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**WHAT MOTIVATES COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY: THE CASE STUDY
OF ESTONIAN COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY DEVELOPMENT 2005-2020**

MA thesis

Supervisor: Thomas Linsenmaier, MA

Tartu 2021

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What motivates counterterrorism policy: the case study of Estonian counterterrorism policy development 2005-2020

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ABSTRACT

Estonia has not experienced terrorist attacks for the last 15 years. However, Estonia has been gradually developing its counterterrorism policies. What explains the counterterrorism policy development in Estonia in 2005 to 2020? The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the existing scholarship on counterterrorism policy development, offering an insight into the behavior of a low-risk country. It is a theory-testing case study, offering counterterrorism policy development explanation through three competing theories: Rational choice theory, Constructivism, and Reference group theory. The study uses a triangulation method in collecting data and conducts a content analysis on sources. The findings indicate that the Reference group theory explains the development the best, suggesting that Estonian counterterrorism policy development is influenced by the necessity to maintain its memberships in the EU and NATO for instrumental purposes.

Keywords: counterterrorism, reference group theory, low-risk, state behavior, policy development, Estonia

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDCT	Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism
CT	Counterterrorism
EFIS	The Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service
EU	European Union
ISDP	Internal Security Development Plan
ISIS/ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JKAK	Sub-committee of the Security Committee
KAPO	Kaitsepolitseiamet/ Estonian Internal Security Service
K-Komando	Special Intervention Unit
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBGB	Estonian Police and Border Guard Board
PNR	Passenger Name Record
TVVN	The Counter-Terrorism Council of the Security Committee of the Government of the Republic
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VVJK	The Security Committee of the Government of the Republic

1. Introduction

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the US Pentagon in 2001, 11th of September marked an increase in terrorism-related studies, more focused on Islamic terrorism. Since the USA government declared the ‘war on terror,’ various approaches have been used to discuss the phenomena. Scholarly works have been focusing on terrorist’ methods, strategies, impacts on societies, and how to fight it (B.Hoffman 2006; L.Weinberg 2008; G. Martin 2006;). As the conflict sparked in Syria and spread to surrounding territories, new terrorist organizations emerged in the Middle East. When the most known of them to the Western society, Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, became active in Europe, fighting terrorism rose higher in the European Union’s security and defense plan. Counter-terrorism spending in European Union rose from 5,7€ million in 2002 to 93,5€ million in 2009¹. Europe had seen some deadly terrorist attacks beforehand in Spain 2004² and London 2005³, but the Islamic State’s approach was different, marking the era of new jihadism⁴. Transnational terrorism became a threat to all states forcing them to adopt new methods to fight violence. A variety of scholars and states have adopted a view of looking into the root causes to prevent radicalization, the so-called de-radicalization programs (J.Horgan, K.Braddock 2010; D. Koehler 2016; A.Speckhard 2011)

Though terrorism has been deeply studied and discussed, no single definition has been agreed on, and no single method has proved to be sufficient enough. However, deep cooperation between states to detect suspicious activity is essential for everyone. When it comes to the studies of terrorism, most in Europe have been done on Western Europe- the states that have suffered the most from terrorist attacks and continue to be under the terrorists’ radar (Gaibullov, Sandler 2008; Nesser, Stenersen, Oftedal 2016). These states also significantly invest in counter-terrorism (CT). For example, France increased CT spending by 3,8€ million after the 2015 January attacks. Low levels of

¹ Counter-Terrorism funding in the EU budget. European Parliament. 2016 briefing.

² Terrorist bomb trains in Madrid. March 11, 2004. History.

³K.J. Storm and J.Eyerman (2008) Interagency Coordination: A case study of 2005 London train bombings. *National institute of Justice Journal*.

⁴ Farhad Khosrokhavar (2017) "The New European Jihad", *Revue du MAUSS*, vol. no 49, no. 1, pp. 31-47.

terrorist activity have been noted in Eastern and Northern Europe⁵ compared to the Southern and Western states. Yet, these low-risk states still adapt CT measures and strategies (Rekawek 2016). Though spending more on countermeasures may seem like a logical response to heightened risk, it is unclear why states who do not experience terrorist attacks develop counterterrorism policies. Thus, it is yet to explore the behavior of low-risk states who continuously build their CT policies in the same manner as states who experience terrorist attacks.

One example of a low-risk state located in the North-East of the EU that has engaged in the development of CT is Estonia. Estonia has contributed millions of US dollars in the war of terror while having no terrorist attacks on its soil (Omelicheva 2009). Thus, it is puzzling why a state with a low-level terrorist activity actively participates in CT-related activities, including the adoption of policies and measures. As mentioned before, most studies have been done on the states that experience terrorism and increase their efforts in CT-policy making. Still, there is not much research done on why low-risk countries develop their CT policies.

This thesis aims to contribute to the counterterrorism scholarship by presenting a case study of a state located in a low-risk area who develops their CT policies over time. Thus, the central question is, what explains the development of the Estonian counterterrorism policy in 2005 to 2020? The period of 2005-2020 considers that by 2004 Estonia was welcomed into the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and had fulfilled both of the organizations' accession requirements, including relevant obligations regarding CT such as implementing directives and regulations. Meaning that CT policy requirements were part of the accession, 2005 marks the start of the period when Estonia developed its CT policy as a member of these organizations rather than acting as a policy-taker. In order to identify what factors were driving Estonia's CT policy development, this study relies on the existing explanations of CT policy development in the CT literature, namely rational choice theory, constructivism, and reference group theory, from which it derives three competing hypotheses:

⁵ European union terrorism situation and trend report (TE-SAT) 2020.

H1: A state develops its CT policy if the levels of threat perception correlate with the adopted CT measures.

H2: A state develops its CT policy if it has developed a common identity with another state or group of states.

H3: A state develops its CT policy if it wants to maintain its memberships for instrumental purposes.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter, after the introduction, conceptualizes the counterterrorism policy development, followed by the discussion of what terrorism is and what counterterrorism is as a response. The first chapter introduces the three explanations of CT policy development and the theoretical assumptions they are based on. The chapter discusses CT-policy development through theories of rational choice theory, constructivism, and reference group theory. In the second chapter of methodology, the thesis reviews the methodology of this thesis. The third chapter is dedicated to the analysis of results. The analysis first examines the Estonian CT development between 2005 and 2020, providing evidence of the present and gradually developing CT policy. It is followed by the analysis of results regarding each explanatory theory regarding CT policy development in Estonia. Lastly, the thesis concludes findings and presents suggestions for further research on the topic.

This is a theory-testing case study of Estonian CT policy development. The research collects data from presidential speeches, ministerial statements, KAPO and Europol reports, and Riigiteataja (Estonian legislation) part of the triangulation method. Data from speeches and statements are analyzed by using content analysis under each theory explanation. The content analysis uses deductive coding for speeches, statements in which categories are delivered from each respective theory.

2. Theoretical framework: Explaining counterterrorism policy development

Counterterrorism and terrorism are both widely used in media and discussed in scholarly works. However, terrorism as a concept has become quite contested, and no single definition has been agreed on. Counterterrorism, on the other hand, is more understood and discussed as an effort to fight terrorism. But, to lay a legal basis and strategies to combat terrorism, a set definition must be provided for reliability and legitimacy. The following chapter elaborates on counterterrorism and related terms. Specifically, the chapter attempts to answer the question, what is counterterrorism policy, and why does it matter? Furthermore, this chapter explains CT connections to other policy areas and the issues arising in the domestic and international dimensions. This is to explain what counterterrorism entails in a broader spectrum and how puzzling the subject at hand is.

2.1 Conceptualizing counterterrorism policy development

To understand the complex concept, it is the most reasonable to first divide it into simpler concepts- “counter,” “terrorism,” “policy,” “development” and elaborate on them. Though one can explain all three concepts using a dictionary, the first issue emerges with the term “terrorism.” There is no commonly accepted definition of terrorism, but defining terrorism is crucial as it also explains counterterrorism to some parts. The term has been elaborated for years, mainly because of the changing nature of activity along with varying reasoning of perpetrators, instruments, motives, and strategies. Over the years, terrorism has become “increasingly deterritorialized, transnational, and decentralized,”⁶ contributing to the everchanging approach to combating terrorism. The draft convention of the UN in 1937 defined it as:

⁶ Moussa Bourekba (2020) Necessary but unwanted? The United Nation’s evolving approach to counterterrorism” *CIDOB 09/2020*

“All criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public.”⁷

Though this convention never entered into force, it was one of the first steps of recognizing terrorism as a criminal act. However, this definition did not include the acts against civilians. Over the years, the UN adopted multiple definitions contained in international conventions. In 2004, the UN Security Council Resolution 1566 defined terrorism as:

“Criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.”⁸

Though there is no single definition, some key elements have been agreed on: the intention of spreading fear, usage of violence, non-state actors, civilian targets, and political or religious motivation. Based on the UN Resolution and international conventions, states and international entities have elaborated their definition and legal framework further. However, with the rise of extreme right-wing or left-wing attacks, the definition of terrorism has become further contested, as for many, the question is- who exactly can we even call as a terrorist, at what is a terrorist act then? If a citizen commits a violent crime against their co-citizen, is (s)he a terrorist or just a criminal? This issue, along with many others, contests the definition, but it does not mean that there have not been efforts to promote peace.

As every state and entity offers its own version of the definition, this thesis takes into account the Estonian definition of terrorism. According to the Estonian Penal code. 35 section 237, terrorism entails the act of crime against people and property to provoke

⁷ Javier Ruperez “The UN in the fight against terrorism“ pp.2 accessed 21.01.21

⁸ Various Definitions of Terrorism. Accessed 21.01.21

conflict for political or religious reasons by non-state actors⁹. Estonian Internal Security Service (KAPO) further specifies the motivations, including the enforcement to make a state act in a certain way, interfere with the state, spread fear, and cause death or economic damage¹⁰. And the attacker is usually a subnational group or individual. The form, perpetrator, and impact vary across the definitions. Still, the common theme is the violation of human rights- a will to live, and through that, the act of terrorism is an attack against the state and its sovereignty. As it is clear that there are many definitions of terrorism, many measures and strategies are fighting terrorism.

Simply put, “policy” entails proposed actions by an organization, individual, or state. Thus, counterterrorism policy refers to the proposed set of actions by an institution to protect citizens, property, and a state from violent actions committed by non-state perpetrators. More specifically, CT policy includes appointing and creating relevant agencies (Crenshaw 2001), for example, in the case of the EU, the creation of Europol. CT policy also involves adopting legal instruments that make it possible to carry out the tasks in specific action plans (O.Bures 2007). Furthermore, CT policy may involve foreign aid (S.Bandyopadhyay, Sandler, Younas 2011). Whichever CT policy is dependent on the state’s understanding of who is a terrorist or enemy (B.Ganor 2014), state’s definition of terrorism for counterterrorism (A.Martini & E.T.Njoku 2017), guidelines provided by international conventions and expectations (A.MazKenzie 2010; L.Malkki 2016), a state’s perspectives (R.Crelinsten 2014), threat perception, and state’s approach to the issue. A state or organization’s CT policy is manifested through its strategies- usually a set of written statements that describe goals to combat terrorism. A state can create its own system but can just adopt strategies of umbrella institutions. CT strategies are mainly public for everyone to read, but the action plans that describe specific tasks are classified. Therefore, the actual activity plan, resource allocation, and who does what is not publicly available, and scholars can assess counterterrorism efforts as aftermath.

⁹ Karistusseadustik. Riigiteataja

¹⁰ Terrorism. KAPO. Accessed on 22.01.21

The UN provides primary guidelines and expectations¹¹, and all member states need to sign international conventions to protect the society as a whole. The EU further provides strategies to its member states, and along with regulations and directives, all EU member states are obliged to do their part in combating terrorism¹². For example, Estonia belongs to the UN, the EU, and NATO; therefore, Estonia is obliged to follow their guidelines and directives, and regulations provided by the EU. However, being obliged to follow the guidelines may create an impression that countries are not left to decide on the application of countermeasures. Except they do, but frequently choose to oblige for multiple reasons like moral or financial motives¹³. Often enough, new guidelines, strategies, and policies are worked out after a major attack (Rekawek 2016). This usually results in policies coming in clusters, and responses are thus, difficult to be traced back to a specific policy (Crenshaw 2001).

Last but not least, the Cambridge dictionary defines ‘development’ as positive growth and becoming more advanced. Or in other words, development means a positive change. In the context of CT policy, development then refers to the enhancement of CT policy over some period. More specifically, ‘development’ asks whether the CT policy has evolved? Development of CT policy can entail the upbringings of new initiatives (J.Horgan, 2008), changing the approach (L.Malkki 2016), increasing resources for intelligence and policing (R.Briggs 2010), improving cooperation (C.Kaunert and S.Leonard 2011), creating institutions to support the overall framework. However, it mainly comes down to three indicators: creating new legislative acts, institutions and allocating finances for CT purposes. Thus, the ‘development’ here does not include decreasing the budget for CT, not making laws or initiatives to fight the problem, and not appointing specific institutions to take responsibility for CT.

Based on the previous discussion, how to understand a CT policy development? Simply put, CT policy development refers to all “legislation, policies, and functions that are explicitly linked to counterterrorism,” with a focus on domestic policies.¹⁴ In

¹¹ United Nations. A/RES/60/288, adopted September 8, 2006

¹² European Commission. Counter terrorism and radicalization.

¹³ Posner, Eric A. "Do states have a moral obligation to obey international law." *Stan. L. Rev.* 55 (2002): 1901.

¹⁴ Leena Malkki, 2016 pp. 345

scholarly works, CT policy development has been analyzed through public policy (Spencer 2006), through convergence theory (Nohrstedt and Hansen 2010), criminal justice models (Pedahzur and Ranstorp 2001). More commonly, CT policy development is regarded as national actions or responses to the threat. Estonian CT policy development analysis starts from 2005 when Estonia had just gained membership in the EU and NATO in a previous year. The policy development takes into consideration changes in attitudes and approach, terrorist threat perception, and drivers of policies. However, it is important to distinguish the approaches and policy developments in CT which are delivered from the changing nature of terrorism.

Contemporary terrorism, currently international Islamic terrorism, is the form that most 21st century people are the most familiar with, which requires an adequate framework for safety. The threats terrorism poses and the ways it uses to damage society detect the security needs. Due to the possible misconception of terrorism, some states may have inadequate countermeasures that do not fit the threat, and thus, do not protect the people nor the state itself,¹⁵ and may lead to even more disastrous events¹⁶. The latest recognized threat stems from the returning jihadists from conflict zones, terrorist financing, and cyberattacks which require an adequate framework to prevent these acts and possible threats. Starting from the 2010s' states recognized the threat of lone-wolf terrorists, who act alone and may not have any affiliations to terrorist organizations. They are also harder to track and block from acting. Before 2010, the main reference points to counterterrorism policy were 9/11 followed by bombings in various European states. Invasion to Iraq and Afghanistan and the 'war on terror' declared by the US after 9/11 illustrate the invasive or reactive approach in de-escalating conflicts abroad. However, after 2010, active warfare has not been as internationally supported, and more emphasis has been put on prevention. As the approach has changed over time, the CT policy drivers have as well.

¹⁵ Example: Jordan. Ihab Hanna Sawalha (2017) "A context-centered, root cause analysis of contemporary terrorism" *Disaster Prevention and Management* Vol. 26 No. 2, 2017 pp. 183-202. DOI 10.1108/DPM-07-2016-0140

¹⁶ Alexander Spencer 2006 „The problems of evaluating counter-terrorism“ *UNISCI Discussion Papers, No 12, October 2006; ISSN 1796-2206*

The aftermath of terrorist attacks, scaring citizens, and sowing distrust against leading politicians, required elites to react to the problem resulting in event-driven CT policy-making. The 9/11 highlighted the need to establish common grounds in the fight against terrorism. However, the resulting ‘event-driven’ policy-making in the EU, which Rik Coolsaet (2010) characterized as a “successful shock wave, propelled by major attacks, but gradually winding down once the sense of urgency had faded away,”¹⁷ illustrated the rise of CT policies as an aftermath of major attacks. However, even after 9/11, counterterrorism was not on the high EU security agenda until the 2005 London bombings.

Bombings resulted in the establishment of the EU Strategy, based on the UK Strategy, consisting of four pillars: ‘Prevent,’ ‘Protect,’ ‘Pursue,’ and Respond.¹⁸ ‘Protect’ to safeguard people and property from new attacks; today also includes the prevention of terrorist financing and access to explosives. ‘Pursue’ is connected to tracing and investigating terrorists and their networking. And ‘Respond’ attempts to enhance the cooperation, capabilities, and solidarity if one of the member states is being attacked.¹⁹ Despite the efforts to enhance the cooperation between the member states, some issues remain. Since all member states have the main competence regarding terrorism, which is tackled through criminal law, member states fail to share intelligence. As the EU is the supporting power, the CT management is organized around ‘three’ pillars. First includes the “responding policy domains covered by the Union”²⁰ in the member states, meaning the creation of working groups. The second pillar includes the Common Foreign and Security Policy, in which COTER handles terrorism-related foreign policy. The third pillar involves the JHA, where the Terrorism Working Group works with internal threat assessment, coordination, and cooperation within the EU.

The ‘Prevent’ and ‘Protect’ refer to the preventive CT policies, while ‘Pursue’ and ‘Respond’ include reactive measures. Actively engaging in warfare, a reactive approach can be condoned by citizens, and the government may be criticized for

¹⁷ Rik Coolsaet (2010), “EU counterterrorism strategy: value added or chimera?” *International Affairs* 86: 4, 2010, pp.858

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 860

¹⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 859-861

²⁰ *Ibid.* Pp 861

contributing to the violence. This could be seen from the example of the United States entering Middle-Eastern states or Afghanistan. Reacting to the violence with more violence is less and less supported in the international arena; however, responding is easier and cheaper than prevention²¹. Preventing terrorism involves work on many levels and is vital because even with the best intelligence system, it is complicated to track some types of terrorists.

Prevention is the most effective way to impede future terrorist attacks from happening, which requires cooperation on multiple levels. Some of the most challenging phenomena like martyrdom, lone-wolf acts, changing strategies, and uncertain goals of new jihadis or ISIS fighters, require horizontal and vertical cooperation. A common theme understands that a lone-wolf terrorist is an attacker, who can be affiliated with some terrorist organization or ideologies, but not always, and acts alone. That is why some states, like Scandinavian countries, have adopted counterterrorism strategies that aim to prevent root causes or sources of radicalization, like deradicalization programs.²² To name a few, the sources include radicalization in prison, the internet, secluded slums, and the causes include isolation, discrimination in the society, and low socioeconomic position. However, radicalization remains problematic as a definition. The most practical is to rely on the McCauley and Moskalenko developed framework, in which radicalization means the “changes in beliefs, feelings, and actions in the direction of increased support for one side of a political conflict.”²³ Based on that definition and framework, it is clear that preventing terrorism can be costly. Deradicalization programs may improve socioeconomic position by creating jobs and improving education, providing resources and integration programs to bring people out of poverty and isolation. However, discrimination may have a triggering effect. In recognition of it, states have to modify other policies as well to prevent attacks.

²¹ Bjorn Lomborg (2008) “Kas terrorismivastane võitlus on oma hinda väärt?” NATO Teataja. Accessed 25.01.21 https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2008/04/AP_COST/ET/index.htm

²² Maxim A. Yavorskiy, Irina E. Milova, Renat R. Khasnutdinov, and Danila D. Osipov. (2019) "Deradicalization of Prisoners in the Scandinavian Countries as a Milestone Phenomenon of Circular Economy." In Institute of Scientific Communications Conference, pp. 1266-1276. Springer, Cham. Harvard

²³ McCauley and Moskalenko (2014)p 70 in L.W.Dickson (2015) p 4. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1487949/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

The fear of terrorist attacks has given a push to other developments in the society that strives on attacks but unfortunately circles back to violent offenses. Establishing boundaries is a way to prevent aggression. One example of this ‘circle of violence’ can be seen from the Refugee crisis in 2015. In the light of the Crisis, discriminative language and violence against ethnic minorities became an issue. When Charlie Hebdo (France) published mocking cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in 2012, it led to a carefully planned attack on the publisher in January 2015, killing 12 people. Charlie Hebdo then published an issue no.1778 after the attack, drawn by survived cartoonists, setting off protests all over the Muslim population. This attack is one of the examples of triggering effects caused by discrimination. Following and previous attacks in France, Belgium, UK, and multiple other countries in Europe contributed to the rise of right-wing extremists with nationalistic tendencies who verbally and physically attacked their Muslim co-citizens. Increasing fear among European citizens and populist rhetoric pushed minorities further into the corner. Thus, a government’s preventative countermeasure is to condemn discriminative behavior, integrating minority groups into society, and teaching all sides to respect each other. However, as Lomborg noted, the most effective methods are the cheapest, but not the easiest.²⁴ This illustrates how the threat of terrorism requires the work of many policy areas to prevent violence.

2.1.1 Counterterrorism policy development in the EU and NATO

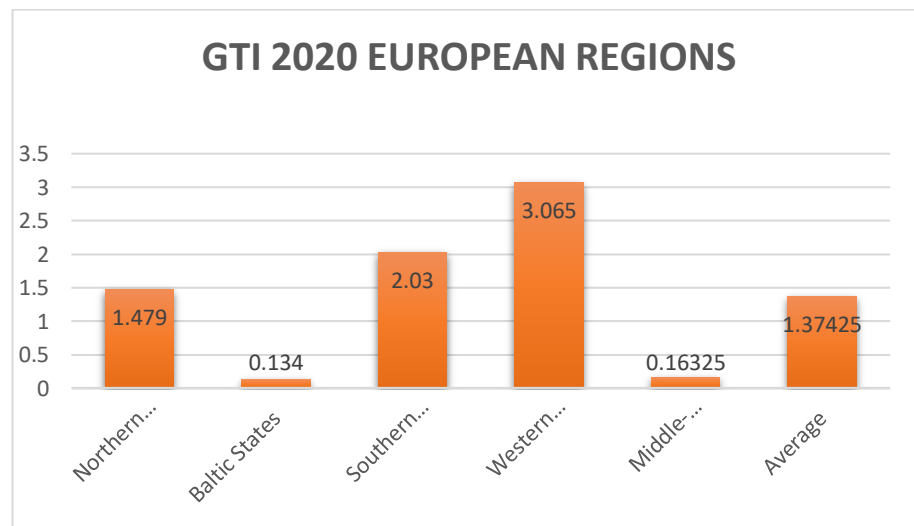
While CT policy development happens domestically, it can also be influenced by international entities. Since Estonia is part of the European Union since 2004, Estonia is obliged to transpose directives and implement regulations. Thus, looking further into the developments of the EU approach helps us to understand the impact of the EU framework on Estonian CT policy development. The pillars of the EU strategy were discussed earlier, delivered from the EU counter-terrorism strategy adopted by the Council in 2005. It is based on Article 83 TFEU, which gives “European Parliament and

²⁴ Bjorn Lomborg (2008) “Kas terrorismivastane võitlus on oma hinda väärt?” NATO Teataja. Accessed 25.01.21

the Council competence to adopt minimum rules concerning the definition of particularly serious crime with a cross-border dimension, of which terrorism is an example.”²⁵ The EU sees terrorism not only as a threat to human lives but also as an activity directed against the foundations of the EU. The ‘openness’ of the EU makes the Union more vulnerable, as the EU also recognizes that not only international terrorist organizations pose a threat, but also those who are inspired by it.²⁶ Thus, the EU regulates the minimum standards the member states have to follow, being one of the drivers of member states’ CT policy development. However, for some states, the measures are more crucial than for others.

The states with a higher risk level are also the ones with a higher incentive to upload the policy changes. The states experiencing more activity also tend to take a lead role in pushing counterterrorism measures and raising the minimum bar for everyone. The terrorist threat level is fluctuating throughout Europe along with the counterterrorism measures. Table 1 illustrates the differences between various regions within the EU; it is the most apparent that the highest index is in Western Europe.

Table 2. Global terrorism index, 2020, European Union regions²⁷



²⁵ Counter-terrorism strategy (2005), EUR-Lex.

²⁶ Jörg Monar (2007) "Common threat and common response? The European Union's counter-terrorism strategy and its problems." *Government and opposition* 42, no. 3: 298

²⁷ Based on the Global terrorism index yearly report, 2020. Baltic states is brought out separately for a latter analysis, and does not affect the overall regional standing. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf>

The underlying reason for raising a bar can be connected to the fundamental agreements of the EU (like the Schengen agreement 1990)²⁸ and the extent of the counterterrorism policies. For example, a country could be used as a transit country or entryway to the EU without having any attacks on a country's soil. Thus, to prevent potential terrorists from entering the Schengen zone using the airport, a country's airport and background check need to be strict and throughout. This places a further emphasis on bordering states required to guard the zone from illegal immigration. Additionally, tracking criminals is also more complex because of the open borders, which presumes sharing intelligence and collaboration. Sharing intelligence, for example, is one of the main issues in the fight against terrorism that has not been resolved even with the help of EUROPOL.²⁹ As Bureš (2016) suggested, creating institutions in the EU to help intelligence sharing is not enough. This for two reasons: 1) sharing depends on institutional actors, including law enforcement, internal security, policymakers; and 2) geographical interactions- bilateral, multilateral globally and regionally.³⁰

The developments and approaches taken by the EU on CT policy play an essential role in shaping member states' policies. However, member states' initiatives play a further role in establishing norms regarding CT policies in Europe. In other words, CT policy development is largely dependent on member states' initiative, while the EU attempts to promote collaboration and support their efforts in combating terrorism. This means that while states like Estonia are affected by the regulations and directives, their motivation to establish these agreements must stem from other sources. Since Estonia also belongs to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), it is also important to review this organization's impact on the Estonian approach and policy development regarding CT.

²⁸ Schengen Area. European Commission. *Last accessed on 11.05.2021*

²⁹ Oldřich Bureš (2016). "Intelligence sharing and the fight against terrorism in the EU: lessons learned from Europol." *European View* 15, no. 1: 58-60

³⁰ *Ibid.* Pp.62

Though it may seem like NATO has influenced the EU's counterterrorism policy development from the beginning, it is not the case. Before 2001 terrorism was a secondary threat for NATO, and after 9/11, terrorism was recognized as a primary threat. Yet, it took 11 years to come to a strategy. The first NATO strategy concerning counterterrorism was released in 2012 – Policy Guidelines on Counter-Terrorism.³¹ It was based on the Strategic Concept of 2010, offering a vision for a strategy. The strategy and vision were in cooperation with the EU, the UN, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Regardless of terrorism becoming a primary security threat, reaching the common strategy was challenging among the EU and NATO member states. The difficulties along the way were rooted in member states' divergent political and ideological views³². Based on the strategy, a reactive NATO Action Plan (classified) was launched in 2014 and had detailed duties within the three pillars: awareness, capabilities, and engagement. However, Quanten (2019) noted that these measures were not enough, and the US demanded the alliance to step up, which in turn resulted in a series of initiatives in 2017. However, despite the efforts, sharing intelligence remained one of the central issues.

Terrorism does not know borders; thus, it is essential to cooperate and share information between partners. As mentioned before, coming to a common strategy was complicated by the political divergences. This means that not all states perceive terrorism the same way- states define terrorism differently, their experiences vary, and their approaches as well, which all influence the CT policy development. Divergence contributes to limited cooperation, including information sharing, hindering the overall security of member states. However, as NATO has faced multiple obstacles in its strategy, its primary responsibility remains in military leadership while policy-making and civilian response is carried out by member states. Thus, NATO is a supporting power, offering alliance “a framework for cooperation among member states and with partners; a degree of international legitimacy; specialized military means; experienced

³¹ NATO's policy guidelines on counter-terrorism. *Last updated 24.05.2012* North Atlantic Treaty Organization

³² Kris Quanten (2019) NDC Policy Brief. *NATO Defence College, Research Division. No.12-May 2019*

planning structures; and experience.”³³ In return, member states have to develop their CT policies that according to the agenda proposed by NATO.

2.1.2 Problematic counterterrorism policy development efforts

While countries accept the increasing threat of terrorism and understand that these actions put everyone’s safety at risk, there are still some issues in coming to a consensus on how to create a stable environment. In addition to the lack of coherence between states, there are also some gaps in scholarly work. Spencer (2006) and Rekawek (2016) uniformly note that most CT and terrorism studies have been done on the Western states but not extended to all EU member states. Though all member states have to meet minimal standards, they find from their comparative studies on post-2004 accession states that the CT measures do not fit the actual level of threat. Mainly, because these CT measures are designed after the Western states’ example, and also based on Western states’ experience, the CT policies are superficial. Rekawek (2016) called it a ‘copy-paste manner,’ in which CT measures do not stem from the internal threat perception, instead, for a reason to meet the requirements where resources are not precisely used for the CT. Thus, one size does not fit all, as is apparent from the Eastern and Central Europe being forced to “speed up from 30km to 300km for different reasons, very diverse from what the sole reason should have been.”³⁴ In other words, new member states’ structure was not ready to adapt to the Western Europe CT policies, and because of that, new states’ CT policies are ineffective and superficial.

Furthermore, NATO’s efforts to improve cooperation have been limited, and strategies and action plans are rather reactive. Meaning that instead of targeting the causes, alliances deal with the consequences and actively engage in warfare. While countries and multilateral institutions create five- or ten-year strategy plans to combat terrorism, NATO has no long-term vision³⁵. Yet, there is a widespread tendency to act as a result of major attacks, proving that terrorism is regarded as a primary threat, which

³³ Ibid. Pp.4

³⁴ Kacper Rekawek (2016) „Referenced but not linear? Counterterrorism in Central-Eastern Europe in Theory and in Practice“ *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*. Vol 31, no.1, Feb 2017, pp 195

³⁵ Kris Quanten (2019) NDC Policy Brief. *NATO Defence College, Research Division*. No.12-May 2019

is not visible through states' own actions³⁶, which means that states create their policies also as a reaction to major attacks, instead of preventing them in the first place.

However, it is challenging to examine the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures, especially when there is no activity happening. This applies to the states with very low or non-existent terrorist activity. In addition, governments keep terrorist records and CT measures confidential, which makes it difficult to come to precise conclusions regarding counterterrorism³⁷. This raises questions, whether spending on the countermeasures is justified and how much should be spent on reactive measures.³⁸

Developing preventative CT policies involves many policy areas and institutions and are dependent on the internal threat perception. *Threat perception* is based on values, social and institutional demands for group welfare and survival that also satisfy the biological needs of individuals (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). When a terror attack happens, a personal sense of threat increases because a violent attack goes against one's values and sense of security and stability. However, multiple scholars note that threat perception along with counterterrorism policies do not develop in a vacuum (Haider-Markel; Joslyn, Tarek Al-Baghal 2006; Goodwin, Willson, Stanley 2005). Those around us influence our threat perception.³⁹ In the international arena, groups and other states influence a state's threat perception based on the established norms. Thus, the threat perception of an individual state is influenced by the international situation and norms in addition to own experience. This means that threat perception also influences the CT policy development.

³⁶ Kacper Rekawek (2016) „Referenced but not linear? Counterterrorism in Central-Eastern Europe in Theory and in Practice“ *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*

³⁷ Alexander Spencer (2006) Counter-terrorism in New Europe. What have the new EU members done to combat terrorism after September 11th? *International Public Policy Review*, vol.2, no.2, pp.109

³⁸ Bjorn Lomborg (2008) “Kas terrorismivastane võitlus on oma hinda väärt?” NATO Teataja. Accessed 20.01.21

³⁹ Robin Goodwin, Michelle Willson, and Gaines Stanley Jr. (2005) "Terror threat perception and its consequences in contemporary Britain." *British Journal of Psychology* 96, no. 4: 392

2.2 Explaining counterterrorism policy development

Even though terrorism is contested as a term having no single definition, it is also widely theorized. On the other hand, counterterrorism is less congested but very under-theorized⁴⁰. This chapter discusses three theories which can be used to explain counterterrorism policy development: rationalist, constructivist, and reference group theory explanation. These theories are used to introduce more specific explanations of CT policy development in Estonia. Thus, this chapter is concerned with three theories explaining the counterterrorism policy development with the central question of why low-risk states adapt and develop CT policies? Theories explore the potential drivers of CT policy development. Explanations go as follows, first, rational choice theory, then constructivism, and lastly, reference group theory.

2.2.1 Rational choice theory explanation

In the existing literature, one way to explain CT policymaking is the rational choice theory. The rational choice theory assumes that individuals calculate costs and benefits before deciding how to act. (Scott 2000) ‘Rational’ is used in everyday life to characterize an activity or a person making the most sense to others and is often interchangeably discussed as a logical action. The consequences of rational actions could be predicted; thus, the consistency of action along with logical reasoning and decision-making have been part of the human rationality discussion for decades⁴¹. However, ‘rational choice theory,’ also used in international relations, differs from ‘rationalism’ and other theories by denying any other form of action other than rational and calculative⁴². This means that actors “aim at achieving certain goals, as a rule with own interests and power is the center, and in the form of maximizing benefits and minimizing losses.”⁴³ In other words, a rational actor always acts in the way that

⁴⁰ Oliver Lewis „Conceptualizing State Counterterrorism“ Ch.1 in the Palgrave Handbook of Global Counterterrorism Policy. Pp 3-38

⁴¹ Eldar Sharif and R.A. LeBoeuf (2002) “Rationality” *Annual Review Psychology* 2002, 53:491-517

⁴² John Scott (2002) “Rational choice theory”, ch.9 in *Understanding Contemporary Society*, ed. G.Browning; A.Halcli, F.Webster; pp 126-138

⁴³ Natalie Züfle (2008) “What rationalist approaches in IR contribute” Munich, GRIN Verlag

benefits this actor the most. Based on the available information, they calculate the alternative that satisfies them the most.⁴⁴ By a strong definition, rational choice theory “requires that individuals choose the best action according to stable utility functions and the constraints facing them.”⁴⁵ Thus, rational choice theory helps us to understand and predict the choices of actors.

The rational choice theory involves the discussion of cause-effect relationships; thus, the theory expects actors to follow the ‘logic of consequence’ (H.A.Simon, 1965; NJ Smelser 1992; JG March and JP Olsen 1999). Robert Keohane (2002) notes that international actors behave strategically; thus, rational choice theory helps to resolve puzzles, look for causal mechanisms, and explain political and legal behavior to some extent⁴⁶. Based on the cause-effect relationship and predictability, collective action problems are often discussed within the rational choice theory. Collective action problems highlight the number of alternatives actors can choose from, and the assumption of predictability and rational thinking helps us understand their behavior.

The collective action problems are highlighted by the commonly known Prisoner’s Dilemma, Dictator Game, Zero-Sum game, and Chicken. All of them present the options to act. Choices are based on each actor’s cost-benefit calculations- most often, cooperation is the most rewarding and acting alone most harmful to everyone. However, there is always an option not to cooperate, even if other parties are willing to. This brings us to the main issue of international relations and cooperation- the free-rider problem, suggesting that actors have an incentive to minimize their costs by not choosing to act while benefitting from the effort of others⁴⁷. Collective action problems are also relevant in CT policy-making, as all actors want to feel secured, but not all are willing to develop their own strategies to fight terrorism. As Thomas Reid (1786) concluded in his essay: “In every chain of reasoning, the evidence of the last conclusion

⁴⁴ John Scott (2000) “Rational Choice Theory” from *Understanding Contemporary Society: Theories of the Present*, ed. G.Browning, A.Halcli, F.Webster (Sage publications, 2000), pp. 3

⁴⁵ Claude Berrebi (2009) "The Economics of Terrorism and Counterterrorism: What Matters and Is Rational-Choice Theory Helpful?." *Social science for counterterrorism: Putting the pieces together*. 151-208. P169

⁴⁶ Robert O Keohane (2002) "Rational choice theory and international law: Insights and limitations." *The Journal of Legal Studies* 31, no. S1: S307-S319. P 310

⁴⁷ Hardin, Russell and Garrett Cullity, "The Free Rider Problem", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/free-rider/>>.

can be no greater than that of the weakest link of the chain, whatever may be the strength of the rest”⁴⁸ In other words, even if there is a single actor who benefits from the common good while not contributing, everyone’s safety is compromised. For example, when it comes to the security of a union, all members’ security is endangered because of the free-rider, even if other members have done their part.⁴⁹

The free-rider problem can also be applied to the CT-policy development globally, regionally, and domestically. Sandler and Enders (2004) point out that terrorists choose the least stable place to organize their activity, opting for the ‘weakest link.’⁵⁰ Based on that logic, if even one state decides to be a free-rider, it weakens the collective security against terrorism. Thus, it is in everyone’s interest to protect themselves. When assuming that all actors are rational, then they develop policies based on the cost-benefit calculations. In other words, when actors perceive a high level of threat, they are expected to develop appropriate countermeasures in response based on the cost-benefit calculations.

On the one hand, countermeasures can be expensive, misunderstood by the public (like surveillance and tracking), difficult and time-consuming.⁵¹ On the other hand, to stay legitimate and hold power, an actor needs to protect its people and property from attacks. Thus, the expenses of CT are justified with the protection, and spending on CT outweighs not spending because then actor’s legitimacy would be at stake, and the probability of attacks may be elevated.

A rational choice for a political actor is to cooperate with international partners if it wants protection, while compromising is a tradeoff. Compromising as a tradeoff may involve pooling power and resources. An actor cannot make decisions all on its own and has to share intelligence that many actors are negligent in doing. But it is in an actor’s interest to stay in power and legitimate; thus, it is willing to do some tradeoffs while gaining protection. For example, it is in small states’ interest to form alliances

⁴⁸ Thomas Reid (1786) in Liadh Crowley, (2019) Proverbs: A Chain Is Only As Strong... Accessed 8.02.21

⁴⁹ Thomas Plümper and Eric Neumayer. (2015) "Free-riding in alliances: Testing an old theory with a new method." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32, no. 3: 247-268.

⁵⁰ Todd Sandler and Walter Enders. (2004) "An economic perspective on transnational terrorism." *European Journal of Political Economy* 20, no. 2: 301-316. P 309

⁵¹ John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart. (2014) "Evaluating counterterrorism spending." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 28, no. 3: 237-48.

when benefits are greater than the costs⁵². These costs can also mean participating in conflict zones when international partners and situations require so, but in turn, an actor gets resources, training, and recognition for its efforts. An example of it would be Estonia being part of NATO- by participating in operations and training, pooling some resources, Estonia is also protected by its neighboring Russia through binding membership obligations and principles.

In CT policy development, cooperating with international partners holds a similar idea of compromising. Since terrorism knows no borders, states have to cooperate to secure themselves. The most effective way is to work together. However, the tradeoff here is that some member states in an alliance may not want to develop CT policies thoroughly because they perceive no significant threat; thus, spending on CT measures is not reasonable⁵³. On the other hand, these states yet choose to cooperate by sharing intelligence or implementing policies because otherwise, they could lose funding, protection, and legitimacy. In other words, not cooperating is irrational because not spending resources on CT, which is closely tied to overall security measures, could mean losing overall protection. This behavior could be seen from the example of the European Union. Though the EU does not offer military protection, not cooperating with other member states and not implementing regulations or directives could mean penalties and lack of interest of member states to cooperate in the future. For example, hypothetically, if Estonia was going to deny implementation of the Anti-Money Laundering and Financing Act, it could face an infringement procedure launched by the European Commission. As the infringement procedure could bring heavy financial penalties, it is reasonable for Estonia to implement policies like all other member states.

To conclude this section, international actors act rationally based on their cost-benefit calculations. In policy-making, actors choose to act if they benefit more than they would lose. In CT policy development, if actors perceive a high level of threat, they would benefit from developing CT policies because, in case of omission, a state could lose even more by facing attacks. In CT development, the rational choice theory

⁵² Heinz Gärtner (2001) "Small States and Alliances". In: Reiter E., Gärtner H. (eds) *Small States and Alliances*. Physica, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-13000-1_1; pp. 2

⁵³ Rik Coolsaet (2010) "EU Counterterrorism strategy: value added or chimera?" *International Affairs* 86:4 (2010) 857-873

is relevant as it could potentially explain why actors choose to participate in common security and defense policy-making with their international partners when there are high costs in participation.

However, as Omelicheva (2009) noted, rationalist theory has some limitations in explaining CT policy development. In the Estonian case, it suggests that Estonian CT policy-making is dependent on the NATO alliance, making its policies based on the historical enemy of Russia.⁵⁴ Furthermore, in rational choice theory, another limitation is the assumption that there is no other action than rational. In other words, even if states choose not to develop CT policies because there is no apparent threat, they still act rationally based on what the actor sees as the best alternative. Even though non-cooperation could be interpreted as an irrational act by other member states, actors still get to choose the best alternative based on their cost-benefit calculations. This is problematic, as the theory fails to explain why states avoid intelligence sharing (like the EU member states) to improve common security and prevent attacks. In this case, collective action problems under the rational choice theory can be useful to explain cases such as free-riding but not cooperating without perceiving high levels of threat.

Ultimately, the doctrine suggests that all actors have an option to choose to act and multiple dimensions of alternatives to choose from. Furthermore, looking for alliance, protection, resources, and good relationships are all part of the policy development. The decisions are based on the cost-benefit calculations delivered from the levels of threat perception in which high risks are responded to with the increased CT policy adoption. Thus, the hypothesis about CT policy development derived from rational choice theory is:

- A state develops its CT policy if the levels of threat perception correlate with the adopted CT measures.

⁵⁴ Mariya Y. Omelicheva (2009) "Reference group perspective on state behaviour: A case study of Estonia's counterterrorism policies." *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 3 (2009): 484-485.

2.2.2 Constructivist explanation

In the center of constructivism is the word ‘construct,’ or in other words, the building of knowledge. Constructivism doctrine entails then the construction of knowledge instead of passive reception of information. It is related to our everyday life during the process of learning, connecting events with sources and outcomes, and the way we understand and identify things around us. In other words, constructivism could also be seen as a process of social learning, where individuals build their knowledge based on previous experiences. Thus, everyone understands the world in its unique way.⁵⁵ Constructivism became more relevant in International Relations in the late 1990s and early 2000s and has been part of the IR debates since then. Constructivism has been changing over the years, and researcher’s focus has shifted towards “identity and its strategic consequences.” This research is based on the latest development of constructivism, that is, the question of identity. It relies on the perception in which “the actors seek to fulfill the obligations encapsulated in a role, an identity, a membership in a political community or group, and the ethos, practices, and expectations of its institutions. Embedded in a social collectivity, they do what they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation”⁵⁶.

The question of ‘logic of appropriateness’ and identity brings such debates to the table, like who is ‘we’ or ‘us,’ and who do ‘we’ consider as ‘them’ or ‘other.’ For example, an Estonian male can identify himself as a male, a student, Tartu’s citizen, Estonian citizen, European citizen. Every person has multiple dimensions of identity. Based on that, one can identify the ‘other.’ In international relations, states continuously (re)define the world and development around them; their identities and norms change, influencing their approach.⁵⁷ Thus, states continue to develop policies based on the norms. The question of identity comes in when asking whom policies are being made for. If a state implements new security policies, what and whose policies are to protect and from what? In CT policy-making, it appears that these are to protect from terrorist

⁵⁵ What is constructivism? *Western Governors University*. Accessed 9.02.21

⁵⁶ James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen (2004) "The logic of appropriateness." In *The Oxford handbook of political science*.

⁵⁷ Maja Zehfuss (2002) “Constructivism in International Relations: the Politics of Reality” Cambridge University Press. Pp 4

attacks. But then again, questions arise, who do 'we' identify as terrorists or as the 'other.'

Based on the understandings of constructivist alliance formation, members of the alliance identify themselves as 'we,' against 'other' non-alliance members.⁵⁸ The understanding of 'us' then defines the common security policy along with the threat from 'others.' This lays a basis for a collective security or defense culture that is further portrayed in member states' domestic policy-making. *Collective defense* refers to the balance-of-power politics where states cooperate to counter a common threat through military means. In contrast, *collective security* means the agreement in which states "agree to enforce international laws and discourage aggression or illegal activity."⁵⁹ For example, NATO goes under the collective defense principle, while the EU falls under the collective security. However, both collective security and defense hold that respectable member states identify themselves as one. Through that, they define the 'other.' Within this culture, social learning is the most prevalent and includes social or peer pressure.

While states attempt to learn from each other's mistakes, not executing relevant policies may still result in implementation because of peer pressure. As the *collective security* assumes the presence of the collective identity in which all member states' security is affected by one another, choosing not to act is going against the norms. Violating norms is often responded to with international criticism. The Finnish case well illustrates the international pressure. In her research, Leena Malkki noted that Finland faced international criticism for not implementing certain policies between 2001-2007. However, it eventually led to the development of CT policies that went beyond any international agreements.⁶⁰ Going beyond may have been an attempt to reestablish the Finnish position in international partnership. However, there may also be other domestic motivations, including the improvement of overall security. Conversely, when assuming that states develop their policies based on their internal threat

⁵⁸ Smith Alastair (1995) "Alliance formation and war." *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4: 405-425.

⁵⁹ Viotti and Kauppi (2012), p.444 in B.Mowell (2017) „Counterterrorism policies and institutions in Northern Europe and the Baltic States“ in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Counterterrorism Policy*. Ed. S.N.Romaniuk et al. Pp 414

⁶⁰ Leena Malkki (2016) "International pressure to perform: Counterterrorism policy development in Finland." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39, no. 4: 342-362.

perception, Toomas Riim (2006) found from his study that the collective identity pressures the state to recognize the threat. Thus, the collective security within the collective identity leads to the threat perception, not the other way around.⁶¹

To sum this section, constructing knowledge is part of our everyday life. Recent developments of constructivism in IR are more concerned with identity, and states keep learning the behavior of others and construct their understandings and policies based on it. CT policy-making is deeply connected with the sense of security; however, the prevailing issue is the identification of a terrorist and how to deal with 'others.' Based on social learning, states continuously learn from each other's mistakes in dealing with terrorism. The collective identity and security culture emerging from it lay a basis for international pressure due to what states develop their threat perception. Regardless, peer pressure insists the states with little CT efforts to act up more even if they do not have an actual need for it. Threat perception is an aftermath of international pressure. Thus, the hypothesis about CT policy development derived from constructivist theory is:

- A state develops its CT policy if it has developed a common identity with another state or group of states.

2.2.3 Reference group theory explanation

Reference group theory was first introduced by Herbert H. Hyman (1942). It became relevant in psychology and sociology in the 1970s to understand how and why individuals adjust their behavior when they are part of a group or want to belong to a group. In other words, 'reference groups' "exert an influence on the development of an individual's attitudes, values, and aspirations."⁶² Reference group theory combines elements of rationalist and constructivist theories yet is closer to constructivism for the importance of identity and norms. The theory assumes the self-interest of actors, who adjust their behavior according to the groups they have developed a common identity

⁶¹ Toomas Riim (2006) Estonia and NATO: A Constructivist View on a National Interest and Alliance Behavior. Vol 8, 2006

⁶² J.E. Stafford and A.B. Cocanougher „Reference group theory“ *Ch 16 in Selected Aspects of consumer behavior: A summary from the perspective of different perspectives* “pp 361-370 (1977) P. 361

with. Thus, the theory also presumes the presence of shared values, problems, views, and identity. It is argued that reference group theory “allows for common expectations regarding the socialization process into desired groups,” and why members agree to modify their own interests to respond to the bigger concern.⁶³ However, it is also important to point out different belongings within the reference group. Table 2 illustrates the four types of relationships that an individual can have with a group.

Table 2. Reference groups⁶⁴

Reference status	Membership status	
	Membership other	Non-membership other
Reference other	1	2
Nonreference other	3	4

Based on the Stafford and Cocanougher (1977) paper, a ‘reference other’ within a ‘membership other’ (cell 1) is characterized by belonging into a primary group with regular interactions. Cell three characterizes a relationship where an individual or unit does not take any group values it belongs to. The second cell, often overlooked, characterizes an ‘other,’ which an individual or a unit does not belong to but references it. A good example of it brought by the authors is the case of an athlete who references a higher athletic team or upper class beyond his capabilities yet desires to be there. The fourth cell, less likely to exist today, characterizes an individual or unit that does not belong to nor references another group.⁶⁵ On the other hand, the fourth cell contrasts other cells as the ‘undesirable’ one. However, in society, the ‘undesirable’ groups also provide a basis for wanting to belong to a more advantageous group.

⁶³ E. Murell Dawson and Elfreda A. Chatman. (2001) "Reference group theory with implications for information studies: a theoretical essay." *Information Research* 6, no. 3: 6-3.

⁶⁴Table 2 is delivered from Table 16.1, page 361 of the Reference group theory Selected aspects of consumer behavior (1977): 361-380. By Stafford, James E., and Benton A. Cocanougher

⁶⁵ Stafford, James E., and Benton A. Cocanougher. (1977) "Reference group theory." *Selected aspects of consumer behavior* : 361-380.

While the preceding discussion was from an individual standpoint, dissecting a relationship from a 'reference group' standpoint is as important. The theory distinguishes three types of reference groups- normative, comparative, and multiple reference groups. A key to a 'normative' is the normative function that comes from the consensus of group norms among members. Members are motivated to gain or maintain acceptance, and other members enforce the standards set by consensus. A comparative reference group is based on the evaluation of a self-comparison to others, and the group is often used as a 'checkpoint' "which individuals or others use to make judgments."⁶⁶ The third, multiple reference groups, describe the situation where an individual uses various groups to evaluate his qualities. Similar to a comparative reference group, each group acts as a checkpoint. However, sometimes the values and behaviors of reference groups contradict each other leading to an internal discord of beliefs. (Hyman, 1942)

Reference group theory has been used in politics to understand voter-party relations and partisan ties (A.Miller et al. 1991; W.G. Jacoby 1988), religious leadership (K.M. Beatty and O.Walter 1989), and state behavior (M.Y.Omelicheva 2009; L.Pi Ferrer and P.Alasuutari 2019), in which the group mentality and self-interest is considered. In policy-making, it means that states develop similar policies to their reference groups to gain protection, alliance, financial aid and are willing to compromise or change their interests on behalf of the bigger group (cell one on table 2). While on the individual level, a 'reference' can be another person, group of persons, then on the international level, a 'reference' can be another country or group of countries. For example, the EU, NATO, the US could be counted as reference groups for European states, including those in the accession process or the EU neighboring states (the non-membership other). And for some other states, China or Russia can represent a reference group with whom they share similar concerns and values and adjust their own behavior accordingly. A 'reference group' can be anyone or any social group that one belongs to (cell 1) or is desirable for followers (cell 3). However, not wanting to be associated with an undesired group may motivate states to push

⁶⁶ Harold H. Kelley (1952) "Two functions of reference groups." In Dawson, E. Murell, and Elfreda A. Chatman. "Reference group theory with implications for information studies: a theoretical essay." *Information Research* 6, no. 3 (2001): 6-3.

themselves towards the desired group away from the non-desirable. In politics, a desirable social group can be economically successful and stable a state or a group of states that have formed an informal or formal alliance, providing any kind of bonuses to its members or partners. Advantages as such include protection, development, economic resources, and different forms of integration.

In the past few decades, reference group theory has become more relevant in CT studies as well (M.Y. Omelicheva 2009; K.Rekawek 2016; A.Spencer 2006; L.Malkki 2016) to highlight the possibility that some states' CT policy-making does not stem from the internal need. Their research is focused on the less-studied areas of Europe in CT- Eastern and Northern Europe. The area of concern has been picked in their studies for the same reason- Eastern and Northern Europe have either low or no terrorism threat compared to the better-researched Western Europe, yet, they have developed countermeasures similar to high-risk states. The comparative study of Rekawek (2016) found that "Central-Eastern Europeans 'reference' their CT arrangements from Western Europe in a copy and paste manner"⁶⁷ in which the local threat perception does not cause the CT policies. Rekawek (2016) noted that developing countermeasures are seen "as an act of solidarity with Western European or American allies,"⁶⁸ thus, the reference groups here are Western European states and America (*cells 1 and 2, Table 2*). However, the problem arises that one-size does not fit all, and CT policies should be more diversified according to the local threat.

Furthermore, to fulfill the requirements of CT, low-threat states use the budget allocated to CT for other purposes, such as gaining experience, securitizing other parts of the system, masking the spending while having no interest in the matter, yet may have a desire to impress the reference groups. The reference groups in CT policy-making are, thus, a state or group of states that "guides and orients other states' response to terrorism by endorsing and enforcing principles of counterterrorism activities and by providing information about the legitimacy and effectiveness of counterterrorism measures."⁶⁹ In other words, a reference group in CT is a desirable

⁶⁷ Kacper Rekawek (2017) "Referenced but not linear?" *Eastern European Politics and Societies and Cultures. Vol 31, no 1.. Pp 179-200. P.179*

⁶⁸ Ibid. P. 193

⁶⁹ Mariya Y. Omelicheva p. 486

state or group of states for its or their capabilities to protect and provide support. The states, in turn, have to follow group norms to maintain acceptance; they will also evaluate and compare themselves to others and may have internal conflicts due to having multiple reference groups. In order to maintain the advantages of a group, a state has to adjust its interests and behavior that fits the values and goals of the reference group even if these contradict their own understandings.

To conclude this section, reference group theory distinguishes an individual's relationships with its reference groups and the types of reference groups. But, the reference group theory can be further applied to bigger units, such as the states and their behavior in relation to reference groups. However, the theory combines some elements of previously discussed theories of rationalism and constructivism. The theory assumes the presence of self-interest and a formation of a common identity. However, the distinct feature of reference group theory is the willingness to change own interest to fit the interest of the bigger group. During this, states may adopt measures that are not stemming from the internal need but the external stimulus, such as group norms and comparison of self to others used as a checkpoint. Reference group theory may offer an explanation for adapting CT measures that are not derived from the domestic threat perception but instead from the external stimulus, which is to maintain membership in groups that are expected to provide benefits to its members. Thus, the hypothesis about CT policy development derived from reference group theory is:

- A state develops its CT policy if it wants to maintain its memberships for instrumental purposes.

3. Methodology

This is a theory-testing single case study of Estonian CT policy development between 2005 and 2020. The research explores which of the three theories- rational choice, constructivism, and reference group theory- explain Estonia's behavior and domestic motivations most accurately and aims to fulfill the gap in scholarly research. From the point of view of approaches that consider CT policy to develop in response to terrorism threat (Crenshaw 2001; Lum and Kennedy 2012), Estonia represents an outlier case- and therefore, deserves to be explored in detail. Estonia represents a particularly insightful case study to this phenomenon because Estonian representatives emphasize the importance of developing counterterrorism and continue to support its allies in the fight against terrorism in conflict zones (Omelicheva 2009) while having no terrorist attacks on its soil, little terrorist-related activities, and terrorist organizations' low interest in Estonian communities (KAPO reports). As such, findings can potentially be extended to other states facing similar conditions.

Case studies are used in various disciplines as it allows the researcher to focus more on one particular issue within one set of variables or another way around, a set of variables within one unit. A case study helps to uncover explanations specific to the case while also allowing to generalize among other similar cases. However, it is often referred to as a category of research methods, methodologies, and designs. Due to that, it has lost its meaning and significance, having both proponents and opposers. A case study is most commonly understood as a small-N qualitative method (Yin 1994) or an investigation of a single phenomenon. Gerring (2004) further adds that in the literature, a case study is also understood as in-the-field research, characterized by a process-tracing or investigation of the properties of a single case. A case study can be best understood as "an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units,"⁷⁰ intending to determine the complexity of the issue of study. The case study is also very fluid and is not limited by a paradigm or discipline. Thus, a case study is a "transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic" in which the pieces of

⁷⁰ John Gerring (2004) What is a case study and what is it good for? *The American Political Science Review*, May 2004, Vol.09, No.2; pp 341-354. P341

evidence are carefully and precisely collected.⁷¹ Because the ‘case study’ has been defined and understood in multiple ways, arguments for and against vary depending on the definition. Thus, this study uses Gerring’s (2004) definition of a case study.

A case study is often used to study phenomena in-depth, providing understandings and answers to the complexities unseen in large-N studies. Hyett (2014) pointed out that case study has been “unnecessarily devalued by comparisons with statistical methods” and is “reputed to be the ‘weak sibling’ in comparison to other.”⁷² However, as Hyett argued, the aim is not to produce outcomes generalizable to all populations through statistical research. In contrast, the aim is to recognize the complexity and value of the case, which is, in fact, more interpretative than large-n statistical studies. Hyett further argued against a perception that doing a case study is convenient for a researcher. While it may be convenient to focus on one unit, then, in reality, the researcher has to do more work. A case study is an intensive method for data gathering; analyzing data takes longer and is more time-consuming for the researcher compared to the statistical methods. However, the researcher’s effort is justified, as the findings from a case study may stimulate further research on the topic and providing new insight into the issue.

Based on the Gerring and Seawright (2008) case study techniques, the case study of Estonian CT falls under the extreme case category. Their interpretation of ‘extreme case’ represents an unusual case⁷³. As mentioned before, it is not common for states to develop unnecessary and costly policies; thus, if Estonia develops its CT policies while having no terrorism, then this behavior is uncommon and worth exploring. This research uses a Type III case study based on the definitions provided by Gerring (2004). Type I case study essentially means observation of a single unit over the period. Type II means a synchronic within-unit variance, in which the event is examined at a single point in time. Type III is the most used in case studies, synchronic

⁷¹Rob VanWynsberghe and Samia Khan. (2007) "Redefining case study." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 6, no. 2: 80-94. P.80

⁷² Nerida Hyett, Amanda Kenny, and Virginia Dickson-Swift. (2014) "Methodology or method? A critical review of qualitative case study reports." *International journal of qualitative studies on health and well-being* 9, no. 1: 23606.

⁷³ John Gerring and Jason Seawright (2008) „Case study selection in case study research.“ *Political research quarterly*. Vol 61, No.2, June 2008 pp 294-308. P.301

and diachronic within-unit variance.⁷⁴ In other words, type III combines the elements of the first two, the observation of the period and examination of a single point. In this study, the observable period is 2005-2020 for the development and the single point to examine is the present using the interviews.

3.1 Operationalization

The study is limited by a time period, from 2005 to 2020. The starting year is picked 2005 because Estonia became part of the EU and the year before a NATO member. Estonia was required to sign relevant agreements with the EU and NATO during the accession period considering the accession requirements. In an attempt to study Estonian CT developments stemming from domestic and international needs, fulfilling accession requirements may affect the results. The 15-year time period is short enough to study the CT policy development more closely, yet, it is long enough to detect changes in preferences and perception.

In this outcome-oriented study, the dependent variable is Estonia's CT development, which either exists or is absent. To measure the variable's value, the study looks into two indicators. The first indicator is institutional change- the study looks into what organizations or institutions were created to engage with counterterrorism. The study attempts to detect when these were created, who share the responsibility, and if they were created exclusively to deal with CT or existed previously and got new tasks to fulfill. As 'development' requires a positive change between 2005 and 2020, the indicator also has to show the expansion of relevant institutions. The second indicator is the presence of legislative acts that will be detected by using *Riigiteataja.ee*. The webpage is the most direct resource to search adopted legislative acts and see when the acts were signed and amended. To fulfill the requirement of 'development,' Estonian legislative acts have to show amendments and new legislation. If the research finds that both indicators exist along with development, then Estonia's CT policy development also exists. The study intentionally excludes the allocation of resources due to the unattainability of direct data.

⁷⁴ John Gerring (2004) "What is a case study and what is it good for?" *The American Political Science Review*, May 2004, Vol.09, No.2; p. P344

The independent variable of rational choice theory can take values of low or high. Levels of the perceived terrorist threat are high when developing CT policies correlates with the internal threat perception. The variable is low if the level of perceived threat level does not correlate with the adapted measures. The indicator, proportionality of response to the threat, measures the levels of terrorist threat perceived by actors. In other words, it analyzes the implementation of countermeasures' relationship with internal threat perception.

The analysis of the indicator is based on the following sources: Global Terrorism Index⁷⁵ to detect Estonia's threat index viewed globally. It provides a background and a comparison between what Estonia sees as a threat and how others interpret Estonia's reporting on terrorism. Threat perception is delivered from the presidential speeches, public statements of four ministries- Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Justice, and KAPO and Europol reports between 2005 and 2020.

The threat level is divided into two: CT-related and non-CT-related. This is done to differentiate the terrorist threat from other threats. Furthermore, it is divided based on Rekawek's (2016) study presenting that CT-policies can be used for other means. Instead, CT-related refers only to the threat stemming from terrorism, while non-CT-related refers to other security threats like aggression or international instability. It does not include instabilities such as financial, health, environmental concerns but merely focuses on the threat stemming from physical armed attacks. Furthermore, it does not include cyberterrorism as it is a separate branch.

Each year, CT-related and the non-CT-related threat are measured on a scale of 1 to 5, based on the United Kingdom threat levels.⁷⁶ For each year, statements and KAPO reports indicate the assessment of threats stemming from terrorism and other sources, such as neighboring Russia. For example, the 2020 KAPO report indicates a low terrorism threat; thus, the scale brought below 'low' equals 1. Similarly, a non-CT-

⁷⁵ Global Terrorism Index. *Visited last on 24.04.21* <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/global-terrorism-index/#/>

⁷⁶ Terrorism and national emergencies. UK government.

related threat, in 2010, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves noted that Russia is not a threat to Estonia⁷⁷, which also equals to low 1 for non-CT-related threat assessment.

- 1 low - an attack is highly unlikely
- 2 moderate - an attack is possible but not likely
- 3 substantial - an attack is likely
- 4 severe - an attack is highly likely
- 5 critical - an attack is highly likely in the near future

Adoption of CT measures reflects the amount of institutional and legislative changes.

The scale for each year is following:

- 0- No new changes
- 1- 1 or 2 added measures/amendments/institutions
- 2- 3 to 5 added measures/amendments/institutions

The independent variable of constructivist theory relies on the establishment of a common identity identified by actors. The variable can take either a positive or negative value. The value is determined by an indicator of identification measured by studying written statements of state leaders and ministries. Leaders reflect their vision for a country through their statements⁷⁸ and often refer to international partners they identify with, bringing similarities with their approach and vision. The observation of the positive identification suggests similar approaches to counterterrorism. Thus, it is expected that the observation of collective identity takes a positive value if Estonian leaders talk about shared values, views, and concerns. An observation of collective identity takes a negative value when leaders do not imply the existence of shared values, views, and concerns. The data regarding keywords are collected from presidential speeches and statements from ministries. The security-related speeches and statements that discuss terrorism are first assigned a keyword and then categorized into specific theories. The keywords are: 'shared values,' 'common,' 'solidarity,' 'identity,' and 'other.'

⁷⁷ Vabariigi President Tartu rahulepingu 90. aastapäeva kontsert-aktusel Vanemuise kontserdimajas Tartus. 02.02.10

⁷⁸ Yair Berson, Boas Shamir, Bruce J. Avolio, and Micha Popper (2001) "The relationship between vision strength, leadership style, and context." *The Leadership Quarterly* 12, no. 1, 53-73.

These keywords are looked into as indicators of common identity, separating 'us' from 'others' through finding out who is 'us' and what characterizes the common identity.

'Shared values' are going to be assigned to the statements that indicate the existence of common viewpoints and shared values. Essentially, it divides 'us' from 'others' by indicating who are the entities that belong into the same world of understandings, morals, and worldviews. 'Common' keyword is assigned to the statements that indicate the existence of common problems and goals and duties that are in line with entities that Estonia considers as 'us.' 'Solidarity' keyword is assigned to the statements that indicate the presence of solidarity which is the foundation of a good partnership in a shared space. 'Identity' keyword is assigned to the statements that define 'us.' In other words, what entities Estonia sees itself sharing common identity with. Lastly, the keyword 'other' distinguishes entities that are not part of the 'us' sharing the values, problems, and goals.

The independent variable of reference group theory is the maintenance of membership which can take a value of either negative or positive. An indicator takes a positive value when a state identifies with a group for instrumental purposes and wants to maintain membership. The indicator takes a negative value when a state does not expect benefits from the group it identifies with. The variable's value is observed through presidential speeches and statements of four ministries, which statements indicate the instrumental necessity to belong into a group, comparing Estonia to the group members, establishing check-points and positional goals in these groups.⁷⁹ The keywords assigned to the statements to measure maintenance of membership are: 'alliance,' 'evaluation,' 'check-point,' and 'comparison.'

'Alliance' keyword is assigned to the statements that refer to the like-minded entities and units that support Estonia and in front of who Estonia sees a responsibility to behave in a certain way. By that, it considers entities whose presence is significant for Estonia's wellbeing and whose partnership Estonia wants to maintain. In these

⁷⁹ Harald Müller (2004) "Arguing, bargaining and all that: Communicative action, rationalist theory and the logic of appropriateness in international relations." *European journal of international relations* 10, no. 3

references, Estonian leaders highlight the need to participate in missions/operations/discussions to make themselves heard and serve as a good member in exchange for support and consideration of Estonia as a worthy ally. ‘Evaluation’ keyword is assigned to the statements that refer to the assessment of the country’s position and behavior, indicating what Estonia needs to do or how well Estonia has done so far by hold membership. ‘Checkpoint’ keyword is assigned to the statements in which leaders highlight the goals Estonia has fulfilled membership-wise, implicating how gaining the membership is not only a goal itself but what Estonia has gained by having those memberships. ‘Comparison’ keyword is assigned to the statements in which Estonia leaders compare Estonian position/well-being with other members in the group or members outside the group. This implicates the importance of the memberships to Estonian interests.

3.2 Triangulation method

This study uses triangulation for data gathering. The triangulation method consists of multiple data sources and is “to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources.”⁸⁰ Application of triangulation further enhances the reliability of results (Stavros and Westberg 2009; Denzin 2009) and involves multiple methods and sources of gathering data and analysis. Uwe Flick (2004) and Denzin (2009) distinguish four forms of triangulation in social research, in which data can be correlated between people, space, and time; *investigator* triangulation correlating the results from multiple researchers in one study; *theory* triangulation for using multiple theories to correlate data; *methodological* triangulation for correlating data from multiple data collecting methods⁸¹. This study uses *methodological* triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of the results. Triangulation as a strategy helps to understand the issue more deeply and helps to underpin knowledge while gaining additional information during the process.⁸² However, a researcher has to be cautious

⁸⁰ N.Carter et al. (2014) "The use of triangulation in qualitative research." In Oncology nursing forum, vol. 41, no. 5,. P.545

⁸¹ Patricia I. Fusch and Lawrence R. Ness (2015): "Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research." *The qualitative report*20, no. 9, p.1411

⁸²Uwe, Flick (2004) "Triangulation in qualitative research." A companion to qualitative research 3: 178-183.

and recognize the personal perspective on the subject that may lead to wrongful interpretations. Distinguishing personal bias and ensuring data saturation contributes to valid and reliable results.

Data gathering is based on the principle of saturation to ensure the quality and validity of the research. Data saturation within triangulation, thus, fits the aim of ensuring the reliability and validity of results. Though there is no *one-size-fits-all* concerning the saturation, a general agreement among researchers concerning data saturation involves the following principles: “no new data, no new themes, no new coding, and ability to replicate the study.”⁸³ Based on these principles, the study seeks *depth* of data, which is not necessarily connected to a larger sample size (Burmeister and Aitken 2012), but to the quality of gathering, documenting, and processing data. For this reason, the following sources are used to determine multiple points of view and change in attitudes. As the study is concerned with Estonia’s behavior towards CT policy development, it is essential to point out that the original texts are either in Estonian or English, diminishing the possibility of errors in analysis stemming from translated texts.⁸⁴

The first resource of data includes written and oral statements of elites, including ministers and the president of Estonia. To be more specific, the study analyzes 95 presidential security-related speeches between 2005-2020 to give an overall context, and of which 15 speeches with the keyword “terrorism” are further analyzed for this study. Presidential speeches are studied to detect the country’s perception and approach, what and who they see as a threat and partners, and how they justify governmental actions to the public (Eshbaugh-Soha 2010). The statements of ministries involve the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The statements are delivered from each ministry’s webpage, where press releases include the word ‘terrorism’ in a total of 25 articles. In order to study

⁸³ Fusch, Patricia I., and Lawrence R. Ness. (2015) "Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research." *The qualitative report* 20, no. 9, p.1409.

⁸⁴ Barik, H. C. (1994). A description of various types of omissions, additions and errors of translation encountered in simultaneous interpretation. *Bridging the gap: Empirical research in simultaneous interpretation*, 3, p. 121-137.

presidential speeches and ministers' statements, the study uses content analysis on these sources.

3.3 Research design

Content analysis in qualitative research is a tool to detect and analyze meanings and relationships between themes and concepts. Furthermore, the content analysis's versatility allows to apply of textual, visual, and audio data.⁸⁵ As a tool, content analysis is applied to these texts to examine trends and patterns⁸⁶. The research uses deductive coding based on three theories explored in this study. Deductive coding, or theoretically-driven coding, differs from other approaches for having the departure point, which allows for a more systemic way of categorizing. The coding frame is based on the conceptualization delivered from three theories- rational choice theory, constructivism, and reference group theory.⁸⁷ The study identifies the main concepts within each theory and applies them to the speeches and statements based on the scholarly literature on these three theories. The codebook includes descriptions of concepts and will be applied to the collected data. The process includes "reviewing, revising and confirming that the codes do in fact appear in the data by finding examples."⁸⁸ Thus, the study first pinpoints main concepts based on the scholarly framework. Then these concepts will be used on data. After the initial coding of statements and speeches, coding will be further revised to ensure correct appliance before analysis.

The second resource of data includes publicly available reports- specifically KAPO and EUROPOL yearly reports. Yearly published reports include valuable information in the sense of what Estonia has been done in the past year counterterrorism-wise. Thus, only the section on CT efforts will be studied. Reports determine the level and scope of the threat and what Estonia has been done to counter the threat. The difference between these reports and written/oral statements of elites is

⁸⁵Steven E. Stemler (2015) "Content analysis." *Emerging trends in the social and behavioral sciences: An Interdisciplinary, Searchable, and Linkable Resource*, 1-14.

⁸⁶ Stemler, Steve. (2002) "An overview of content analysis." *Practical assessment, research, and evaluation* 7, no. 1: 17. Harvard

⁸⁷Noel Pearse (2019) "An illustration of deductive analysis in qualitative research." In 18th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies, p. 264

⁸⁸ Boyatziz 1998 in Noel Pearse "An illustration of deductive analysis in qualitative research." P 266

that KAPO reports are written by experts who deal with security concerns on an everyday basis. Since KAPO is the main responsible body for CT, reports reflect threat perception regarding terrorism and other threats. Europol is the EU's law enforcement agency that cooperates with states on various international crimes, including terrorism. Since Member States report back to Europol, the yearly reports are useful in determining the threat and methods that Estonia has reported back. However, similarly to elite speeches and statements, KAPO reports help to draw a timeline of developing threat perception over the years. Europol reports further confirm the activity. In these reports, only the section on counterterrorism efforts will be analyzed to detect a threat to Estonian security and measures taken against them.

Last but not least, the study uses *Riigiteataja* for detecting a legal framework and publicly available strategies and development plans concerning CT policy-making. *Riigiteataja* webpage allows to track procedural information in the parliament, whereas strategies and development plans lay down the goals and existing threats. These will be compared to the data delivered from speeches, statements, and reports.

3.4 Limitations and acknowledgments

The author has recognized the limitations to this research and approach. Conducting interviews was considered part of the study and the triangulation method. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 situation and sensitivity of the subject, the number of possible interviewees was highly limited. Thus, the reports, statements, and speeches remain the primary sources of analysis. Considering these difficulties, the in-depth elite interview serves as valuable background information. The questionnaire is open-ended and semi-structured, with an option to conduct an interview over a Skype session due to the Covid-19 restrictions based on their schedule. It is also essential to point out that the author has considered the subject's sensitivity and has expected and avoided questions to which respondents cannot answer.

Regarding the ethical issues arising from conducting interviews, respondents are informed of sound recording and confidentiality on their and the author's part beforehand and at the beginning of the interview. Due to this, respondents are asked to

sign a consent form, and transcribed text will be sent to the respondents after the interview. All transcribes and voice recordings will be deleted after the analysis.

4. Analysis: explaining Estonian CT policy development 2005 to 2020

This chapter focuses on defining Estonian counterterrorism policy development from 2005 to 2020. In order to explore the explanations through three theories, rational choice theory, reference group theory, and constructivism, the thesis first provides insights into the development of Estonia's CT policy. Then it presents evidence in support of each of the explanations for CT policy development in order to conclude which of the explanations and factors explains the development of Estonia CT policy best.

4.1 Estonian CT policy development 2005-2020

The analysis of sources suggests that Estonia's CT policy has developed between 2005 and 2020; therefore, CT policy development can be considered as present in this period. Regarding approach, it has not changed- Estonia has taken a preventative role in foreign and domestic affairs when it comes to counterterrorism. Emphasis on prevention has also been noted by the Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT)⁸⁹. Prevention efforts include prominence in resolving conflicts abroad (Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria) to prevent international terrorism affecting Estonia and strengthening the world order through international law. In there, Estonia holds a supportive role in conflict zones. The statements reflect the recognition of the increasing threat from unstable international situations both from the neighboring Russian Federation and conflict zones in the Middle East and North Africa. While there have not been recorded terrorist attacks on Estonian soil, the Estonian government's security interest is doing its best to prevent any activity. Thus, to avert the escalation of the terrorism threat, the preventative approach also includes the reactive method of grounding tensions in war zones. In principle, Estonia sees that cooperation with international partners is more effective and rewarding than tackling the threat alone. To improve the stability, Estonia is determined to collaborate and strengthen cooperation

⁸⁹ Profiles on counter-terrorism capacity- Estonia, October 2019 by Council of Europe Committee on Counter-terrorism

with its partners. Thus, the external drivers of Estonian CT-policy development are membership obligations, international agreements and are compelled to transpose and apply directives, regulations, and resolutions.

Domestically, the Estonian approach involves combining the efforts of various institutions and gives them power through legislation. While some legislative acts and tasks are based on international obligations, others may stem from the domestic approach. Estonian CT-related activity follows the partly classified Internal Security Development Plan 2015-2020 (ISDP) (five-year plans), public Foreign policy strategies⁹⁰, development plans⁹¹, and public CT foundations and strategies found on *valitsus.ee* webpage.

The following section demonstrates the existence of CT policy development based on two indicators- institutional change and legislative change. The first indicator of existence is the presence and change of institutions. Based on the Fundamentals of Counter-terrorism in Estonia (2013) provided by the Interior Ministry, 24 organizations share the responsibility for CT policy. The document is an updated version of the 2006 document on the strategy⁹². The 2013 document states that the main responsible body in the CT is Internal Security Service (KAPO). Estonian Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB) hold a substantive place in responding to criminal activity, contributing to the preventative approach. Both PBGB and KAPO act under the Ministry of Interior who has an integral role in assessing the security situation and composing strategies along with organizing implementation. PBGB also commands a special Intervention Unit (K-Komando), supportive and executive force in crisis. The Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service (EFIS) is also an organization shaping Estonian security and defense policy but operates under the Ministry of Defense. EFIS's main task is to collect and analyze data necessary to detect and prevent terrorist attacks.⁹³ While most of the organizations listed on the 2013 strategy have other tasks in addition to CT, the

⁹⁰ Estonian foreign policy strategy 2030

https://vm.ee/sites/default/files/Estonia_for_UN/Rasmus/estonian_foreign_policy_strategy_2030_final.pdf

⁹¹ Development plans. Vabariigi Valitsus

⁹² Document not found anymore. <https://www.valitsus.ee/uudised/valitsuskabineti-noupidamine-17-augustil-2006>

⁹³ Profiles on counter-terrorism capacity- Estonia, October 2019 by Council of Europe Committee on Counter-terrorism

Counter-Terrorism Council of the Security Committee of the Government of the Republic (TVVN) is the only one whose main and only tasks are CT-related. All other institutions listed on the strategy have supporting roles for CT policy and hold a preventative role within the system. TVVN's main task is to prepare the strategy and Action Plan updates and monitor the implementation giving recommendations to the Security Committee of the Government of the Republic (VVJK) and Sub-committee of the Security Committee (JKAK). The foundation of these three dates back to 2002 statutes⁹⁴. Statutes define the composition, duties, and rights of VVJK, and the amendment of 2005 added the sub-committee to assist VVJK and TVVN to advise JKAK. Two committees, the Governmental Committee for the Coordination of Issues Related to the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing and Crisis Management Committee of the Government of the Republic, were founded by separate acts in 2006⁹⁵ and 2017⁹⁶, respectively.

It is evident that Estonian anti-money laundering acts and amendments are heavily influenced by the EU conventions and directives, which have added to the establishment of related sub-institutions. Anti-money laundering acts purpose in CT is to prevent and block terrorist financing, including supporting the traveling of terrorists and sending them money. The basis of money-laundering acts in Europe are 1) the European Convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime (ETS no.141) ratified 10.05.2000 and 2) Council of Europe Convention on laundering, search, seizure, and confiscation of the proceeds from crime and on the financing of terrorism (CETS No.198) signed in 07.03.2013. Based on these conventions and EU directives, the Estonian government established the Governmental Committee for the Coordination of Issues Related to the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in 2018⁹⁷. Money laundering and terrorism financing are further inspected by the Estonian Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) that

⁹⁴ Vabariigi Valitsuse julgeolekukomisjoni põhimäärus. RT I 2002, 15, 84. Riigiteataja

⁹⁵ Valitsuskomisjoni moodustamine rahapesu ja terrorismi rahastamise tõkestamist puudutavate küsimuste lahendamise koordineerimiseks. RT III, 04.02.2014, 7 Riigiteataja

⁹⁶ Vabariigi Valitsuse kriisikomisjoni põhimäärus. RT I, 28.06.2017, 38 Riigiteataja

⁹⁷ Rahapesu ja terrorismi rahastamise tõkestamise komisjoni liikmete arv ja töökord. RT I, 04.12.2020 Riigiteataja

operates under the PBGB; starting from 2021, FIU operates directly under the Ministry of Finance.⁹⁸

It is apparent that Estonia has created institutions in addition to the existing ones to construct a cohesive system against the threat, which also demonstrates the institutional change. Even though there have been a few additions to the system, institutional change is evident in the latest ones regarding terrorism financing. What these findings suggest is that multiple institutions have been created to specifically deal with the development of CT policy. In addition, existing institutions have expanded their mandate to include CT-related tasks. As a result, one can observe a steady and gradual build-up of institutional bodies dealing with CT development in Estonia. The presence and development of legislative acts give these institutions the power to act.

Currently, there are eight active legislative acts related to counter-terrorism, of which four were put in force after 2005. So far, Estonia has signed 16 CT-related European conventions and ratified 16 UN conventions.⁹⁹ The CT-related amendments are delivered from the most prominent conventions in the EU:

- *European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism* (entered into force in Estonia 28.06 1997)

This Convention is to simplify the extradition of individuals who have committed acts of terrorism to ensure that they do not escape prosecution and punishment.¹⁰⁰

- *European Convention on the Transfer of Proceedings in Criminal Matters* (entered into force in Estonia 29.07 1997)

Under this Convention, a State can request another state to start proceedings against a suspected person. Normally, a suspected person is a national of the requesting State, or when the person is to serve a prison sentence in a requesting State.¹⁰¹

- *Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons* (entered into force in Estonia 01.08. 1997)

⁹⁸ Republic of Estonia. Financial Intelligence Unit <https://www.fiu.ee/en>

⁹⁹ Profiles on counter-terrorism capacity- Estonia, October 2019 by Council of Europe Committee on Counter-terrorism; p 9

¹⁰⁰ Details of Treaty No.090 Council of Europe

¹⁰¹ Details of Treaty No.073 Council of Europe

Under this Convention, foreigners serving a punishment may have a possibility to serve time in their own countries to facilitate social rehabilitation. Convention lays down the procedure for transfer.¹⁰²

- *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism* (entered into force in Estonia 21.06. 2002)¹⁰³

The Convention recognizes that terrorists are dependent on finances and urges to enhance cooperation among States to adopt effective measures to prevent terrorist financing.¹⁰⁴

- *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings* (entered into force in Estonia 10.03.2002)¹⁰⁵

The Convention is to improve international cooperation in planning and adopting measures to prevent acts of terrorism and effective investigation and prosecution of suspected individuals. Convention notes bombings and use of explosives with the intention to kill, injure and destruct unlawfully.¹⁰⁶

- *Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism* (entered into force in Estonia 1.09.2009)

The Convention is to “increase the effectiveness of existing international texts on the fight against terrorism,” aiming to strengthen States’ effort by establishing public provocation, recruitment, and training as a criminal offense, and reinforcing cooperation on prevention domestically and internationally. It also contains provisions on the protection and compensation of victims.¹⁰⁷

- *Prüm Convention* (entered into force in Estonia 19.07.2008)¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Details of Treaty No.112 Council of Europe

¹⁰³ Välisministeeriumi teadaanne, RT II 2002, 20. Kristiina Ojuland. Riigiteataja

¹⁰⁴ International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. United Nations.

¹⁰⁵ Välisministeeriumi teadaanded, RT II 2002, 15. Kristiina Ojuland. Riigiteataja

¹⁰⁶ International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. UN 12.12.1997 New York

¹⁰⁷ Details of Treaty No.196. Council of Europe

¹⁰⁸ Austria Vabariigi, Belgia Kuningriigi, Hispaania Kuningriigi, Luksemburgi Suurhertsogiriigi, Madalmaade Kuningriigi, Prantsuse Vabariigi ja Saksamaa Liitvabariigi vahelise eelkõige terrorismi-,

Also known as Schengen III Agreement, it is primarily concerned with improving cross-border cooperation on combating terrorism and cross-border crime. It enables signatories to exchange data like DNA, fingerprints, and vehicle registration of suspects. There are 14 signatories to this Convention.¹⁰⁹

The latest act, Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Prevention Act, is derived from the EU regulations of 1889/2005 (EC)¹¹⁰, 2015/847¹¹¹, 2016/679¹¹², and directives 2015/849¹¹³ and 2015/2366¹¹⁴. The act is connected to the previously named institutions on money laundering. The act has gone through multiple amendments between 2017 and 2021. Amendments can be largely connected to the infringement process launched by the European Commission regarding the 4th and 5th Anti-Money Laundering Directive in 2018 and 2020¹¹⁵. This suggests that the European Union legislation heavily influences Estonia's policy development regarding money laundering and terrorist financing.

In Estonia, terrorism is defined in the Penal Code §237 under Division 3: Offences against State Power¹¹⁶. Compared to 2005, §237 has gone through multiple modifications implicating the development of adding provisions. For example, in 2007, terrorism as a criminal offense was redefined, and the possible punishment was extended from five to 12 years to five to 20 years or life imprisonment. The act further defines a terrorist organization, preparation (amendments 2015, 2017, 2019), financing and supporting terrorism (amendments 2009, 2015), and added malicious entry (2015), traveling for terrorist purposes (2019), and organizing and supporting travel for terrorist purposes (2019). The amendments were to respond to the EU legislation but also influenced by the terrorism-related events in Estonia and Europe. For example, starting from 2008, KAPO reports indicate the possibility of terrorists using Estonia as a transit

piiriülese kuritegevuse ja ebaseadusliku rände vastases võitluses piiriülese koostöö tõhustamise lepinguga ühinemise seadus. RT II 2011, 16, 1. Riigiteataja

¹⁰⁹ Prüm Convention. 7.07.2005 Council of the European Union

¹¹⁰ Euroopa Parlamendi ja nõukogu määrus (EÜ) nr 1889/2005, 26. oktoober 2005. EUR-Lex

¹¹¹ Euroopa Parlamendi ja nõukogu määrus (EL) 2015/847, 20. mai 2015. EUR-Lex

¹¹² Euroopa Parlamendi ja nõukogu määrus (EL) 2016/679, 27. aprill 2016. EUR-Lex

¹¹³ Euroopa Parlamendi ja nõukogu direktiiv (EL) 2015/849, 20. mai 2015. EUR-Lex

¹¹⁴ Euroopa Parlamendi ja nõukogu direktiiv (EL) 2015/2366, 25. november 2015. EUR-Lex

¹¹⁵ February infringement package: key decisions. European Commission. 18.11.2021

¹¹⁶ Eesti Karistuseadustik. Riigiteataja. *Accessed 07.05.2021*

country to enter the Schengen area, to which paragraph 4 was added to the Penal Code §237 in 2014 (entered into force 2015). Furthermore, in 2015 two suspects were captured for financing terrorism. In 2017, Ramil Khalilov and Ivan Sazanakov were prosecuted for these offenses based on §237(3), to which the amendments were done in 2015 and 2009.

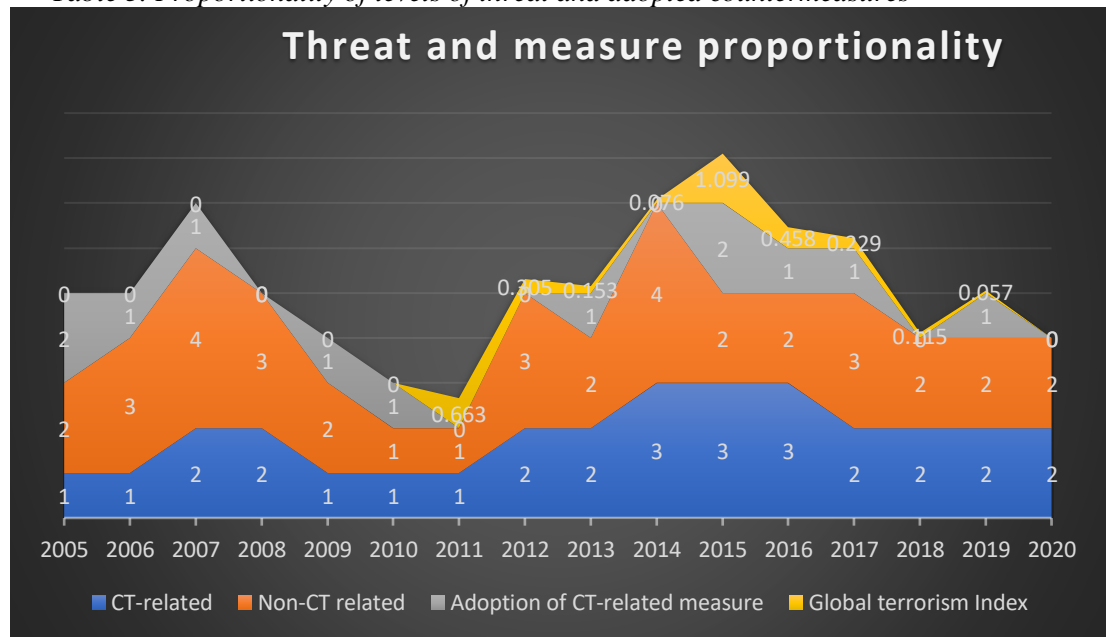
It is clear that Estonian legislation related to CT has been developing in the period between 2005-2020. Even though many legislative acts originate from the EU or UN level, it still requires Estonia to transpose and implement them. Regardless, signing conventions is up to Estonia, suggesting that the policies resulting from that are inspired from other sources or domestically.

Based on the preceding analysis, it is clear that Estonia has established a legal and institutional framework and has gradually developed CT policies between 2005 and 2020. In other words, analysis suggests that between 2005 and 2020, there was a development of Estonia's CT policy. Thus, the Estonian CT-policy development is present. Considering that one of the drivers of Estonian CT policy development is the EU and international law, there is further to explore what has been driving Estonian CT policy development. The following sections do so by offering evidence in support of each of the three explanations.

4.2 Measuring rational group theory in CT policy development

The proportionality of response to threat indicates the independent variable of rational choice theory regarding counterterrorism policy development. The following analysis is going to show how this indicator has been delivered from the data. Table 3 is a concise illustration of findings. Based on the literature, it was expected that the state develops a policy if the state perceives a high level of threat.

Table 3. Proportionality of levels of threat and adopted countermeasures



Firstly, analyzing the CT-related threat is the most elevated between 2012-2016, possibly due to increased international terrorist activity in Europe. Reports and speeches indicate the fear arising from the frequency of attacks that have become geographically closer, such as attacks in France and Belgium. Nice attack in 2016 contributed to the increase of threat as Estonian citizens were injured and killed in the attack. Reports and speeches also indicate the possibility of returning fighters and increase of radical converts which was countered with multiple additions to Penal Code §237 in 2015, specific amendments to §237 (1) to (4); §238 Organizing and preparing mass disorders and incitement to participation therein; §239 Commission of offense during mass disorder. Elevation of CT-related threat perception can also be associated with the Refugee Crisis¹¹⁷ and an increasing number of populist rhetoric contributing to incitement to hatred and violence.

The CT-related threat largely correlates with the Global Terrorism Index, which is the highest in 2015- 1,099 and lowest between 2005-2010, valued at 0. However, in 2015 the index was elevated throughout Europe due to the increasing number of attacks in multiple countries. Even though the index is the lowest between 2005-2010, KAPO reports indicate the rise of fundamentalist, the threat of biological warfare from AI-

Qaeda (2005); potentially radicalized individuals (2006); recognition of lone-wolf activity, and evidence of financing terrorism (2007); rise of Islamic terrorist organizations' (Jamaat Tablighi, Al-Waaf Al-Islami, Hizb ut-Tahrir) interest in the Estonian Muslim community (2008); increase of illegal immigration and using Estonia as a transit country (2009); increase of radical converts posing a security threat (2010).

Regarding non-CT-related threats, the most commonly named threat to Estonian security was Russian Federation aggression. Russia's foreign policy was thoroughly discussed in KAPO reports and mentioned in presidential speeches. The threat level regarding Russia has been stable but peaks at the times of invasion to other countries, posing a threat to entire Europe, thus, to Estonia as well. This includes the Russian invasion of Georgia and Ukraine. Before 2010 Estonia threat was elevated due to the increase of espionage, Bronze Soldier situation followed by a cyberattack. The efforts to counter Russian activity have emphasized the importance of the NATO alliance, conducting various operations and training, and responding with counterintelligence to external espionage.

Based on the data presented in table 3, perceived terrorist-related threat correlates little with the measures adapted and can thus be interpreted as low. However, it is apparent that non-terrorist related threat correlates more with the measures adopted. These findings may suggest that for one, implementation in response to threat is delayed, and two, threat perception regarding terrorism may be influenced by other sources of threat that results in CT policy development that attempts to dissolve terrorism-related and threat from other sources at the same time. However, when taking into account that developing policies takes time, we could expect at least one year delay in implementation. For example, we can look at the CT-related threat in 2011 and then the adoption of CT-related measures in 2012. This example is illustrative, but it demonstrates that it is not proportional. On the other hand, when we look at all indicators in 2011- they are all low. However, there is a stronger correlation between measures and CT-related threat perception in 2007, 2014, and 2015 regarding high-points—the low-points of correlation in 2005 and 2006, and 2010. Yearly-wise, six years over the 15-year period correlate. But again, considering the 1-year delay in responding with developing measures, it does not correlate. Taking these into account, the rational choice theory hypothesis is proven wrong as there is no significant

correlation between threats perceived from terrorism and adoption of CT-related measures.

Even though the first hypothesis regarding rational choice theory was proven wrong in the means of terrorist threat level not correlating with the adoption of CT-measures and the variable being low, it does not exclude state's rational behavior in the means of adopting measures that are based on the membership obligations. Regardless, accepting that there are limitations to rational choice theory allows one to explore Estonian behavior in CT policy development through the other two theories.

4.2 Measuring the constructivist approach in CT policy development

The following analysis is dedicated to the constructivist theory independent variable of common identity. It is in this section's interest to analyze the CT policy development through constructivist theory.

Mentioning of 'shared values' frequently appears in the analyzed texts. Primarily, this refers to values that are shared with entities, such as the EU, NATO, or neighboring Estonian countries. Essentially, it divides 'us' from 'others' by indicating who are the entities that belong into the same world of understandings, morals, and worldviews. Some examples from the data: "We know it as a European cultural space, a transatlantic area of values, Nordic solidarity, Baltic co-operation - many formal and less formal ties,"¹¹⁸ refers to the cooperation with multiple entities. This statement shows that Nordic countries and Baltic States' space overlap with the EU's cultural space and values. Thus, as Estonia is part of the Baltic and Nordic, common Estonian identity is also linked to the European cultural and value space. Another, "we know that we are all those whose compass is based on the same field of values,"¹¹⁹ referring to Estonia's partnership that is based on the same values. We can interpret this statement as a reference that Estonia adjusts its behavior when values change. Thus, if Estonia is sharing values with the EU or other entities and their values and norms develop,

¹¹⁸ Vabariigi President Riigikogu avaistungil, 09.09.2019 Kersti Kaljulaid

¹¹⁹ Vabariigi President Vöidupüha paraadil 23.juunil 2018 Tallinna Lauluväljakul. Kersti Kaljulaid

Estonian activity and approach are also influenced by the changes in the shared space. Statements most often referred to sharing values with the UN, NATO, the EU, neighboring Scandinavian states, Baltic states, and the USA, which means that these entities' morals and values influence Estonian values as well, which contributes to the development of similar approach and behavior.

References to 'common' also appear frequently in the analyzed texts, indicating the existence of common problems and goals, and duties that line with entities that Estonia considers as 'us.' An example of the statement "Let's face it: now we, that is, Europe, are threatened by an unprecedented wave of war refugees in our countries."¹²⁰ In this statement, we can see that Estonia refers that Europe as 'us.' When something or someone threatens Europe, it also influences Estonia; thus, Estonia sees itself sharing the same problems as Europe. Based on this, Estonia needs to act outside Europe with its allies to protect the common; Estonia cooperates with its neighbors to strengthen the alliance. The indication of sharing common borders is evident from: "This [border security] will remain equally important for us in the future because the Estonian border is also the European Union's external border between east and west, it is the border between two different value spaces."¹²¹ This refers to an abstract border between 'us' as the west and 'other' as the east. It also refers that there exist value-based borders between 'our' world and 'others' who are outside of the physical EU borders. The elite interview indicated that though the cooperation exists with the eastern neighbor regarding terrorism on a practical level, cooperation is not as deep as it is with partners belonging to the same sphere of values. This suggests that even though Russia is regarded as part of the 'other,' the common issue of terrorism allows cooperation through practical measures because terrorists are the unwanted 'others' for every nation. However, Estonia feels safer to cooperate more deeply with entities that it identifies with because, in the shared space, the established norms provide a sense of security. The common problems and goals add to the shared values, in which member states feel safer to collaborate on issues that impact the community's sense of security and identity.

¹²⁰ Eesti Vabariigi presidendi Toomas Hendrik Ilvese sõnavõtt ÜRO 70. peassamblee üldarutelul New Yorgis, 29. septembril 2015.

¹²¹ Vabariigi President Eesti piirivalve loomise ja taasloomise aastapäeval. 01.11.2020 Kersti Kaljulaid

The references to 'solidarity' were less frequent in the analyzed texts. An example of solidarity is, "In 2014, we have really felt what solidarity is in the European Union; which means when we are listened to and understood."¹²² Solidarity refers to mutual respect, which presidential speeches and ministerial statements value highly in its partnership. It is part of a good alliance, a source of trust and good collaboration. Regarding the threat of terrorism, "Estonia is in solidarity with all those affected by conflict, terrorism, and violent extremism," suggesting that Estonia is further concerned with violent activity outside its and European borders and is interested in doing its part in resolving conflicts. It is very evident in "we show solidarity and shoulder to shoulder where possible and as strong as our country can today,"¹²³ confirming the internal need to participate in international missions. When it comes to applying European directives or NATO's guidelines, it was evident from the elite interview that the decisions that influence Estonian policy development are based on mutual understanding, in which member states are not forced to deliver unacceptable measures. The mutual understanding, helping each other, and concluding decisions implicate the solidarity within these organizations. This implicates the sense of common identity, where member states commonly recognize the threat and what they need to do in order to resolve these issues.

'Identity' frequently appeared in the analyzed texts. Usually, it refers to the statement in which Estonia does not only see itself sharing the sphere as an individual state but refers to it to be within that entity. Findings from defining 'us' can be found from statements such as "Estonia is a member of NATO. There is no term in our discussion for 'us' and 'you,' much less the terms 'us' and 'them.' We are NATO,"¹²⁴ demonstrating that Estonia identifies itself with NATO. It distinguishes that Estonia does not see itself as a bystander but part of the entire organization that does not divide members into individual entities. The sense of identity is further apparent in "we are a

¹²² President Toomas Hendrik Ilves Tartu rahu 95. aastapäeval 02.02.2015 Tartus Vanemuise kontserdimajas.

¹²³ Vabariigi President Euroopa päeva konverentsil "Eesti valikud ehk kuidas olla korraga eestlane, eurooplane ja maailmakodanik" 9.05.2018 Kersti Kaljulaid

¹²⁴ Vabariigi President Kaitseväe Ühendatud Õppeasutustes Tartus. 18.01.2010 Toomas Hendrik Ilves

completely European country with a passion for social security and caring for our people,” referring to being a European, and “This would probably be the biggest joint initiative we could take together because we are the European Union.”¹²⁵ The last sentence refers to being part of the EU, while the first sentence refers to a more abstract European identity. There is a slight difference between being a European and being in a European Union. Being European is an identity, similar to nationality, with a sense of pride that anyone can feel, regardless if they are living or are from somewhere else. But being in a European Union is a membership with obligations and borders. It is less abstract than European *per se* but indicates a multidimensional identification of Estonia to the EU and Europe. Thus, Estonia sees itself as a NATO and the EU, not only a member of these entities implicating a strong sense of common identity.

References to ‘other’ often appeared in texts, ‘others’ from ‘us.’ Some examples from the texts: “Yes, their linguistic and cultural background is very different from ours. True, at least the extreme and aggressive form of Islam conflicts with the Estonian way of life, values, and beliefs. Yes, terrorism is an indisputable risk to the security of any country.”¹²⁶ Here, the former president Toomas Hendrik Ilves differs from the ‘other’ whose values conflict with ours. But the ‘our’ and the last sentence of this segment indicate that radical Islam is the ‘other’ for every country globally, including Estonia. However, it is further apparent from the texts that neighboring Russia is also the ‘other.’ It is previously pointed out that Estonia sees itself as part of the west. The following statement indicates the conflict between two worlds: “Firstly, Putin blames the West for the collapse of the world order - as if it were our fault that the current rules no longer apply.” The statement illustrates the conflict between values and understanding and the change in the world order, which the ‘other’ is negligent in welcoming. This suggests that the ‘other’ is needed in order to define ‘us.’ The ‘other’ is usually a threat posed by someone whose values are not in line with the established norms in the established common identity.

These findings suggest that Estonia has developed a strong common identity with the European Union and NATO, sharing values and facing common issues against

¹²⁵ ÉNA kõrgemate riigiametnike täiendkursusel Prantsusmaal. 23.02.2019 Kersti Kaljulaid.

¹²⁶ Vabariigi President võidupühal 23. juunil 2016 Võrus. Toomas Hendrik Ilves

common ‘others.’ The strongest ‘others’ whose values and understandings conflict with the ‘west,’ is Islamic terrorism and Russian Federation. To protect the common, the acts of solidarity include respect and understanding and physically supporting those who are consumed by the ‘others’ against their will and values. Furthermore, ministerial statements indicate the application of measures that are meant to support the infrastructure and cooperation against the threat to protect the common values and way of life with its allies. The discussion under the ‘identity’ illustrated that Estonian leaders had expressed the presence of a common identity. The motivations to develop countermeasures based on the directives or regulations can be thus, linked to the existence of shared value space, in which these legal acts are based on solidarity and mutual understanding against ‘others’ that threaten the common identity. The common identity has laid a basis for the establishment of common security culture, in which states act to protect the shared space as a whole and not just separately.

4.3 Measuring the reference group theory in CT policy development

The following analysis is dedicated to the reference group theory independent variable of maintenance of membership. It is in this section’s interest to analyze the CT policy development through reference group theory by showing who are the reference groups for Estonia and whether they are the drivers of Estonian CT policy development.

References to ‘alliance’ were the most repeated in the analyzed texts. An example from the text: “As a responsible member of the international community, Estonia is aware of its responsibilities to do more globally,”¹²⁷ indicates accountability to others. It also means that Estonia has overtaken responsibilities that it did not have before joining the international community. As the organizations where Estonia has a membership (the EU and NATO) also have global agendas, it means that Estonia has adopted similar principles to those shared by these organizations. The hand-washes-hand principle can also be noted from: “Our participation in international coalitions

¹²⁷ Vabariigi President Riigikogus 10. septembril 2012. Toomas Hendrik Ilves

increases our security because those who help others can be sure that they will be helped if necessary.”¹²⁸ It again refers to the responsibilities that Estonia has overtaken from its memberships in international organizations. But, being part of them also satisfies Estonian security interests. Another, “We, who have regained our freedoms and human dignity, must support them, the freedom fighters of today, together with our like-minded allies. Being alone always means hopelessness, loss, and submission to a totalitarian regime.”¹²⁹ This statement suggests that Estonia also sees a responsibility to support its allies in the missions because belonging to those organizations has secured Estonia, and believe the alliance can also help struggling nations to gain independence and peace. Based on the texts, the responsibility to act can be tied to the norms the EU and NATO have established; thus, they can be regarded as *normative* reference groups.

References to ‘evaluation’ were also frequently used in the analysis of texts. An example of that is: “We must constantly strive for strengthening allied relations and Estonia's international position.”¹³⁰ This sentence indicates the internal assessment of how the country shall behave to maintain its relationships. A similar idea emerges further from: “Like Norway, Estonia also believes that it is not enough to be a member of NATO, but to be an active member. Be larger than necessary.”¹³¹ These statements demonstrate that Estonia is interested in maintaining and improving its position internationally. This means that Estonia has to stand out with its activity regarding security to maintain its membership and strengthen its relationship with its allies.

References to ‘checkpoint’ often appear from the presidential speeches. It is clear from the texts that joining NATO and the EU was the goal for Estonia for years before joining, “The goal we set immediately after the restoration of our independence was fulfilled,”¹³² indicating that gaining membership was a goal for Estonia. A further

¹²⁸ Vabariigi President Eesti Vabariigi 89. aastapäeval Vanemuise teatrisaalis Tartus 24. veebruaril 2007. Toomas Hendrik Ilves

¹²⁹ Kommunismi ja natsismi ohvrite mälestuspäeval Maarjamäel . 23.08.2020 Kersti Kaljulaid

¹³⁰ Vabariigi President Paju lahingu 100. aastapäeva tähistamisel Paju lahingu monumendi juures. 31.01.2019 Kersti Kaljulaid

¹³¹ Norra Rahvusvaheliste Suhete Instituudis. 15.10.2017 Kersti Kaljulaid

¹³² Vabariigi President tsiviilmissioonidel teeninute tänuüritusel välisministeeriumis. 18.06.2019 Kersti Kaljulaid

indication of Estonia seeing the membership as a goal that was fulfilled is “For 20 years, we have made great, clear and right choices that have set our place on the political map of the world - the rule of law, the European Union, NATO.”¹³³ This demonstrates that Estonia has been interested in pursuing the membership of the EU and NATO and is further interested in staying in the position as they provide a political and strategical backup for Estonian security politics. Thus, EU and NATO have been strong influencers on Estonian CT policy development as well.

References to ‘comparison’ can also be found from the texts. An example of comparison is: “we want to be as rich as Finland or Switzerland,”¹³⁴ comparing the financial aspect. Estonian leaders had further stated that even before the collapse of the USSR, Estonia wanted to be like and will continue to be like Finland.¹³⁵ Scandinavia, for its well-being, is still a reference group that Estonia is not a member *per se* but wants to belong there.¹³⁶ Estonia has further compared its position with Georgia in 2009 in the light of the Russian invasion. Regarding Georgia, Estonian president Ilves noted that it is unlikely that it will happen to Estonia because of the EU and NATO membership.¹³⁷ This means that Estonia has continuously compared itself to more or less successful states. However, becoming part of the EU and NATO helped Estonia to rise higher in the international arena. In addition, holding membership in these organizations has helped Estonia to feel more secured and become wealthier.

These findings suggest that the strongest reference groups for Estonia are NATO and the EU. Throughout the speeches, a common pattern emerged- membership of NATO and the EU is not only a fulfilled goal of Estonia, but the importance of maintaining and achieving a higher position in these entities is as essential. Estonian leaders recognize the vitality of keeping these memberships for the country’s security

¹³³ Vabariigi President konverentsil "Eesti kui väikeriik" Tallinnas 27. novembril 2013. Toomas Hendrik Ilves

¹³⁴ Vabariigi President Riigikogus 10. septembril 2012. Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

¹³⁵ Vabariigi President Soome Vabariigi 90. aastapäeva, Soome-Eesti kultuurilepingu sõlmimise 70. aastapäeva ning Tuglase seltsi asutamise 25. aastapäeva pidukoosolekul Tallinna Raekojas 22. novembril 2007

¹³⁶ Vabariigi President Võnnu lahingu aastapäeva tähistamisel Cēsises. 22.06.2019

¹³⁷ Vabariigi President Tartu rahulepingu 89. aastapäeva pidulikul kontsert-aktusel Estonia kontserdisaalis.

and feel the responsibility to participate in alliance-led activities. Estonia is seen as part of the chain in which it aspires to be a stronger unit by establishing good relationships and trust with its partners.

This approach can be further applied to the CT policy development- if everyone else in the group is implementing measures, Estonia has to do the same to not lose its partners' trust. One cannot deny the strong influence of the EU and NATO on Estonian security politics. Thus, they are also strong *normative* reference groups for establishing common responsibilities based on the norms in which Estonia compares and evaluates itself constantly. In return, Estonia expects a sense of security. Before joining NATO and the EU, it is possible that then, these two organizations were also comparative reference groups, but once becoming a member, they became more normative. Regarding the *multiple reference group*, Estonia has two strong reference groups- the EU and NATO- but their values and norms overlap; thus, there is no significant internal conflict regarding responsibilities.

A country can have multiple reference groups, whose characteristics can change over the years depending on the success of groups and the overall international situation. However, it is clear that Estonia has developed a strong common identity with its reference groups, and these reference groups have influenced Estonian overall policy-making. What refers to the presence of reference groups in CT policy adoption is the participation in international missions as prevention (NATO), adopting regulations, directives, guidelines, and suggestions to meet the Union's expectations. Thus, the *normative* reference groups can be responsible for the development of CT policies between 2005 and 2020. This logic is based on the assumption that if states change their behavior to fit reference groups, they will also adopt the common sense of threat based on the norms. In other words, if a member did not perceive terrorism as a threat before joining the group, then in the group, a member will adapt the threat perception. This can be seen from the statements that indicate that if anyone threatens the EU or NATO, they are also a threat to Estonia. Thus, any threat to the EU or NATO is a threat to Estonia, and holding a membership requires Estonia to carry out its responsibilities.

Based on the analysis, the variable of maintenance of membership suggests that the EU and NATO are strong normative reference groups and influence Estonian CT policy development. Based on these findings, Estonia has developed responsibilities

stemming from these groups' norms. In turn, the state also expects support and safety in return when carrying out these responsibilities. The development of CT policies is based on the evaluation and comparison with other member and non-member states to justify the responsibilities Estonia has overtaken.

5. Conclusion

While all three theories contribute to the discussion of CT policy development, the findings suggest that Estonian CT policy development between 2005 and 2020 can be explained by the reference group theory and constructivism. Rational choice theory regarding CT policy development was proven wrong in the means that the level of threat perception did not correlate with the adoption of CT policies, suggesting that Estonian CT policy development does not stem from the internally perceived levels of threat, and are, therefore, influenced by other sources.

Findings from constructivist explanation implicate the existence of a common identity, which influences policy development through shared values and issues. It is helpful to consider that shared values and common identity plays a role in constructing a common security culture by which countries feel the necessity to contribute for the reason of protecting the common identity. However, the reference group theory proves the strongest in explaining Estonian CT policy development for overtaking the responsibilities that are based on the established norms while also expecting something in return (e.g., protection). However, constructivism is helpful in considering the development of policies based on the common identity, but in contrast to reference group theory, it does not expect that parties may want to gain from the relationship. Since the findings indicate that Estonia is concerned with keeping its position and enhance security with the help of its membership in the EU and NATO, reference group theory is better in explaining why Estonia has been developing CT policies. Thus, Estonian CT policy development can be best explained through reference group theory, where Estonian CT policy development is explained by the need to maintain membership in its reference groups, adapting to its norms that shape Estonia's CT policy, and is willing to adjust its behavior because holding these memberships are beneficial to Estonian security and overall well-being.

As it was clear from the speeches, it is vital for Estonia to collaborate to survive, and being part of a like-minded group is the most beneficial. However, as the group's concerns and goals develop, it also develops new responsibilities that states adopt. Not adopting new changes may influence the state's international legitimacy and trust. It is in everyone's interest to secure themselves from external threats. Thus, the

terrorism threat brings many entities together, pressuring states to develop policies that may not be specifically driven by the internal threat perception but by the threat against common values and partners, in which carrying responsibility may be awarded with support and protection from other group members. In other words, actively developing policies that fit the standards of the group ensures the membership that, in turn, grants members protection and support through alliance.

These findings can potentially be applied to other states similar to Estonia- low-risk countries that are developing countermeasures. In a broader spectrum, it can be used to explain the influence of the EU and NATO on member states' policy development and to detect the impact of belonging to a group on domestic policymaking.

This study was focused on the explanations of a low-risk state developing CT-policies. As stated before, main studies have been done on the countries that experience terrorism and develop their methods accordingly. However, scholarly work lacks a systematic explanation of why some methods are developed and how development differs between low-risk and high-risk countries. There were a few case and comparative studies regarding Eastern and Northern Europe CT policy development; thus, this area is largely unexplored. To fulfill this gap, future studies could be done on Eastern and Northern Europe, as well as on the states who develop CT policies but are not experiencing terrorist attacks. Furthermore, to get a better picture of the CT policy development, future studies can also ask why some countermeasures that could be beneficial are not implemented. Regarding these suggestions, a comprehensive comparative study or further case studies on states can be conducted, strategically studying the implementation and actors' behavior regarding counterterrorism.

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