the degree of the intuition approach when determining the document structure and thus cause a high structure variability of individual documents or individual versions of the same document. Eight respondents mention an explicit application of selected approaches to determine the individual areas of a document. It is either the MCA

methodology - Main Capabilities Areas or DOTMLPFI - Doctrine, Organisation, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities, Interoperability.

As it is mentioned above, the realisation of the *analytical phase [1-5]* of creating strategic documents is typically accompanied by a rather low degree of attention and exact approach. This might have several reasons (occurring also within other categories) -lack of time and information, pressure put only on a result that causes the omission of the analytical procedures, selection of processors and their insufficient qualification (or motivation). The prevailing qualitative character of the documents is also problematic in this respect, and this is related to a low degree of using hard data and exact methods. The consequences of omitting or a low degree of the analytical work are logical contradictions and inconsistencies inside the materials or among individual documents, content errors, incorrectly inferred conclusions, and impossibility of measurability, comparison or result assessment.

The respondents feel also the following deficiencies and risks when working with data:

- A random, unsystematic choice of information and data sources.
- It is necessary to verify the quality and credibility of information.
- Information flow can be set up ineffectively.
- Information sources, the degree and way of their use depend, to a considerable extent, on the processors' erudition and experience.

One of the key subcategories that resulted from the assessment of the obtained data by means of grounded theory procedures is the *application of exact methods [1-6]* in the process of creating SCD. There is a broad congruence among the respondents in this area - the following conclusions are confirmed by a major part of the sample.

The respondents were at first interviewed about using the methods in the process of creating a strategic document in which they had participated, and this was without offering them any particular method. After they answered, a similar question followed - but this time with a list of methods to choose from and comment on the degree of their use as well as the way of their practical application (in terms of the process of creating a strategic document in which the respondent participated in the past). These methods are those that shall be, according to the methodology of the Defence Department, used with the creation of SCD.

The exact methodological procedure is not usually mentioned within the documents themselves. According to the respondents, it is not typically required by the assigners whose key priority is the result rather than the procedure. Nevertheless, applying exact methods is definitely desirable at least in the sense that it contributes to supporting the argumentation of presented conclusions. The higher the degree of the use of exact methods and techniques, the more credible the presented materials are for the assigners.

The respondents are mostly familiar with the methods of SWOT analysis and DOTMLPFI (which are very frequently required by the nature of the assignment). Applying these methods reaches the top in the list. Moreover, the respondents unanimously confirm using the chosen methods of data collection (interview, questionnaire, expert group discussion), but then again they unanimously (in accordance with the following) admit high informality in the application of these methods.

Major problem aspects of this category are the following:

- Applying the methods of strategic analysis, decision making and problem solving is highly intuitive. It does not meet the requirements for a correct formal procedure of individual methods and techniques, and the respondents admit that the use of the methods is sometimes even unconscious. With the question where no particular methods were offered, thirteen respondents mentioned only general thinking procedures - analysis, comparison, synthesis, induction, deduction, etc.
- An unsystematic selection of appropriate methods (e.g., according to the processors' or assigners' knowledge).

The identified reasons for omitting the analytical phase and application of methods are lack of time, intention, lack of interest or knowledge (of assigners or processors) and pressure only on the result.

### **Absence of methodology**

A significant identified category and deficiency, which the respondents accentuate in a high degree in their answers, is the *absence of methodology* [2] in creating SCD in the researched organisation and the relating absence of a unified and systematic procedure of processing the strategic documents.

A wide set of SCD, which are categorised according to various criteria, has been created over the time up to the present in the Defence Department of the Czech Republic. The main framework of document categorisation is based on the nature of the organisational environment. On the top level, there are supranational NATO documents and EU legislation because of the Czech Republic's membership in both organisations. On the national level, the top documents of the Czech government are the Security Strategy, Defence Conception Strategy and political guidance. On these the Department's documents are based, where a complex strategy of the Defence Department is processed in the Long Term Perspective for the Growth of the Defence Department of the Czech Republic. Three documents of the lower level that secure strategic planning are the Conception of Building the Czech Armed Forces, Conception of Building the Military Police and Conception of Building the Military Intelligence.

The individual document types are updated in the course of time - thus at different time periods updated versions of the individual document types are created.

An indisputable requirement, imposed on creating SCD, should be for their factual and time concord, consistency and interconnection. For most cases also a unified structure and generally homogenous approach shall be required in document creation. However, the respondents agree in a high degree that, based on their experience, the above mentioned requirements are not met. A large number of deficiencies can be identified in this area. An absence of holistic approach to creating strategic documents is evident in the following effects (arranged in order of intensity according to the respondents' accentuation):

- Inconsistency and lack of interconnection of both formal and content aspects of the document. Inconsistency among individual document types appears within the created set and document hierarchy, within a single document type it appears even among the individual updated versions. Such inconsistencies (factual, time, etc.) sometimes occur also among individual parts of the same document.

- The selection and application of exact methods (the methods of strategic analysis, decision making, problem solving) is carried out unsystematically, informally and intuitively (see above).
- Insufficient methodological background may be the reason for distrust of the assigner or approvers, as it does not provide sufficiently conclusive results of the analysis.
- A rather random way of choosing sources and materials for creating strategic documents - it is caused by different levels of qualification and experience of the processors. Nevertheless, the respondents agree here that the previous version of a given document is always used (unified approach), but the other sources are usually chosen and used only randomly.
- The materials for the created documents are stored and kept a record of rather randomly (it also depends on a document type, in some cases a systematic approach occurs). These facts cause the situation when some analyses and steps are carried out repeatedly, despite the fact that they were realised while creating a different document type or a different version in the past.

### Teams - Personnel

The third significant category, which emerged from the comments by the respondents during the qualitative interviews, is *personnel* [3], i.e., the personnel support for creating SCD. The respondents highlight a number of problematic aspects in this particular area. Some of them are even causes of the other - aforementioned - negative impacts on the process of creating SCD. Let us consider here again some of the significant characteristics (subcategories) of the “personnel” category, and then also the mentioned problem areas that stem from them.

The creation of SCD is typical for the *team work* [3-1] with the exception of partial, only narrow (specifically) focused documents that can be processed also by individuals. The created teams are usually varied, composed of both internal and external employees. The core of the team is typically built, consisting of about 5-7 members who are frequently in contact, and apart from that there are occasional consultations with the other team members. The team size depends on the document type and its scope. The created team of processors is usually divided into smaller teams that are focused on individual specific areas of the strategy or conception to be created. The team normally collaborates with various entities (see recommendations). That could be all about the typical aspects of the personnel support for the process of creating SCD.

Highly accentuated difficulties of the personnel support for creating SCD in the researched organisation are (again presented in order of their significance, or frequency of their occurrence in the interviews and assigned degree of importance):

- A random (unsystematic) choice of the members of the process team or their choice based on incorrect criteria (e.g., their availability at the current time instead of their qualification and experience with a similar task). Different problem solvers apply different procedures when creating strategic documents. Another negative consequence of incorrect selection of personnel may be further the personnel’s low motivation to undertake the creation of strategic documents responsibly.

- Incompetence of the processors - particularly no knowledge of creating SCD and no knowledge of the methods of strategic analysis. The lack of experts results in a high degree of subjective procedures incorporated in the documents by the processors.
- Incompetence or a high workload of the assigners - incompetence or low motivation to formulate an assignment and required output effectively, general focus on operative tasks, neglecting strategic tasks.
- Absence of a focus on the long-term time horizon, missing “culture of strategic thinking”, frequent changes of the Department’s conditions, which result in instability of the main ideas, focus on a short-term time horizon. The respondents emphasize in a high degree the significance or even necessity of strategic and conceptual thinking of the assigners, which is, according to their experience, more important for creating strategic documents than expertise in one specific field.
- Unethical procedures - for instance, politicking or distorting the analyses to one’s own department’s advantage or processors themselves.

### Strategy and impacts

This chapter is logically based on the structure of grounded theory. In terms of every discovered category and related subcategories, the respondents suggested a large number of recommendations to increase the efficiency of the process of creating SCD and thus increasing the standard of the documents themselves. These recommendations are further categorised again according to the discovered categories as described above.

#### *Procedure and process of creating strategic and conceptual documents*

The first identified category was the *Procedure and process of creating strategic and conceptual documents* [1]. The creation of documents is always initiated by an assignment and setting up a general goal. Both are defined with varying degrees and ratios by the assigner and processors. The degree of the assignment and goal specification has to be by all means well-founded and adequate, or more precisely, appropriate with the specifics of the document and its goal. The required output of the document should not be outlined as a definite and specific outcome for which the processors have to merely devise appropriate steps (justification). The document structure advances from the analytical phase to the goals and then to the strategies to achieve them, but definitely not the other way around - from the goal to analysis, see Procházka.<sup>22</sup>

A general congruence amongst the respondents prevails in the area of the applied solutions for creating strategic documents. It is definitely appropriate to work with the previous versions of the currently created documents, and to approach the creation process as updating the documents. This process should include assessment and implementation of the change of conditions and requirements at the time between creating the original and updated document version. The creation procedure with one document type should be unified so that it completely prevents heterogeneous outputs from arising. The changes of the individual document updates should not be revolutionary,

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<sup>22</sup> PROCHÁZKA, Josef - MELICHAR, Josef - BAXA, Fabian - PROCHÁZKA, Dalibor - RICHTER, Jiří - PETRÁŠ, Zdeněk - HODICKÝ, Jan. *Metodická pomůcka pro tvorbu koncepčních dokumentů rezortu Ministerstva obrany*. Metodika. 2018.

if possible, but rather have the form of gradual work on the principal ideas. Also, the documents hierarchically superior have to be considered within the creation process and the processors have to keep them in compliance with the newly created document, if they are interrelated.

The document structure is based on the assignment and it should be logical, clear and adequately specific. The individual covered areas are logically defined and the compliance among them has to be secured (factual, time, personnel, etc.).

The analytical phase must be given considerable attention and time within the process of creating SCD. Omitting this part results in insufficiently supported and groundless outputs that suffer from the absence of measurability, definiteness, objectivity and comparability. These shortcomings result in impossibility of assessment. Furthermore, it is necessary to work with sufficient and credible data and information in the analytical phase. The set of data has to be adequate to a particular situation in both quantitative and qualitative expression. The data, which the processors work with, have to be complete, objective, true and relevant, consistent, comprehensible, and exact.<sup>23</sup> As emerged from the interviews there is a requirement for information flow - adequate information (in both quantitative and qualitative sense) has to reach those who need it, or who know how to deal with it effectively.

The analytical subcategory itself in the process of creating SCD is the selection and application of exact methods (strategic analyses, decision making and problem solving, etc.). During the interviews, the respondents accentuated the specifics of this area to such an extent that a separate category was created for them *Selection and application of exact methods [4]*, whose characteristics are addressed in chapters 3.1 - 3.3. The recommendations for this category are presented in chapter 3.4.4.

Other recommendations, which have been formulated by the respondents in terms of creation of SCD, are related to the organisational aspect and they can be expressed as follows:

- The use of a process / project approach with creating strategic and conceptual documents.
- Creating ad hoc managing documentation for a particular document which would consist of organisational requisites for its creation (time schedule - time milestones, team structure and distribution of competences and responsibilities etc.).
- Already in the course of creating a document, it is useful to be familiar with the requirements and attitudes of the approvers, or collaborate with them already in this phase. This surely prevents consequent - time-consuming - discussions about different ideas of the approvers and processors and the risk of rejection of the whole document or its major part is lowered.
- According to the respondents it is not useful to limit the extent of the document (number of pages) if possible.

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<sup>23</sup> GRASSEOVÁ, Monika. *Efektivní rozhodování: analyzování, rozhodování, implementace a hodnocení*. Brno: Edika, 2013. ISBN: 978-80-266-0179-1.

### *Absence of methodology*

*Absence of methodology* [2] of creating SCD is accompanied with a number of problems and negative impacts, as mentioned above. Therefore there is a clear recommendation to create and implement a methodology, particularly in order to define and apply the unified procedure, methods and principles of creating the Department documents. Other considerable benefits of such methodology were mentioned by the respondents as follows:

- Increasing the measurability, objectivity and comparability of the outputs.
- Reducing the incompatibility among the individual documents and their versions.
- Engagement of the systematic approach in various areas (choosing the personnel, methods, sources and materials, etc.).

The respondents also suggest a particular form of such methodology that should, according to their experience, be a set of explicitly described individual steps - whether of the process of document creating or method application. They mention that while the theoretical determination of methods is available in the accessible sources, the specific examples and procedures of their application are missing.

Let us note that certain steps are being realised currently in the researched organisation in accordance with the recommendations above. A methodology of document preparation has been issued.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the interviews have also revealed the need to create ad hoc methodology for individual documents.

### *Personnel support*

The last category, defined above, is *Personnel support* [3]. In the beginning of the work on a particular document, it is necessary to determine the personnel that will comprise the team, all responsibilities and competences. The respondents suggest to define also all the other parties involved in the document creation (who is supposed or will express opinion on the documents, everyone who is concerned). Before initialising the document work itself, it is useful to arrange an initiation meeting of the process team where the preparations for the action itself shall take place - clarification of the organisational requirements, applied procedures and methods, etc.

And again, a number of recommendations emerged from the identified and above mentioned problem areas of the personnel support of the process of creating SCD, aiming at increasing the efficiency of this process and thus also increasing the quality of those documents. They can be defined as follows:

- Defining the relevant criteria in order to select the processors - in particular, qualification, previous experience with document creating, knowledge of exact methods, strategic and conceptual thinking abilities, and last but not least time capacity and motivation to participate in the process of creating the Department's documents.

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<sup>24</sup> PROCHÁZKA, Josef - MELICHAR, Josef - BAXA, Fabian - PROCHÁZKA, Dalibor - RICHTER, Jiří - PETRÁŠ, Zdeněk - HODICKÝ, Jan. *Metodická pomůcka pro tvorbu koncepčních dokumentů rezortu Ministerstva obrany*. Metodika. 2018.

- Keeping the team composition unchanged for the whole time of working on a document (if possible and desirable) or at least minimising the personnel changes within the team.
- The ability to reveal and eliminate potentially unethical procedures (preferring personal interests or a department's interests, intentional hindering the application of objective procedures and exact methods in order to decrease measurability and objectivity of the outcomes, deliberate and groundless preference of the final result of the process without any previous analysis, etc.).
- Integrating the approvers and external examiners as soon as the document processing phase (see above).
- Education in the field of procedures and methods of creating strategic documents should not be applied globally - for all the personnel of the Department. A more effective procedure would be to aim the educational activities only at those employees who are likely to use such knowledge and skills in their work.

#### *Analysis and application of exact methods*

Based on numerous suggestions made by the respondents, a new category was created *Selection and application of exact methods [4]*. A primary and clear recommendation to enhance the process of creating SCD, and thus increasing also their quality, is the correct application of exact methods of strategic analysis or other objective procedures and techniques. The particular requirements for increasing the effectiveness of the method application can be formulated as follows:

- Appropriate choice of methods - the choice must include the methods that are relevant in terms of the required output and document type, or more precisely they must be applied for the appropriate purpose.
- Minimising the intuitive and informal or even completely incorrect application of the methods. If the methods are used incorrectly or partially, then logically their output and benefit for the whole process is limited. To support the above mentioned recommendation it is necessary to focus also on the causes of the omission of the exact method application and minimise their negative impact. The particular requirements are:
  - Securing the sufficient time capacity for creating strategic documents and for the analytical phase in particular.
  - Increasing the qualification and motivation of the entire personnel that participate in the document creating - the assigners and processors.
  - Appreciating the importance of using the exact methods as resources for increasing the quality of the created documents. Specific positive impacts of their application are evident in increasing the support of argumentation of the outcomes (increasing the results' credibility), increasing the degree of the quantitative aspect in the documents and thus increasing measurability and comparability of the results.

## DISCUSSION

Conducting interviews and subsequent analysis revealed several sub-areas (categories) that are critical in the context of the use of methods of strategic analysis in the documents. In essence, these are the individual elements of the more complex problem of creating SCD. The content of this chapter is a summary of individual findings into a coherent model and evaluation of the context and importance of the newly created theory. At the same time, there is room for clear delineation of the problems. The overall structure of the elements is shown in Table 2, the clue is explained in Table 1.

**Table 1: Paradigm model clue**

[X] Category

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[X-Y] Subcategory

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- Dimension



In the area of document processing (category [1] *Process of Document Creation*), significant deviations between the real and the optimal states have been identified. The optimum here is the situation that the respondents see as optimal, which is based on the form of questions in the interviews. Significant difference is already in the entry into the creation of documents, where the submission of documents lacks a clear and logical structure and purpose. At the same time, the problem is in the form of an assignment, the content of which is the desired result, to which the authors of the document are to complete. This practice contradicts both the normative and descriptive planning and strategy-making theory. From the point of view of causal analysis, there are several reasons that lead to the given situation: Until now, a unified methodology for creating documents has not been applied in the defence sector, leading to a subjective conception of each new document. This principle is also reflected in the subjective approach to the existing previous versions of the document or to relevant documents from abroad. Thus, a paradoxical situation arises where the creation of conceptual documents does not have a unified departmental concept and is fundamentally dependent on specific processors. One of the negative effects of this principle is the inability to repeat the document creation process by another team with the same result. It can be stated that the planning result depends more on the individual authors of the document than on the objective characteristics and elements of the relevant organizational environment from which, according to the theoretical conception, planning should be based.<sup>25,26,27</sup>

The first problem area is closely related to the absence of methodology for document creation and the need to create it ([2] *Absence of Methodology*). In the period between the interviews and the creation of this article, a binding methodology for the creation of SCD was created under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence. First, it has not yet been fully implemented. As document creation is a matter of several months or years, its impact on documents will be traced back to a significant time lag. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the new methodology covers only the most general level of the issue. In general, there is a clear process of document processing and specific activities and methods used. However, the specific application page of the mentioned methods is missing, the processing and outputs of which are the content of the document itself. At the same time, the methodology lacks the required practical application of the required methods to respondents. Basically, there is a lack of practical examples in the methodology of how the desired result of the sub-steps (parts) of the document should look. The result is an existing general framework for document creation, which will again be applied according to the subjective interpretation and needs of the authors of each document. Thus, the ongoing solutions to the problem cannot accommodate this area comprehensively and remove the bottleneck as a result. In this context, the creation of a toolkit for the application of the most important methods in document processing can be recommended.

In both previous points, the fact that document creation is based on the individual abilities of their authors was mentioned. This factor was specified in [3] *Personnel*. In the

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<sup>25</sup> DONELLY, H. James - GIBSON, L. James - IVANCEVICH, M. John. *Management*. Praha: Grada, 1997. ISBN: 978-80-7169-422-9.

<sup>26</sup> COULTER, Mary. K. *Strategic management in action*. (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson, 2013. ISBN-13: 9780132620673.

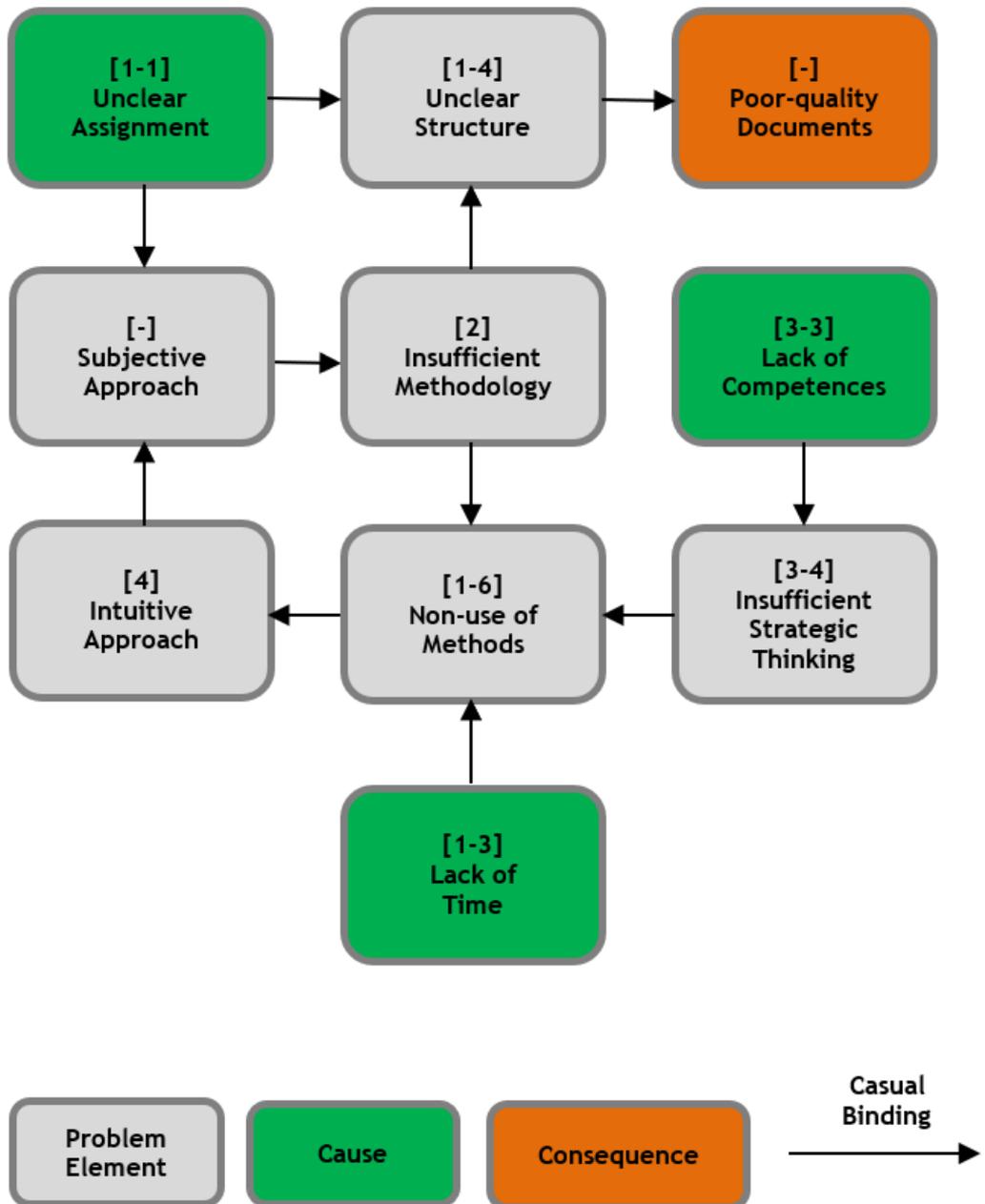
<sup>27</sup> TYLL, Ladislav. *Podniková strategie*. Praha: C.H. Beck, 2014. ISBN: 978-80-7400-507-7.

context of the above, the competence and experience of staff in developing SCD are critical. With the absence of a sufficient guiding methodology, the problematic assignments to the document makers have no choice but to rely on non-empirical intuitive ways of solving problems. The use of intuitive approaches is not in itself a crucial point worthy of criticism, but given the lack of experience with strategic thinking, it is a cyclical problem without easy starting point (poorly used methodology of document creation > intuitive procedures > subjective approach > low use of methods > poorly applicable methodology). The described shortcomings in creation and changes in implementation teams further deepen this problem.

Potential solutions to current practice are summarized in the category [4] *Selection and Application of Methods*. The interviews show that it is precisely higher knowledge of the specific methods of strategic analysis from which the resulting document is compiled that could address individual bottlenecks and fundamentally contribute to streamlining the entire system described. A consistent approach to the methods used should lead to a more comprehensive structure of documents across the defence sector. At the same time, limiting intuitive and subjective processing can result in a more objective form of strategies and concepts that will be more compatible with both previous versions of documents and transnational documents. At the same time, it will be possible to better consult the process of creation across departments and in case of changes in implementation teams there may not be any major problems with the continuity of partial works. The clearly defined requirements for the necessary methodology can be used to build a functional and effective system of education, which can complement the missing competencies in the area of knowledge and application of methodological apparatus.

Overall, there is a clear causal link in the theoretical framework of the problem, which creates a dynamic system from individually created categories and subcategories. In the process of elaborating the paradigmatic model, mentioned were also the identified elements which enter into the solved problems as external influences or result from it as external consequences. It is, therefore, possible to take a general picture of the current state of processing SCD in the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic. This overall view of the causes and consequences identified is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Causal theoretical model



Source: Authors

## CONCLUSIONS

The content analysis carried out in recent years revealed that SCD elaborated in the Czech Defence Department contain significant methodological, formal and content insufficiencies. Subsequently, interviews with the authors of these documents were conducted. It was found that even document authors perceive a number of partial deficiencies. Using the grounded theory methodology, these shortcomings were divided into several groups (categories and subcategories), which contain both a description of the current situation and possible causes and potential solutions.

The identified categories, i.e., Process of Document Creation, Absence of Methodology and Personnel, are closely related. These system elements can be solved either as isolated individuals or as a single whole. The interviews revealed a set of suggestions for improvement of partial identified shortcomings, which can be transformed into variants of solution of the whole research problem. Choosing the optimal way of solving the problem and proposing its implementation is part of the follow-up research. It is necessary to supplement the proposals with findings from the related benchmarking study and current trends in military and security analysis. The results presented in this article are one of the important steps for increasing the quality of strategic and conceptual planning in the Czech Defence Department. The created theoretical model can also be used in other similar organizations for identification of weaknesses in planning and their optimization.