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**Learning From External Crisis: Changes in Estonia's Civil Protection Framework in
the Light of Russo-Ukrainian War**

MA thesis

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Authorship Declaration

I have prepared this thesis independently. All the views of other authors, as well as data from literary sources and elsewhere, have been cited.

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Abstract

For Ukraine, the war started in 2014, but only after the large-scale invasion by the Russian Federation did Estonia start to see the bigger picture and think about the protection of its own population within the civil protection framework. The civil protection framework of Estonia has changed due to the war in Ukraine. These changes are the awareness of citizens about the public bomb shelters, sirens, and the support of the internal security volunteers. In this thesis the policy learning framework is used to assess whether a policy change took place and if it was the result of a policy learning in a context of an external crisis. Policy learning does not occur from nowhere, therefore there are triggers that start the process. This study demonstrates that Russia's use of hybrid measures, what constituted an external crisis for Estonia, contributed to the emergence of policy learning and as a result policy change. The biggest change triggered by the external crisis was the comprehensive model for the evacuation as a part of the civil protection framework. It comprises of a system of notification such as sirens, guidance for evacuation, and safe structures for taking cover. In addition to the aforementioned aspects, the transition to Estonian-language education has also been a significant change as an effort to curb the spread of Russian propaganda. If Estonia was afraid to deal with the previous aspects before the Ukrainian war, expecting a response from the Russian Federation, the situation where the Russian Federation has significantly fewer resources to respond allows for new opportunities. All these factors suggest that the policy learning process has started in Estonia. The findings reveal that perceived as an external crisis, Russian use of hybrid measures in Ukraine triggered policy learning in the area of civil protection in Estonia.

Keywords: policy learning, policy change, civil protection framework, war in Ukraine, Russia's hybrid warfare measures, external crisis

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Introduction

A little before February 24, 2022, it was known that the Russian Federation had a plan to invade Ukraine. What was not known is how extensive the war would be. Putin's 3-day war turned into more than two years and counting of horror, genocide, and loss of hope for the Ukrainian people. Although no one can ever be fully prepared for war, it is ideal to learn from other's wins and failures without waiting for the actual hostilities to start. The central theme of this master's thesis is policy learning, which helps to understand how Estonian state structures adapt and what, if any, were the most important things that changed. The central focus of this study is civil protection where state institutions are important factors in the primary protection of the population. This means whether the population of Estonia is sufficiently aware of crisis management, bomb shelter locations, and various possibilities to sustain their primary needs to stay alive. This knowledge is of great importance when having Russia as a neighboring country. With the full-scale invasion Russia has revealed its plans about what kind of war they are waging, using the hybrid warfare measures to attack from a long distance. Russia is notorious for using the GRU (Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation) and the FSB (Federal Security Service) publicly, leaving traces and giving people something to talk about. They are using the infamous GRU Unit 29155 which purpose is to destabilize Europe and the GRU Unit 74455 of belligerent hackers. It just goes to show how Russia is not concerned about how the process will go, but cares more about the aftermath and the desired results. Still using the right tactics to minimize the damage caused by such activities could end up just like the full-scale invasion of Ukraine for Russia - a complete failure.

The morning of 24th of February 2022 was frightening for Estonian civilians. The reason being that the civil protection measures are far from satisfactory in case of an armed conflict. Two years ago, a situation arose where people started buying dry food, batteries, and canned goods, not knowing where to go in case of an attack. Public bomb shelters and sirens were not a topic of conversation until February 24th, 2022. Even though a lower intensity conflict in Ukraine has lasted for 10 years and its consequences have been much closer to Estonia than expected. Closer not geographically, but rather through sharing a common neighbor, who sees both as a part of its sphere of influence.

War affects the area where it is fought the most directly, but it also has an effect on the nations that are adjacent to the battle. This also holds true for the conflict in Ukraine, which has an impact well beyond its boundaries, particularly in nations where Russia is a source of concern. While the war had an impact in all states of the region, the impact varied, including how it impacted on civil protection frameworks of states in the region. For example, Estonia's

neighbors have very different approaches to begin with and very different challenges emerging from it. Finland's policy of neutrality meant that in case of Soviet or late Russian aggression it had to formally rely on its own and hope that there are willing parties to intervene. Finland established its own civil defense system which involves a network of shelters among other things. The Baltic states however have a very different past. Since 2004 when Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined NATO, much of the security structure was based on the hope that the membership in its own right is a sufficient deterrent towards any possible Russian aggression. Testament to this approach is that Latvia and Lithuania gave up conscription and replaced it with a small professional army.

According to the 10.01.2024 press release of the Latvian Ministry of Interior titled "The State Civil Protection Plan is updated" the new revised plan entails information on "the controlled evacuation and relocation of mass populations in the event of a military invasion, disaster or threat thereof, guidelines for the establishment of an evacuation point and the identification of assembly areas in the event of an evacuation" (Latvian Ministry of the Interior, 2024). The updates are based upon State Audit Office compliance report as well as based on lessons learned through a civil crisis response exercise. As reported by Public Broadcasting of Latvia LSM, there has been mapping of possible shelters out of which most date to Interwar period of Soviet era. However, as of the beginning of 2024 the Latvian municipalities were still mapping the options and the government has envisioned laying down standards for the shelters and by establishing the standards to additionally count the possible cost of updating the existing and building new shelters. (Public Broadcasting of Latvia, 2024) Although reactions are to be expected, it is unknown how much or what kind of changes nations in close proximity have made. The military and defense aspects receive the most attention of how states in the Baltic region have responded to Russia's aggression, whereas the civil protection aspect receives far less attention.

Policy learning and policy change are of great importance in this thesis. It would likely cause further problems for Estonia if it chose to remain passive about changing its policies considering an open and aggressive military campaign towards Ukraine. It takes time to develop and implement new policies. The war in Ukraine caused a heightened sense of security risks both by the government apparatus and the public, i.e., the electorate. This means that the public is more likely to have a demand for such a policy. If people see massive apartment buildings bombed and reduced to rubble, then it raises a very justified question of where one would go, if it were to take place in Estonia. Aggressive propaganda assaults towards Ukraine and spreading of different narratives about the conflict confirm that Estonia has to take

preventative measures if similar events were to unfold here. The election cycle started around the same time the war started. All those issues quite predictably turned up in public debate and in hindsight the war in Ukraine was one of the key issues of the election despite very rapid inflation and a spike in energy prices. It is also a unique opportunity to take measures that three years ago would have caused a very strong reaction from the Russian Federation. Since the Russian Federation's priorities are connected with "the special military operation" Estonia has more freedom to enact policies or to a greater extent that would have been possible.

The topics of civil protection and policy learning in Estonia have been relevant since February 2022. Firstly, because of the war in Ukraine but secondly, state began to deal with civil protection again.

To complete this study, the research question must be answered. This thesis seeks to answer the research question as follows:

What effect does the use of hybrid measures by Russia against Ukraine have on Estonia's civil protection framework?

To answer the research question, the author carried out a single case study of Estonia's civil protection framework in the time period 2022-2024. Estonia was chosen to be the single case in this work. In this stage a lot of sources that indicate learning and are available only Estonian. The situation is the same about Latvia and Lithuania that are in a comparable situation. Therefore, to avoid possible confusion in finding and translating the originals and misinterpretation of the domestic political context, only Estonia was chosen. It needs to be established how the conflict has affected the civil protection systems of neighboring nations and, more especially, if it has resulted in policy learning - the updating of preexisting frameworks considering the conflict. In terms of theoretical framework, the study relies on the policy learning framework. The policy learning framework provides an account of how crises can trigger learning, in this instance, how Russia's use of hybrid measures, as it represented an external crisis for Estonia, triggered policy learning, in the form of changes in Estonia's civil protection framework.

An important part of this work is hybrid warfare measures and their use by Russia in Ukraine. The use of hybrid warfare measures in Ukraine is understood in this study as an external crisis from the point of view of Estonia. External crisis has characteristics which are measurable through the measures of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine. This study is done by

going in the policy learning framework. This explains how an external crisis, like war in Ukraine, triggers policy learning.

Based on the policy learning framework and policy learning literature, this study anticipates that an external crisis, like the use of hybrid warfare tactics in Ukraine, will lead to policy learning and, consequently, a modification of Estonia's civil protection framework. The hypothesis of the study is that the occurrence of an external crisis in the form of Russian aggression leads to policy learning in Estonia's framework for civil protection.

To understand the amount of policy learning that took place in Estonia, this study examines the changes in Estonian civil protection framework after analyzing several official government documents, press releases of various ministries, law drafts of the Estonian Parliament and Estonia's State Journal. By doing so one can observe the changes that Estonia's civil protection framework went through. The war in Ukraine started an avalanche of changes, which has not been done before February 24th, 2022, to avoid being the provocateur to the Russian Federation. This war will forever leave a mark in Estonia as it was too close to home, Estonia having to adapt quickly to new changes and policy learning in order to protect its citizens. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is an event through which Estonia can learn and which imparts knowledge and awareness.

This work is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, the author introduces the theoretical framework and explains with examples what policy learning and policy learning framework are. The author discusses triggers of policy learning, including internal triggers. It is especially important to view policy learning as a response to an external crisis. Second chapter deals with explaining civil protection. Third chapter gives an overview of the methodology used in this work. It includes the research design, case selection, operationalization of the main variables, data, and methods of analysis. Fourth chapter provides insights into Russia's use of hybrid measures in Ukraine as an external crisis for Estonia, and changes in Estonia's civil protection framework as policy learning triggered by this external crisis.

1. Theoretical Framework: Policy Learning as a Response to External Crisis

In this chapter, the author explains why policy learning is the most appropriate theoretical framework for the subject. The author provides an overview about the theoretical framework of policy learning and how it applies to the given subject, as well as how policy learning and policy change occurs after an external crisis.

Policy learning as a framework has been growing its popularity. Dunlop and Radaelli (2018) discussed policy learning suitable for a framework on its own. The answer is yes, but, not surprisingly, the framework has limitations. Dunlop and Radaelli (2018) conclude their findings and argue that it is hard to find a “causal relation between learning and change”. Learning is best measured if there is a change.

1.1 Policy Learning

This chapter focuses on the literature about policy learning, different frameworks other scholars have used and conceptualizes policy learning just as it is and in a context of an external crisis. Jack S. Levy defines learning as “a change of beliefs or the development of new beliefs, skills, or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience” (Levy, 1994). Since policy formulation can have very important outcomes to all interested parties down to every citizen it comes as no surprise that the area has been well studied. As noted by Heikkila and Gerlak most theories that try to explain policy formation like Advocacy Coalition Framework, institutional change, policy diffusion and policy transfer contain all the same element - learning (Heikkila, Gerlak, 2013: 484). On the other hand, the various context where learning takes place make it harder to define. As Heikkila and Gerlak point out it is easier to define what is not learning as learning does not involve mimicry or copying. The latter in turn can be a source for policy change. But learning in turn does not need to end up in policy change as policy failure can equally provide learning opportunities. As Bennett and Howlett (1992: 278) in their article about the lessons of learning pointed out, it is important to recognize who the learners are. As Levy points out that policy learning does not always end up as policy change and only learning is not sufficient for policy change. According to him learning may occur, but the political situation might not be right to implement the results of learning (Levy, 1994: 290).

Policy learning, in the context after an external crisis, usually means that society waits for a change. The more classical definition of learning is by Dunlop and Radaelli “updating knowledge and beliefs about policy and learning from others” (Dunlop, Radaelli, 2013). This means that people modify their knowledge considering new data. When confronted with new information, viewpoints, or insights, it often leads to revising preexisting concepts or understandings. While knowledge can be based on facts, belief is subjective. In a more scientific way, Frömer and Nassar explain that “people use beliefs about the world and the consequences of their own actions to shape their own behavior and update these beliefs according to continuous stream of experience” (Frömer, Nassar, 2023: 3). Lindberg in

“Knowledge and Policy Change” points out the concept of learning, being “most likely one of the most widely acknowledged factors that shape policy and policy processes” (2013: 1). At the same time Lindberg (2013: 1) discusses the importance of knowledge in policy change. According to him “political processes and policy change cannot be understood if you exclude the concepts of knowledge and learning as explanations” (Lindberg, 2013: 1).

Dunlop and Radaelli (2018: 257) in their work “The lessons of policy learning: types, triggers, hindrances and pathologies” discuss the randomness of policy learning, more precisely the lack of randomness: „learning may be unintentional, but it does not occur randomly – not all policy processes carry the same probability of producing learning outcomes“. Many events and crisis lead to policy change rather than policy learning. Even though learning after a crisis would be an ideal outcome, there is no certainty that a crisis automatically leads to change or learning. In this chapter the author discusses how one comes to the learning in response to an external event, the conditions that need to be observed and policy change.

There are also several limitations of policy learning. Ideas have two contradictory forces on politics. One is their relative stability of ideas in imposing inertia on decision-making. The other is a dynamism of ideas in how ideas are collected, selected, assembled, arranged, and then communicated, advocated, or abandoned. These stable and dynamic forces can influence policymaking and need to be incorporated temporally in the analysis of public policies (Dunlop, 2013; Sabatier, 1993). Policy change as a result could equally likely result from different ambitions of political actors, lobbying and external factors like the European Union or NATO policies. The beliefs could already exist without learning but only a sudden change of events could make implementing them possible as pointed out by Levy (Levy, 1994: 290). Individual learning does not always translate into collective learning and the learner's views could be influenced by path dependency. Thus, external crisis can cause policy change, but it needs to be established separately whether it was a result of learning or if it just provided an opportunity to act on already existing beliefs. Equally the opposite is possible, there could be learning without policy change, or the policy change is limited due to other reasons such as limited resources or lack of consensus. This distinction is important for this paper because first the timeframe of the events makes it difficult to assess whether policy learning has taken place but the expected constraints of funds and a need for consensus have delayed the formulation and implementation policies. This is often tied to events outside the realm of the external crisis and are referred to only when necessary. As Levy explains "if we study only learning that is followed by policy change, we cannot understand when individual learning gets translated into policy and when learning gets blocked by institutional or political constraints" (Levy, 1994:

290).

In conclusion, this study focuses on key elements of learning that requires a change in knowledge and beliefs as opposed to finding the most suitable definition. However, its scope is limited to external crisis that trigger learning. Since an external crisis by its definition is taking place somewhere else the amount of data and first-hand experience could vary greatly. It is also often the case that various actors try to portray the events in a way that suits best their interests. This means that the information they present does not need to be false, but it is likely to be selected. It also depends on what the learner knew before hand of the context of the crisis, how familiar is the learner with background and what is their interest in the outcomes. Cultural, historic and geographic proximity means that learning requires less “context” and the learner has more background information. An external crisis is a very holistic term, and it could activate many different actors or give new relevance to political ideas and those currents need not be linear and be of the same relevance in the given time and space. Thus, it is important to know what the possible triggers for learning could be.

1.2 Triggers for Policy Learning

„When learning ‘works’, it is because of some triggers that are activated [...], learning does not just ‘happen’“(Dunlop, Radaelli, 2018: 263). The first question this chapter addresses is of course where the triggers for learning originate from and how does it trigger learning in a specific actor. Thus, this paper first identifies the types of triggers or factors. Theoretical literature about policy learning has identified different triggers that can originate from previous failures, resource constraints, new information, advocacy and decline of functionality. It is not an exhaustive list, but these triggers have been often identified as the most prominent factors that cause policy learning. This is not an exhaustive manner how to differentiate different triggers. The context of international relations allows to categorize the triggers as internal or external. These are triggers inside a country and triggers from outside the country. These different categorizations do not mutually exclude but rather compensate each other depending on the context. Finally, this chapter addresses how they trigger policy learning.

The concept of failure of policies as a trigger is not a complicated one at the first glance. The failure of a policy should be a clear indication to search for input or to take over a whole new policy. However, defining failure and its causes can be problematic as pointed out by Bovens and 't Hart (2016: 654): "the analysis of policy failures is, by definition, not a neutral endeavor, since policy fiascos are not neutral events". Failure is therefore quite often an

assessment, or a label applied by observers. The way a policy is perceived can be manipulated by different interested parties giving minor failures a very strongly emotionally loaded context. Moreover, it is not always the policy but rather its design and implementation that eventually lead to a failure. Thus, the policy could make sense and could solve the problems it is meant to tackle, but because of the attached stigma it has lost its credibility. The direction of public debate and the public level of tolerance towards failures in particular field can equally vary. Bovens and 't Hart note that big policy failures are seldom a trigger for big policy learning, although they have the potential for it and policy analysts can help by creating a knowledge base for future policy makers by documenting what went wrong. (2016: 662)

Another trigger born out of necessity is resource constraints, which are unsurprisingly the most discussed in the business framework. Chen and Shen identify financial and knowledge constraints (Chen, Shen, 2023: 173). The financial constraints come from the fact that economy tends to function in cycles where stable growth ends in a crisis. Either decreasing tax revenue or wage pressure can lead to a situation of resource constraint. In times of economic hardship, the public tends to rely more on state services and the companies and other enterprises increasingly look towards the governing bodies to limit the potential damage. Evidently there is a pressure for a policy change but as noted before policy change does not equate to policy learning. Since these issues need urgent address the time limits direct to a search of best practices. OECD, for example, issued a whole handbook about lessons learned in the educational system for policy makers in 2020 during the Covid 19 crisis (OECD, 2020). The mere copying of policies is hampered by the context itself, on one hand that is the resources are not sufficient to just simply take over a solution. Furthermore, the additional administrative burden does not allow for a complete reorganization. However, learning can help prioritize certain activities while reducing costs on others.

Decline of functionality can be a result of resource constraint but is not limited to it. Decline of functionality can be equally caused by rigidness of systems or solutions that do not correspond to modern solutions. As Debre and Dijkstra pointed out in the context of international organizations the decline in functionality may result in influential member states leaving or on the contrary their mandates increasing while their funding remains relatively unchanged (Debre, Dijkstra, 2022) The latter is a fine example of decline of functionality in extended capacity because of resource constraints. But the focus is which of the two ultimately triggers learning. And unsurprisingly if there is a solution that allows for the increase of functionality without a proportional increase in costs, the former is preferred. But policy learning does not have to be rooted into dire necessity.

Advocacy involves activities to influence public policy. But advocacy as a trigger for learning relies in interested groups arguing in favor of their preferred policy by presenting their views, statistics, best practices.

The literature (Dunlop, Radaelli, 2018: 263) has also identified advocacy as a trigger for policy learning. The best-known form of advocacy is lobbying (Schipporeit, 2021: 78), which can but not always is detrimental to the public interest. Aside from established lobby groups many NGO-s and public interest groups are involved in lobbying as well. Advocacy is just one possible way of learning, but this of course is very dependent on the particular field and even more so on the different advocacy groups. Mere lobbying and any decision as a result do not mean that learning took place, however. On the other hand, an advocacy group may bring new completely new solutions, and, in many cases, different interest groups may be networked globally. Access to power brokers is another issue. External and internal security are much less accessible than environmental issues due to the limited availability of information and state plans. State security involves fewer grass-roots actors and more think tanks and enterprises. In Estonia the revolving door effect has been also noticeable with many leading figures in the army opting for work in military related enterprises (e.g., former heads of the Estonian Defense Forces Riho Terras and Martin Herem, former head of the 1st Division Veiko Vello Palm).

Central to the Advocacy Coalition Framework scholarship is the study of how allies and opponents coordinate their political behavior in advocacy coalitions based on shared beliefs (Sato, Gronow, Ylä-Anttila, 2021). Brokerage is important in Advocacy Coalition Framework and scholars have emphasized that brokerage between advocacy coalitions may define policy outcomes when two or more coalitions compete (Ingold, Varone, 2012). Brokers can be disinterested observers or can lean towards one or the other coalition. In more abstract terms, brokerage is a relation in which one actor mediates two other actors who are not directly linked (Fernandez, Gould, 1994: 1457).

The internal triggers come from within the system where learning is or is supposed to take place and the external triggers as an opposite come from the outside. An external trigger can originate from within the same country or from the outside country, organization, or an interest group. It is equally possible that it could be a combination of both or triggers from the outside can activate triggers within the country. As is discussed above, advocacy can cross borders based on shared interests or an interested party can access the services of a local lobby group for hire.

1.3 Policy Learning in Response to a (External) Crisis

Besides these internal triggers, there are also external triggers. As stated by Dunlop and Radaelli (2018: 257), „policy learning is about how knowledge that comes from these experiences, analysis and social interaction is considered and acted upon by policy actors“. This means that learning has taken place and as a result some change will occur. The urgency created by the time of crisis can overcome the otherwise normal inertia and resistance to change. In times of crisis, political learning that normally proceeds more slowly, may speed dramatically. (Stern 2008: 292) External crises happen outside the state but must have impact for the learning to be present, in order to work as a trigger. Experience in this context is indirect as Estonia is not a direct party of the hostilities despite giving financial and military aid to Ukraine. On the other hand, Estonian policy makers follow the events in Ukraine closely as they can have serious impacts on the state and regional security on the whole. Thus, it is the time and place where state institutions and policy actors can also learn from Ukraine. Although some of the challenges and problems were known before the invasion, policy was changed, and a policy learning occurred only after the invasion started.

Nohrstedt and Weible (2010: 3) conceptualize crises as “essential causal drivers for major or non-incremental policy change“. Nohrstedt and Weible (2010: 5) also define crises as “periods of disorder”. In those “periods of disorder” harmful events can occur (Nohrstedt, Weible, 2010: 5). When discussing the topic of crises, one must make clear the categories of the crises. Boin, McConnell and ‘tHart (2008: 3) in their work “Governing after crisis” differentiates between a community that the crisis has affected and some members of the community whom the crisis affects. In this work the author is using the same terms to give examples of different types of crises. Those are creeping crises, the ones that affect the whole community, e.g., wars, earthquakes, tsunamis, hunger, pandemic, climate crisis. Examples of crises that affect only some parts of the community are corruption, terrorism, and human trafficking.

Crises have certain characteristics. An external crisis can vary by its impact as even an armed conflict could have isolated influence. The Russian Federation has both the means and prior experience of trying to overwhelm not only the opposing military, but the civil state and the society as a whole. This exemplified by their military targeting of civilian infrastructure to demolish the morale of the civilian population without a direct military goal. An armed conflict or indeed a war is much easier to define than hybrid warfare, especially when it is between state actors. Hybrid warfare measures are usually employed or by the minimum favorable conditions have been created to apply them sometimes even before the actual military

confrontation has begun. The hybrid warfare elements could thus exist independently, and they do not require an active military operations. However, in this stage their influence is either more limited or of a shorter time span. In that case the hybrid measures might not have the effect for them to be recognized as a crisis. When the hybrid measures are used concurrently with the armed force there are fewer restrictions since possible negative outside influences like sanctions are generally expected. The use of kinetic force means that there are more capacities to suppress possible countermeasures to hybrid warfare means, thereby multiplying their effect. With the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the more popular term *hybrid warfare* began to be used. Hoffman defined hybrid warfare as follows: “a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder“ (Hoffman, 2007: 8). Hoffman’s definition captures the diversity of hybrid measures, but it is limited in its scope, thus in this paper will be used another definition in comparison to Hoffman’s by NATO members at the Transformation Seminar in 2015. Their definition is “Hybrid warfare and its supporting tactics can include broad, complex, adaptive, opportunistic, and often integrated combinations of conventional and unconventional methods. These activities can be overt or covert, involving military, paramilitary, organized criminal networks, and civilian actors across all elements of power“ (NATO Transformation Seminar, 2015: 5). When defining hybrid warfare, it needs to be taken into consideration that everyone may interpret it differently. Wither (2016: 74) in his article “Making Sense of Hybrid Warfare” said “The way the term is defined may determine how states perceive and respond to hybrid threats and which government agencies are involved in countering them.“ Wither then defined hybrid warfare as “the concurrent use of both conventional and irregular forces in the same military campaign“ (Wither, 2016: 74). „The word hybrid is catchy, since it may represent a mix of anything“ (Bērziņš, 2015) exemplifying how the nature of the definitions leave room for very broad interpretations. What are hybrid warfare measures anyway? In this chapter, the author dwells more on the measures of hybrid warfare and their use. The Military Balance (2015) gives an overview of the hybrid warfare measures: first and foremost, the use of military and non-military means in combined operations, intended to carry out a surprise attack. Then the usage of the diplomatic means by gaining the psychological and physical benefits. Well known Russia’s cyberattacks with advanced and rapid information and undercover operations with the intelligence units. Lastly, economic pressure, which if successful denies the opponent resources to continue fighting. Since Russia’s use of hybrid measures in neighboring countries can represent an external crisis for Estonia, the presence of such measures in Ukraine will be

assessed in order to determine whether a crisis in this sense was present. Hybrid measures are used in parallel with military measures. Russia's military doctrine of war stipulates that the enemy will be harmed in any way. Every measure of hybrid war does not constitute a crisis, but if there is a full-scale armed conflict between countries and hybrid measures are used as part of this conflict, then there is a basis to talk about an external crisis. This indicates that learning can be triggered by external events, such as the use of hybrid measures by Russia against Ukraine, if Estonia perceives it as a “crisis”. Considering the aforementioned, the use of hybrid measures by Russia against Ukraine is likely to trigger learning in Estonia’s civil protection framework. As Stern (2008: 292) above described, during the crisis policy learning will happen faster than in peacetime. This in mind, learning in the civil protection framework in Estonia is expected.

In figure 1 it is seen the range of operations from less violent intelligence operations and cyberattacks to very violent, conventional warfare operations (Crowther, 2021: 23).



Source: Crowther, Hybrid Warfare, 2021: 23

Figure 1. Russian hybrid operations.

2. Civil Protection

Besides policy learning and external crises, another crucial concept for this study is civil protection – as the policy area of potential learning it is interested in. Civil defense and civil protection are sometimes used as synonyms since the difference in meaning can be difficult to distinguish. Civil defense is in a broad sense a non-military defensive action and in a narrower sense the protection of civilians during a war. This definition is often used in the context of the concept of total defense. Civil protection in turn encompasses measures to protect the populace from catastrophes and human caused disasters during peacetime (Levinson, 2008: 416–417). Contemporary concepts of the protection of the populace involve both civil defense and civil protection. The latter tends to be more effective since it relies on the resources and cooperation of peace time structures (Molitor, 2022: 67–68). According to the Estonian Rescue Board, “the purpose of civil protection is to support the population in a crisis situation, including in the case of war, and to increase the preparedness of the population for coping independently in crisis.” According to EUR-Lex, “civil protection is the protection of people, the environment and property against all kinds of natural and human-induced disasters. Along with the deployment of forces and equipment in response to an emergency, it also involves the planning and preparation for such events. This includes carrying out risk assessments and agreeing on protection and rescue plans and procedures.” The Estonian National Defense Act that entered into force on the 01.01.2016 defines national defense in Article 2 section 1 as follows: “The purpose of national defense is to preserve the independence and sovereignty of the state of Estonia, the inseparable and indivisible integrity of its land, territorial waters and airspace and the constitutional order.” Thus, there is no explicit mention of civil defense. Civil protection is separately regulated in the Emergency Act which does not offer a definition of civil protection itself. It can be deducted from the definition of an emergency according to article 2 section 1 which states that “an emergency is an event or a chain of events or an interruption of a vital service which endangers the life or health of many people, causes major proprietary damage, major environmental damage or severe and extensive interferences with the continuity of vital services and resolution of which requires the prompt coordinated activities of several authorities or persons involved in them, the application of a command organization different from usual and the involvement of more persons and means than usual.” This chapter focuses on the concept of civil protection and how it is defined in the Estonian context.

State Chancellery and the Ministry of the Interior (2018: 7) state that “Civil protection is a system of measures intended to protect the population during emergency situations or from threats against national security or the constitutional order.” The definition is stated to rely on

the broad concept of civil protection that is based on the preparedness of the individual through education and the improvement of defensive measures by the local municipal governments. The onus of civil protection is on protecting the lives and health of the population.

To better understand the concept of civil defense, one must break it down into pieces. Civil defense consists of evacuation, sheltering, preparedness for crisis situations, a warning system and messages and disaster medicine (Estonian Rescue Board). Evacuation, or in other words crisis relocation “indicates an actual or potentially dangerous situation” (Quarantelli, 1980: 8). Thus, meaning if there is no evacuation the situation is not a danger to life.

According to Hans Jr. and Sell (1974: 2-3) in their work “Evacuation risks – an evaluation” there are two types of evacuations. First one being the evacuation from outdoor to indoor, in the case of this work the indoor evacuation is the public bomb shelter. The other type of evacuation is “to move persons outside the boundaries of the potentially affected geographical area.” Vogt and Sorensen (1992: 3) in their study about evacuation describe the evacuation concept as “the withdrawal actions of persons from a specific area because of a real or anticipated threat or hazard.”

Shelters provide physical protection in case of emergency or during time of conflict in the densely populated areas. There are three types of shelters based on their function. First type is first class shelters that are made for protecting against weapons, chemicals, radiation, and blast waves and are built underground. Second class shelters, also called public shelters are against weapons without the atomic or chemical component in them. These shelters can be basements or other rooms that do not have any windows. Third class shelters being the family shelters protect against the blast waves from standard weapons and can be at ground floors (Shakibamanesh, 2015: 4-5). For public bomb shelters to work accordingly their location needs to be correct. This means public bomb shelters are built either underground or on the surface and ground floor.

Possibilities for the state to warn the population in case of emergency include the use of social media, warning messages, sirens. Where possible loudspeakers are used, and citizens are notified by door-to-door (Estonian Rescue Board, 2023). Estonian Rescue Board is informing Estonian citizens on the preparedness for the crisis situations by giving information in bulletins and web pages like “Ole valmis!” (Be ready!).

After establishing important elements of civil protection, it is important to assess whether civil protection in Estonia is sufficient to deter possible hybrid attacks. This in turn helps to establish whether there is a need for learning and what could be the possible triggers. Already in 2018, the National Audit Office concluded in the public summary of the report on

Government's activity upon preparing for emergencies endangering internal security that "preparedness for emergencies endangering internal security is not ensured systematically in the state. Too much working time is spent on analyzing the risks of events endangering internal security, but the measures for alleviating risks are not implemented systematically. As such, authorities responsible for resolving emergencies lack information on which risks have been alleviated and which have not." This audit highlights the importance for learning not only on the policy level but also on the implementation level.

Estonia has overlooked civil protection in a possible military offensive scenario for the last 30 years. "Preparedness depends on the ability to foresee events and to organize defenses against them" (Alexander, 2021: 5). Despite numerous instances where the Russian Federation has invaded its neighbors such as Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, Estonia seems to have relied on collective defense in the framework of NATO. As discussed below certain civil protection measures when created from zero can be expensive and take a long time to implement. According to Alexander, short-term kind of preparedness includes emergency planning and evacuation (Alexander, 2021: 5). Since 2022 the preparedness has been short-term, being more of an organizational kind. Although, having the Russian Federation as a neighboring country and knowing the behavior and history of this country, civil defense should have been much more of a priority in Estonia.

Part of policy learning is to establish the options available. The Ukrainian experience can thus be an opportunity to prioritize and make sure that the effort with available means provides the maximum protection to the civil populace. Thus, there are options that should be considered. Firstly, creating notification systems so that people are aware that there is any danger at all. Today it would be done through communication channels or public information. These can be sirens, news outlets or EE-Alarm messages. Second important thing is to create emergency reserves, in the case of an event with many victims, first aid equipment, water, fuel and other necessities must be distributed. The consumption and likely cost of these items will increase significantly if there is a sharp rise in demand. The National Audit Office published a report on the preparedness to comply with the national defense action plan and because of said audit many institutions do not fully understand how the Estonian Stockpiling Agency in case of the crisis works. The task is not to create reserves for state institutions to perform national defense tasks but instead they should be created based on the Emergency Act for the purpose of security of supply for the population. (National Audit Office, 2023: 2-3) Third important task is to create and implement a continuity plan. It is a document that lists actions to restore service if an outage occurs (Riigikantselei, 2022: 39). It should have the critical information on

how the state institutions should work and function in case of a crisis or an emergency and should answer the questions about resources and infrastructure. Fourth important topic is physical protection, or in other words bomb shelters. This goes with the second point and the Estonian Stockpiling Agency, but also ensuring any other emergency supplies are available in the shelters. There are places of refuge in Estonia, but a bomb shelter is a special facility that can withstand impact and where there are no openings for fragments and shock waves to enter. This would be at least second-class shelter according to Shakibamanesh.

This chapter focused on the civil protection, an essential policy area for potential learning. Concept of civil protection involve both, the civil defense and civil protection. Civil protection in Estonia is aimed to assist the populace in the crisis situations by increasing their preparedness and knowledge on how to handle the crisis independently. Civil protection involves sheltering, evacuation, warning systems, disaster medicine, as well as preparedness for crisis situations. The Estonian Rescue Board is using sirens, warning messages, social media, loudspeakers, and door-to-door notifications in order to inform the citizens in case of an emergency.

3. Methodology

In this chapter the author discusses the research design with the case selection of this study. Primarily, the author describes the suitability and importance of the case selection. By doing so, one can improve the understanding on why this research was written on Estonia's policy learning and the state structures. The chapter also focuses on the part of operationalization of the variables in this research. The author firstly introduces the main variables used in this work, following with the definition and a measurement. The methodology chapter ends with two parts – the data, where author explains the primary sources, and as the last part methods of analysis, where author analyzes ways and approaches of the study.

3.1 Research Design

In order to do this research, a single case study is most suitable. This research design was chosen to “gain an in-depth understanding of complex organizational phenomena” (Ozcan, Han, Graebner, 2018: 3). The biggest difference between a single case study and a multiple case study is that one case – one experimentation (Rowley, 2002: 21). A single case study includes only one unit of research. Single case study has a characteristic, and it is the measurement of the variable. Follette (2001) in their work „Single-case Experimental Designs in Clinical Settings“ that as a rule „the data from single-case designs are analyzed by visual

inspection of graphs” (Follette, 2001). All characteristics of a single case study goes to show that it is the most suitable research design for this study. As in this work, the change in the Estonian civil protection framework after the war in Ukraine in February 2022 and after that, is investigated. The way in which Estonia’s civil protection framework has been affected by the war and, more specifically, by Russia’s use of hybrid measures in Ukraine is a particular insightful case to study effect of policy learning because there are urgent needs for changes. Estonia is particularly vulnerable to Russian hybrid threats, hence likely to see learning here. The Russians have been aware of Estonia's capabilities since the time of the USSR - roads, railways, gas pipelines, ports. Many people live in Estonia who follow Russian propaganda. In addition, Estonia is a small state, contributing to flexibility, making learning likely. This makes Estonia a particularly good case to study learning and how states adapt their civil protection frameworks in response to an external crisis.

3.2 Case Selection

The case of Estonia’s civil protection policy as a response to the War in Ukraine war is well suited for studying how an external crisis reverberated “triggered learning” in the form of a change of civil protection framework. Especially as an example of another independent state among others of the post-soviet states in the region in relation to their responses in terms of civil protection. The events in Ukraine are most likely to trigger learning in neighboring states because implications are most felt there or most likely to learn with a view on the event because perceived risk for similar threats is highest.

Single case study being Estonia was chosen because of the similarities between Estonia and Ukraine. Estonia and Ukraine are more comparable – both have a border with Russia, Estonia and Ukraine have been part of the Russian Empire, Russian-speaking minority is in both countries. This means Estonian decision-makers likely to perceive this similarity and to feel inclined to learn and adjust policies in the light of the events in Ukraine. In this stage of development of civil protection framework a lot of sources that indicate learning and are available only Estonian. The situation is the same about Latvia and Lithuania that are in a comparable situation. Therefore, to avoid possible confusion in finding and translating the originals and misinterpretation of the domestic political context, only Estonia was chosen.

Ukraine not being in NATO and the EU impacts whether and how Estonia draws lessons from Ukraine. Both try and implement common policy to varying degrees of success. This on the other hand may constrain or alter the complete adaptation of lessons learned from Ukraine. More so the spatial interdependence - e.g., energy policy is constrained and influenced by the

decisions and existing/planned infrastructure of our neighboring state participants in the common electricity and natural gas market. Estonia was chosen because Estonia could potentially be interested in "learning" since it's a neighboring country with Russia and because of the historical reasons.

The Estonian Ministry of the Interior completed an analysis of Estonia's civil protection in 2013. The purpose of the analysis was that the Estonian Rescue Board and the Ministry of the Interior of Estonia are working for the protection of the people in case of a crisis or an emergency (Tross, 2023:153). After the annexation of Crimea in 2014 civil protection policy was renewed, but it got fully funded after the war in Ukraine in 2022. In 2022 and in 2023 93 million euros were allocated by the government to make the civil protection in Estonia more efficient. Estonian Ministry of the Interior and Estonian Rescue Board had the most problems with the population awareness, communication, public bomb shelters, mass evacuation, provision of critical services and the preparedness for the war. Most important in the civil protection is that people are ready and are capable of coping independently in crises. (Tross, 2023: 157) That is why the population awareness done by the Rescue Board is very important. Lack of knowledge is dangerous in a tense situation during the crisis.

According to the Republic of Estonia Government Office and the Ministry of the Interior in their work about civil protection the main values of the civil protection are the right to life and the right to health protection (Riigikantselei, Siseministerium, 2018: 7). There are three different approaches to modern day civil protection. First one is the closest to the civil protection's core value that is the people-centered approach where the provision of basic needs and protection against danger are the most important components. Basic needs include drinkable water, information, food, warm shelter, hygiene, medicine, and safety. Second approach is called whole-of- society approach where every member of society contributes to the prevention of crises. These members of society are families, community, voluntary organizations, local government units, the media, education system, businesses, national institutions, foreign partners, and international organizations. All of them are involved in civil protection and should work together in case of an emergency or a crisis. Third approach is all-risk approach is about the general preparedness for different crisis situations. This includes protective measures like warning the people in case of a danger, evacuation, provide basic needs and create supplies. (Riigikantselei, Siseministerium, 2018: 8-12)

3.3 Operationalization

This research has two main variables – occurrence of external crisis and policy learning. External crisis in the form of Russia’s use of hybrid warfare measures against Ukraine and policy learning as improvements in the civil protection framework in response to the use of hybrid measures in Ukraine. This part explains the observation of whether an external crisis was present or not. Occurrence of an external crisis is the independent variable in this research which will be operationalized in this chapter. By using different vocabulary, the outcome of the conceptualization will differ. In this context the author uses external crises or external events, and Nohrstedt and Weible (2010: 5) refer to them as “broader processes of societal and/or political development without any analytical attention being paid to actors’ reactions to these events“.

In order to determine the presence of an external crisis, the study analyzes the use of hybrid measures by Russia, to the extent it occurred, representing an external crisis for Estonia. Those are, for instance, military exercises and cyberattacks. It is important to measure the aforementioned indicators from the Estonian point of view. It is expected for policy actors and state institutions to learn after an external or internal crisis. Russia has been using the hybrid warfare measures in the war with Ukraine, one of these measures is the organization of two large military exercises before the start of the war. This is one of the indicators for measuring the presence of an external crisis, as perceived by the Estonian policymakers. As well as are the Russian cyberattacks and the Russian propaganda with disinformation about the war in Ukraine.

Dependent variable in this research is policy learning regarding the Estonian civil protection framework. This explains the policy learning as a dependent variable and how it is observed. One indicator of policy learning is if there is change in frameworks, and this change is related to the characteristics of the external crisis. For instance, Russia indiscriminately bombs Ukrainian civilians, raising awareness of the need of bomb shelters in Estonia. Another example is the spread of propaganda by Russian television channels in Estonia, which Estonia banned after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As opposed, there is no policy learning, when the civil protection framework remains the same, without any change or with a change not related to the external crisis. For instance, there is no clear understanding who is responsible, and who coordinates the crisis reserves.

3.4 Data

When examining policy learning in a context of an external crisis, author used primary sources like Estonia's State Journal (*Riigi Teataja*), Estonia's Rescue Board's code of conduct, official statements of the government, ministries, and Parliament. The data was collected with secondary sources such as scholarly literature and the CyberPeace Institute.

Government documents and press releases are selected according to how correctly they reflect the topic of the work. Estonian Public Broadcasting, Estonian Government and ministries have reported on Russia's actions in Ukraine. Reports, articles, and ministries press releases are selected on the basis on how well they fit the topic of the study. All sources on policy learning and policy change are analyzed with a view on their presence after an external crisis. The sources that covered Estonian civil protection and other topics in Estonia were in Estonian language. Estonia's State Journal (*Riigi Teataja*) can be found in both, Estonian and English languages. This study has incorporated maps and graphs. The map is from the Estonian Land Board for the public bomb shelters across the whole country, helping to visualize the number of shelters.

Three main documents of civil protection in the Estonian context are Civil protection concept 2018, Civil protection plan 2022-2023 by the Estonian Rescue Board and Civil protection action plan 2024-2027. In the civil protection action plan the four areas whose development, from a civil protection perspective, is considered to be of the highest importance in the next four years are increasing population's crisis awareness, local municipalities and increase of their crisis related capacity, quick threat notification solution for population, and the increase of the efficiency of civil protection institutions. (Republic of Estonia Government Office, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of the Interior of Estonia, 2024: 4)

3.5 Methods of Analysis

In this study, document analysis is used to analyze the government documents and official data. Document analysis is a research method where "documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic" (Triad 3, 2016). Document analysis suits many studies because of „an efficient and effective way of gathering data because documents are manageable and practical resources“ (Triad 3, 2016) and has many advantages. Document analysis is most suitable for this study because in this study the existing data and government documents are studied. First, the author uses the writings and articles of other authors and experts in this research, as well as press releases of various ministries.

Document analysis is used when analyzing documents is the best choice when studying people and their relationships. Armstrong's definition of the document analysis „just like any other analytical methods, qualitative research document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to produce meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge“ (Armstrong, 2021: 1) described its characteristics and advantages.

The search contains words such as *policy learning, policy change, external crisis*. Considering how many articles have been written about policy learning, policy change, and external crisis, it is important to monitor the keywords. These keywords usually are *policy learning, crisis, policy change*. When analyzing civil protection, it is important that the documents contain words such as *public bomb shelters, Estonian Rescue Board, Estonian Police/assistant police, civil protection*. These documents usually belong to the Estonian Government because every country has a different principle of civil protection.

4. Policy Learning in the context of Estonia's Framework for Civil Protection in Response to Russia's Use of Hybrid Measures in the Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine in 2022

This chapter brings out policy learning in Estonia based on the example of the Ukrainian war, what was learned, what changed. This chapter also answers the question of whether there was policy learning in the context of an external crisis. In particular to which extent learning is exemplified by the changes in the Estonian civil protection framework. This chapter contains an analysis of how Russia's use of hybrid measures in Ukraine has affected the Estonian civil protection framework and how it has made Estonian state structures work.

4.1 Russia's Hybrid Measures in Ukraine

This chapter will present empirical findings on different hybrid warfare measures which Russia has used during the war in Ukraine in order to determine whether this aspect of an external crisis for Estonian policymaking, and, more precisely, changes in Estonian civil protection framework in response to the war in Ukraine, was present. It is also important to note that Russia itself does not use the term hybrid warfare but has used *new generation warfare* or *non-linear war* (Wither, 2016: 80). In fact, even before the start of the war, Russia started a military exercise with Belarus at the Ukrainian border (Chappell, 2022), which is considered a hybrid warfare measure.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine put out information about Russian hybrid warfare and its contents and narratives. According to MFA of Ukraine the best known and

oldest tactic in propaganda is false information produced by Russia, especially the news broadcasted on Russian TV channels using phrases such as calling the war a “special operation” and telling Russian citizens that the Bucha Massacre was fake. Both are aimed to deny that the war is an act of aggression against a sovereign state but rather a contained military operation to topple an illegal regime for the benefit of the Ukrainian people. The hybrid measures against Ukraine also include cyber-attacks against critical infrastructure, pressure in the trade and economic field with the energy blockade. Another tactic is terrorizing and scaring Ukrainian citizens and denying that the war in Ukraine, as of now, is happening. Less well-known tactics are, for instance, “blaming the other side for its own crimes”. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 2019)

Military exercises by Russia near the Ukrainian border. Russia’s hybrid war actively started in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea, however, the large-scale invasion began on the 24th of February 2022. Before the start of the invasion, Russia held two military exercises, first one being held on September 10-16 of 2021 named *Zapad* (west) and the second one was Allied Resolve held on 10-20 of February 2022. Military exercise is a good excuse to bring a large contingent of troops. However, being close to the border of the country into which one wants to invade if necessary, can help to switch from training to an attack when an order comes, as happened in Ukraine. This is a tactic that dates to the time of the Soviet Union and helps to create a cover for the movement of a large number of troops, equipment and supplies. It also helps to strain the morale of the opponent as they are forced to keep their troops in high readiness without knowing if an attack is imminent. In this part it will be looked more into both military exercises by comparing them in the end.

Zapad 2021. *Zapad* is held every four years and is a strategic military exercise. These types of exercises are held every year and are rotated between different military districts out of total four: *Vostok* (east), *Kavkaz* (Caucasus), *Zapad* (west) and *Tsentr* (center). Exercise *Zapad* is to “allow the Russian General Staff to further develop operational concepts, test Russian military and civilian integration, experiment with force structure, reserve mobilization, or logistical elements.” (Kofman, 2021) *Zapad* was held near the border of Lithuania and Poland.

Allied Resolve 2022. On the 10th of February 2022, two weeks before the invasion Russia alongside with Belarus held one of the biggest military exercises near the Ukrainian border which caused concern among NATO countries, Ukrainian and American analysts (Chappell, 2022). The name of the exercise is Allied Resolve (*Soyuznaya Reshimost*) 2022. This exercise lasted for ten days and its purpose was “practice a specific action plan against the Baltic states, Poland and Ukraine“ (GlobalSecurity.org, 2022). This military exercise is a good

example of *maskirovka* (disguise) or widely known as Russian military deception. It must be understood that *maskirovka* has been used by Russia since the USSR times and thus “seeks to create a false reality for the target audience“ (MAJ Maier, 2016: 6).

Both military exercises were to intimidate the neighboring countries, but the Allied Resolve was held to scare Ukraine, the US, and NATO. There was no other reason for Russia and Belarus to have the largest military exercise since the Cold War (Chappell, 2022) be held near the Ukrainian border and be so close to the invasion on the 24th of February 2022. It was a strong intimidating tactic that helped Russia to invade Ukraine.

As previously mentioned, context plays a big part in understanding, and in the context of the war in Ukraine with these two military exercises taking place, and so closely to each other, it does suggest that there was an external crisis perceived by Estonia.

Cyberattacks. CyberPeace Institute is monitoring all the cyberattacks from 01.01.2022 all over the world. The first *probable* cyberattack was on the 13th of January 2022 by DEV-0586. The first *confirmed* cyberattack on Ukraine was on the 14th of January 2022 by UNC1151, also known as Ghostwriter. (CyberPeace Institute, 2023) It is suspected the espionage campaign UNC1151 has affiliations with Belarus and is targeting governments (Council on Foreign Relations). According to CyberPeace Institute, the day before the invasion, on the 23rd of February 2022 was conducted 13 cyberattacks on Ukraine, 6 are confirmed to be from the Russian Federation and 7 are likely, but not certain, to originate from Russian Federation. 4 cyberattacks were done by Sandworm, GRU Unit 74455, or as Greenberg characterized them as “GRU's most aggressive hacking unit“ (Greenberg, 2023). Important to note here that the attacks in February of 2022 before the invasion were on 1.02, 11.02, 15.02 and 23.02 (CyberPeace Institute, 2023). This only means that Russia was cyberattacking Ukraine 13 times the day before to intimidate them. On the day of invasion there were only 4 cyberattacks according to CyberPeace Institute, 2 of them were confirmed and done by the Russian Federation, where 1 was done by Sandworm.

According to Wordfence (Maunder, 2022), which protects Ukrainian websites, on the day of invasion there were 479 attacks, on the 25th of February 37,974 attacks, on the 26th of February 104,098 attacks and on the 27th of February 67,552 attacks. The graph “Attacks on Ukrainian domains from 28.01.2022 to 28.02.2022” on Wordfence shows how on the 24th to 26th of February the attacks on .UA domains spiked almost up to the 150,000 attacks per day and from the 26th to 27th it went down to circa 99,000 attacks per day. In the context of war, the cyberattacks were weakening the Ukrainian state structures which in turn greatly contributed to lowering defense readiness. Cyberattacks are not always accompanied by war, but in this

context, knowing that Putin planned to invade Ukraine at any moment, one can say that aggressive cyberattacks were the second feature of an external crisis.

Disinformation and propaganda. “Russia’s disinformation and propaganda ecosystem is the collection of official, proxy, and unattributed communication channels and platforms that Russia uses to create and amplify false narratives“ (U.S. Department of State, 2020: 3). Russia has been using disinformation as a tool from the 1920s and has been using it as a strategic weapon (Mahairas, Dvilyanski, 2018: 21). Some examples of false information produced by Russian Federation according to NewsGuard, are the neo-Nazis in Ukraine’s government, Ukraine keeps bioweapons laboratories in active cooperation with the United States of America, Crimean Peninsula has always belonged to Russia and the Bucha Massacre was staged by Ukrainians (NewsGuard, 2023).

The invasion started with disinformation and propaganda by Putin saying he is saving the Ukrainian people (The Spectator, 2022). From the same speech of 24 of February 2022 Putin also added what is the goal of his “special military operation”: „Its (special military operations) goal is to protect people who have been subjected to bullying and genocide by the Kiev regime for eight years. And for this we will strive for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine, as well as bringing to justice those who committed numerous, bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation.“ (The Spectator, 2022) Due to the fact that propaganda has been done in Russia for a long time it was not hard for the country's citizens to believe Putin and his good intentions to save Ukrainians. Another example of Putin’s propaganda and disinformation where the whole section has false information in it is as follows: „....I appeal to the citizens of Ukraine. In 2014, Russia was obliged to protect the inhabitants of Crimea and Sevastopol from those whom you yourself call ‘Nazis’. Crimea and Sevastopol residents made their choice to be with their historical homeland, with Russia, and we supported this. I repeat, they simply could not do otherwise.“ (The Spectator, 2022). The use of the terms “nazis” and “denazification” aims to draw parallels with the Second World War and the Soviet victory even despite the fact that the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyi himself is of Jewish ancestry.

Disinformation and propaganda before and during the war are an example of another feature of the representation of the presence of an external crisis for Estonia. It is an indicator that supports the measuring of the presence of an external crisis.

This part presented the findings of the hybrid warfare measure used by Russia in Ukraine, showing that there is an external crisis as the war in Ukraine is seen by Estonia. The intimidating tactics used by the Russian Federation were the two military exercises near the

Ukrainian border where the second exercise, the Allied Resolve 2022, was of the biggest military exercises being held only two weeks prior the invasion. By doing so, the Russian Federation was showing its military prowess to the world and, in particular, to the Ukrainian people. Second threatening tactic used by Russia was the cyberattacks which significantly increased in its frequency the day before the invasion, targeting Ukraine's state structures 13 times, and the GRU and its aggressive Unit 74455 has heavily contributed to those attacks. On the day of the invasion just 4 attacks were reported, thus, on the 24th of February 2022 the cyber operations were not of a priority. Lastly, perhaps the strongest non-military tactic used was and will be the spread of disinformation and propaganda. This is mostly done by filling the airtime of the biggest TV channels in Russia with propaganda news and talk-shows. Putin's term "special military operation" is being used to this day, therefore one could say the propaganda is strong and working. It can be observed that Russia has also fine-tuned its intimidation tactics based on the experience it has accumulated over the years.

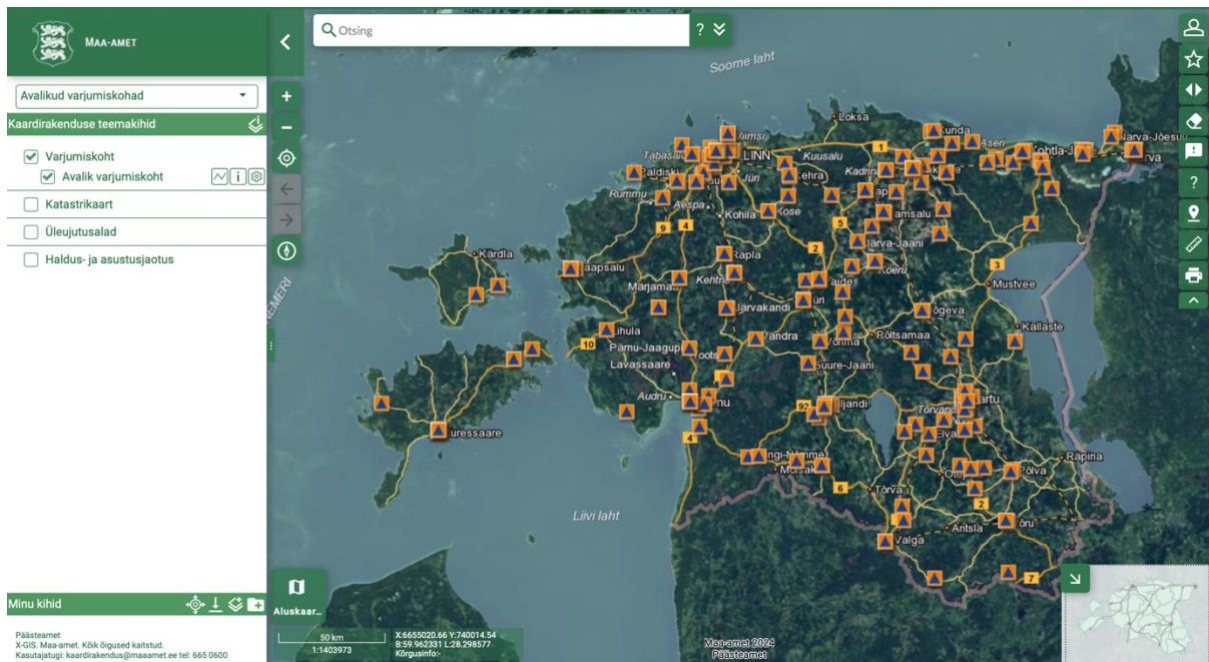
4.2 How Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine in 2022 changed the Estonian Civil Protection Framework as a Response to the Crisis

This section examines several aspects of civil protection, the changes made after 2022, and how they are a response to Russia's use of hybrid measures in order to measure the presence of policy learning in Estonian civil protection in the context of external crisis. To begin with, first thing that changed in the Estonian civil protection framework after the full-scale invasion in Ukraine was the increase of people's crisis awareness and independent preparedness. The Ministry of the Interior of Estonia in cooperation with the Estonian Rescue Board published a guide about bomb shelters and appropriate actions in case of a bombardment. Estonia does not have any new shelters built since the 1990s. Last known shelters from 1993 are for approximately 73,000 people, but it is known that many of those counted do not have any good use today because of the rebuilding and some are out of use. According to the Estonian Rescue Board (2023) the current situation with public bomb shelters is going in the right direction. Currently, as of June 2024, there are 228 marked shelters according to the national risk analysis done by the Republic of Estonia Government Office. Larger settlements of Estonia will have more bomb shelters and by the end of the year 2024 a siren network is established (Estonian Rescue Board, 2023). Bomb shelters are needed during war to minimize damage, but one cannot simply look away from the fact that Estonia's bomb shelters are not in a good condition whatsoever (Tallinn Crisis Management and Civil Protection website). In the event of an attack residents should know for a fact where they can go for a safe shelter as soon as possible.

Therefore, it is important to mark the locations of bomb shelters, which Estonian officials have done. The bomb shelters are marked in the public space by an orange square with a blue triangle. It is internationally recognized as an international civil defense insignia. For convenience, the Land Board of Estonia created a map where they marked public bomb shelter places across Estonia, seen on figure 2.

Public bomb shelters are a part of civil protection that does not happen overnight, but at the same time are a very important primary defense in case of an attack. In 2022 50 million euros were allocated to the rescue agency for the development of civil protection because of the lack of experience in this field (ERR, 30.04.2023).

In order for the bomb shelters to fulfill its function, they should have certain characteristics as discussed in chapter 2. However, some places like tunnels with the orange square and a blue triangle lack these qualities. For one, tunnels should be sturdy and solid enough to survive the attack when, a number of tunnels in Tallinn city center are barely walkable inside. Finland is a good influence when talking about public bomb shelters. Although the population of Finland is four times bigger than the population of Estonia, according to the Finnish Government and the press release of Finnish Ministry of the Interior, there are around 50,500 bomb shelters that accommodate approximately 4.8 million people (Ministry of the Interior of Finland, 9.02.2023). Baltic News Network (19.01.2023) wrote an article on the enlargement of Estonia's number of bomb shelters with reference to Finland where the Minister of the Interior of Estonia said: "The requirement to create a shelter when building new residential buildings should be mandatory, as it is in Finland". The Russo-Ukrainian war showed Estonia what needs to be dealt with in the first place and rapidly. Civil protection is a principle, policy learning is an execution.



Source: Maa-amet/ Land Board, 2024

Figure 2. Map of public bomb shelters in Estonia.

Although the Russian tactics did not come as a surprise, it seems that the issue has been avoided thus far because of the high cost and lack of cheap alternatives. For example, Finland requires new buildings in certain urban areas to be built with bomb shelters. Also, it was evident already during the First Chechen War that when the Russian military fails to capture or control a larger urban area, they opt for siege tactics. Then they use artillery and airstrikes to destroy opposing firing positions often located in residential buildings and then advance to clear bombarded areas. These tactics also cause significant civilian casualties since the conventional artillery fire and unguided bombs can be inaccurate and high casualty rates are accepted by the Russian Federation as collateral damage. Even though Estonia can create an effective territorial defense, it lacked an understanding of a civil protection in case of a military attack or a natural disaster. In the next chapters the author will expand on the civil protection topic and analyze what Estonia's state institutions did change or add after Russia's hybrid warfare measures in Ukraine.

It is important to let the civilians know about the public bomb shelters and evacuation in case of an attack, so the Estonian Rescue Board made it possible to send important messages through the social media, homepages of state institutions or knocking on the door. In 2018 in the concept of the civil protection written by Republic of Estonia Government Office and the Ministry of the Interior, the central problem is the lack of technical solutions to organize immediate and location-based threat notification. In the event of a threat, social media and mass

media were used to communicate the information with the public. According to this civil protection concept, this did not guarantee that everyone will receive the threat notification quickly. (2018: 31)

In the spring of 2022, the Estonian Rescue Board developed a new warning alert that will go out to everyone through an SMS format, which is equipped with information on the guidelines and is called EE-Alarm (Estonian Rescue Board, 2023). This shows the change in the crisis communication development before and after the war in Ukraine in 2022. As of the beginning of 2024, there are 228 public shelters marked for nearly 152 000 people in 90 settlements, the priority is primarily the larger Estonian cities (Estonian Rescue Board, 2024). Estonian Rescue Board came out with guidelines in case of an emergency in the year of 2019, 2022 and 2024. Last two are updated versions and more comprehensive. For instance, in the 2022 version Estonian Rescue Board added paragraphs about sheltering, cyber security, coping with an information war, what to do as a civilian in a conflict zone, and mental health. In the 2024 version of the guidelines, they added information about warning siren. (Estonian Rescue Board, 2024) The change in evacuation is also seen after 2022. According to the Estonian Rescue Board, since January 1st it is the task of the Rescue Board to prepare for a large-scale evacuation. This change was before the invasion of Ukraine but after Russia surrounded Ukrainian border at the end of November in 2021.

A new thing is the emergency siren network, which, according to the Estonian Rescue Board, will be in 22 settlements: Tallinn, Tartu, Narva, Pärnu, Võru, Paldiski, Sillamäe, Tapa, Jõhvi, Kohtla-Järve, Maardu, Rakvere, Valga, Keila, Viljandi, Jõgeva, Põlva, Rapla, Kärđla, Kuressaare, Haapsalu, Paide. Information technology and development center of the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the sirens technological side. According to Estonian Rescue Board (2023) “a siren is used when there is an immediate danger to a person's life. Such situations are major accidents, emergencies (for example, a radiation accident or an accident with dangerous chemicals), but they can also be used in the event of a military threat”. Estonia has a website *olevalmis.ee* (in English be ready) and an application “*Ole valmis!*” where anyone can find crucial information on what to do in case of an emergency or a crisis. The website is found in three languages – Estonian, English, and Russian. With the help of the website and an application one can prepare for a crisis with the code of conduct for crisis situations. A new legal initiative was the Article 151¹. The Estonian Penal Code (*Riigi Teataja*, 2002) was amended with the addition of Article 151¹, which sanctions public exhibiting of a symbol relating to an act of aggression, genocide, crime against humanity or commission of a war crime. The offense is punishable by a fine of up to three hundred fine units or by attachment

and for the same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a fine of up to 32,000 euros. The scope of application of the 151st is wide, as explained by the Estonian Supreme Court on its 9th of March 2023 judgment (Supreme Court Verdict, 9.03.2023, case 4-22-3610).

All above explained is an important part of the change in civil protection policy. Estonian Government (2023: 13) in the National Security Concept of Estonia explained “the basis for civil protection is people’s ability to protect themselves during a crisis until help arrives, and to assist each other if necessary.” Policy learning in Estonia during the Ukrainian war has led to changes and explanations of the Estonian civil protection framework. The Ministry of the Interior and the Estonian Rescue Board published a guide about bomb shelters and appropriate actions in case of a bombardment. Public bomb shelters are an important primary defense in case of an attack. Finland is a good influence when talking about public bomb shelters, with around 50,500 shelters that accommodate 4.8 million people. The Russo-Ukrainian war showed Estonia what needs to be dealt with quickly. Russia's hybrid warfare tactics in Ukraine have been avoided due to high costs and lack of cheap alternatives. Finland requires new buildings to be built with bomb shelters, and Russia has used siege tactics to cause civilian casualties. Estonia has lacked understanding of civil protection in case of a military attack or natural disaster.

The central change was additional funding for things related to civil protection. Estonian Police and Border Guard Board with Estonian Rescue Board are both in the Ministry of the Interior's jurisdiction and Estonian citizens can apply for assistant police officer or for volunteer marine rescue. According to the press release of the Ministry of the Interior, in 2023, the Ministry of the Interior provides up to 3.25 million euros to the Rescue Board's budget. This will support 26 volunteer rescue teams or sea rescue societies. With this decision came another one additional funding for assistant police officers. The Ministry of the Interior will support the renovation of command buildings and the renewal of equipment of assistant police officers, volunteer rescuers and sea rescuers with 5.17 million euros. (Ministry of the Interior, 2023) This only shows that the internal security volunteers are being better funded so their performance can only improve in the times of a crisis.

Local governments are having important roles because of the extensive cooperation with the Estonian Rescue Board and other ministries. Every local government has a civil protection plan which contains information about public bomb shelters, civil protection information, documents on preparedness for a crisis, crisis management, data on what to do in the event of a power outage, the location of drinking water points, etc.

In the periods without acute distress the time which it takes to change the general plans of the involved municipalities, the plans for the states strategic resources infrastructure and to get the required permits from ministries and local municipalities takes years to complete. Thus, the policy learning took place in a very hurried way where the government held open two options to ensure the supply from foreign suppliers. Although diversification in theory to a country that lives next to a hostile neighbor is a logical idea, the occurring costs and different competing interest groups (some also dependent on Russia) make this a long and difficult process.

The Estonian Penal Code (*Riigi Teataja*, 2002) was amended with the addition of Article 151¹ sanctioning supporting and justifying international crimes. Section 1 of the said article sanctions public exhibiting of a symbol relating to an act of aggression, genocide, crime against humanity or commission of a war crime in a manner that supports or justifies such acts. The offense is punishable by a fine of up to three hundred fine units or by attachment and for the same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a fine of up to 32,000 euros. The Preamble of the bill (*Riigikogu*, 2022) presented to the Estonian Parliament states the purpose of the amendment bill is to introduce changes to the Penal Code that are inspired from the attack of the Russian Federation against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The amendment was adopted by the Estonian Parliament on the 21st of April, proclaimed by the president on the 27th of April, published in the Official Publications (*Riigi Teataja*, 2022) on the 28th of April and came into force on the 29th of April 2022. The pace of adopting the amendment is very significant as the usual pace of adoption is usually at least months. The reason in most cases is to provide institutions with enough time to take appropriate measures to adopt the legislation. The date of coming into force on 29th of April is connected to the 9th of May where the display of Soviet and Russian symbols is often visible. The most common being the ribbon of St George that was also heavily displayed as a symbol during the Russian invasion of Crimea and often displayed by the Russian backed and controlled Luhansk and Donetsk separatists. The scope of application of the 151¹ is quite wide as explained by the Estonian Supreme Court on its 9th of March 2023 judgment (Supreme Court Verdict, 9.03.2023, case 4-22-3610). The Estonian Supreme Court quashed the ruling of the first instance court and upheld the Police and Border Guard's verdict. The supreme court noted that the Russian military activities amount to an international crime relying on the National Assembly's 18.10.2022 public statement "on the Russian Federation's war crimes and genocide in Ukraine". The Supreme Court found that Airborne troops are part of the Russian Forces conducting international crimes in Ukraine citing the Massacre of Bucha. Furthermore, they are considered

an "elite" (the quotation marks are used in the original text in the Estonian language) unit, thus being an important Russian military symbol for decades and an ideological weapon. The importance of Article 151¹ is providing legal means to curb the Russian visual propaganda from public spaces. Prior punishment for such misdemeanors can be grounds for terminating the period of stay or refusal of temporary living permits according to Estonian Aliens Act (*Riigi Teataja*, 2010) Article 52 section 4 subsection 1 and Article 124 section 1 subsection 5 respectively. The application of the misdemeanor process allows for the legal documentation of cases and for collecting evidence according to procedural rules. This evidence may come handy in further investigations or in administrative proceedings. The act of committing misdemeanors allows the police to use more intensive measures of securing public order.

Ultimately, one can say that in Estonia policy learning was present, in a sense that the policy learning and policy change occurred in some form. The most problematic issues were dealt very rapidly compared to the situation before the Russian invasion. For example a number of public bomb shelters were marked, now in Estonia 228 marked shelters and a siren network was established across the country located in 22 settlements by the end of 2023. Estonian Rescue Board put out a mobile application *Ole valmis!* and a website was made *olevalmis.ee* for a faster and better cooperation between the Ministry of the Internal of Estonia and Estonia's citizens. This website with the application provides crucial information for before and during crises. In Estonia, internal security has always been important, but after February 2022, the Ministry of the Interior additionally funded assistant policemen and sea rescue, so that during a crisis, the performance of internal security volunteers will improve. Under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense of Estonia is the Estonian Defense League, where after February 2022, more and more Estonian citizens began to join the Estonian Defense League and Women's Voluntary Defense Organization because the war in Ukraine has contributed to the increase in the will to defend. Important policy learning took place in the field of law, where usually adopting new laws and getting them into force takes months, but the addition of Article 151¹ of Estonian Penal Code that sanctioned support and justification of international crimes, was adopted in a matter of days. That goes to show the rapidness of policy learning.

To Answer the two questions, whether policy learning took place and whether an external crisis occurred, is that both were found to be present. Policy learning does not just happen, for it to occur there must be triggers to bring out the learning. The same applies to policy change. In Estonia, after February 2022 major triggers for the policy learning and the policy change were noticed. The primary trigger as mentioned in the first chapter was of course new information especially in setting priorities for the course of action. Although the

belligerence of the Russian Federation was not new the ways how the hybrid attacks were orchestrated gave vital input. The measures adopted are also influenced by resource constraints as a trigger meaning that the urgency and available finances direct the decision maker to look for policies that were within the means. An example of the failure of policy as a trigger combined with new opportunities is the long-awaited transition to Estonian-language education, although it is happening gradually, and by 2030 it should be fully transitioned. This can be called one of the triggers, because the war in Ukraine reawakened the language discussion, which in turn led to policy change in Estonia. Along with the Russian language, a large number of Soviet monuments were also removed across the whole of Estonia. A separate commission was created for this, which documented the monuments and their removal or retention. Although the vast majority were removed, the neutral monuments were kept. Russia's ability to use hybrid warfare measures in the war and some measures before the war has shown their foresight, while these hybrid warfare measures were an indicator to measure the existence of an external crisis. Their hybrid warfare measures that were used by Russia, by conducting large military exercises with Belarus before the war in Ukraine, were to intimidate both Ukraine and NATO. It was more of a policy change after the triggers. As suggested by the presented evidence, an external crisis in the form of Russia's use of hybrid warfare measures in Ukraine was present. Changes in Estonia's civil protection framework occurred in response to Russia's actions in Ukraine and the use of hybrid measures, indicating the presence of policy learning. This finding emphasizes how Russia deliberately and systematically use nonconventional strategies to destabilize neighboring countries.

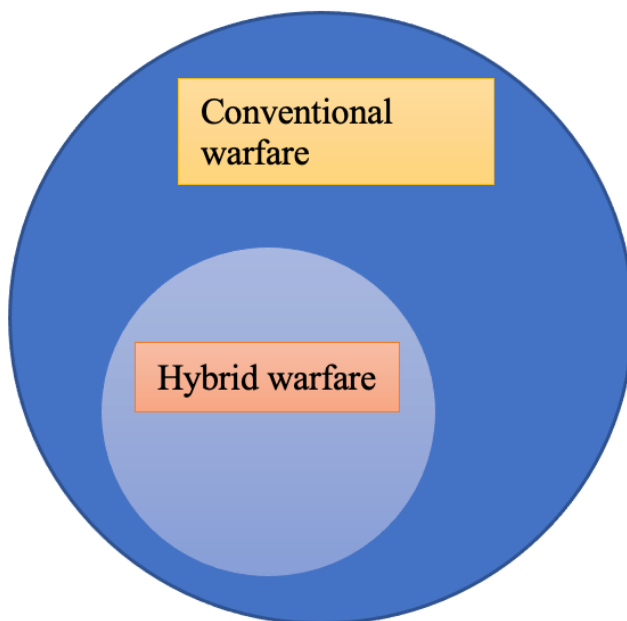
4.3 The Full-Scale Invasion in Ukraine as an External Crisis for Estonian Policymaking

This section is providing the measurement of the presence or absence of an external crisis in the form of Russian use of hybrid measures in Ukraine, and, therefore, whether the war in Ukraine represented an external crisis for Estonia.

Usually in Russian military exercises, various scenarios are carried out with fictional countries, but according to intelligence, the *Zapad 2021* exercise practiced the conquest of the Baltic states. It was an obvious provocation by Russia, as was the entire *Zapad 2021* provocation against the West. Former Minister of Defense, Mr. Kalle Laanet discussed the provocative measures of Russian Federation with Foreign and Defense Ministers of the Baltic States and Poland in Riga, where he stated "The non-transparent actions of the Russian Federation and Belarus in planning the large-scale exercise *Zapad 2021*, and the triggering of

a hybrid crisis on the Latvian-Lithuanian border, are a conscious desire to destabilise security in the Baltic Sea region and to fracture relations between allies within NATO and the European Union.” (Ministry of Defense of Estonia, press release, 14.09.2021)

The author mentioned in the section above the joint strategic exercise *Zapad 2021* which has been a part of Russia’s hybrid warfare measures in Ukraine. So, in this context, an external crisis is a war, and hybrid warfare is a part of the armed conflict. This part will discuss its essence within the framework of warfare, what is its military purpose, as well as provide several examples. This section focuses on hybrid warfare in the context of conventional warfare. Hybrid warfare measures support conventional warfare, in a sense that the latter is one whole, and hybrid warfare is separately within this whole.



Source: the author

Figure 3. Hybrid warfare within conventional warfare.

Based on the evidence presented above, the finding is that the external crisis, in the form of Russia’s hybrid measures, was present. Russia has been in a full-scale war with Ukraine for almost three years and has actively used hybrid warfare measures during those three years. These are Russian military exercises near the Ukrainian border, cyberattacks, propaganda and disinformation. With this war, Estonian people's crisis awareness and independent preparedness have increased, but people still do not know where to hide in case of an attack.

The reason is the old bomb shelters from 1993, which are not suitable for sheltering today, but new bomb shelters require a lot of resources and new buildings. In the light of the theoretical framework, these findings can be interpreted in the way that Russia's use of hybrid measures, as it came to represent an external crisis for Estonia, has triggered policy learning, in the form of changes in civil protection framework in response to Russia's actions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to find out the shortcomings of the Estonian civil protection framework and to show how Estonia learned from the Ukrainian war. This study examined how Estonia's civil protection framework adjusted in response to Russia's hybrid warfare measures in Ukraine since February 2022. After the full-scale war in Ukraine, Estonian civil protection framework changed significantly as is seen in the analysis of this work. First, the Estonian population is much more informed about the concept of civil protection, largely thanks to the Estonian rescue board, people's crisis awareness and independent preparedness has increased. The Rescue Board came out with a summary leaflet on how a person should behave in case of an emergency. Also, the network of sirens, Ole valmis! mobile application, bomb shelters – they have been dealt with only after February 2022. Informing the population is a critical first step in civil protection. The construction of a right bomb shelter requires very large expenses, for this it is necessary to rebuild the existing buildings or to buy land. The hypothesis in this study was the occurrence of an external crisis in the form of Russian aggression leads to policy learning in Estonia's framework for civil protection.

The study addresses the question: What effect does the use of hybrid measures by Russia against Ukraine have on Estonia's civil protection framework? The answer to the research question is Russia's use of hybrid measures led to changes in Estonia's civil protection framework. Based on the findings of the empirical analysis, the study concludes that Russia's hybrid measures triggered changes, external crisis led to learning. In conceptual terms, the occurrence of an external crisis, in the form of Russia's hybrid measures, triggered policy learning, in the form of updating of civil protection framework in Estonia. The hypothesis that is the occurrence of an external crisis in the form of Russian aggression leads to policy learning in Estonia's framework for civil protection, is therefore confirmed.

Wider implications gives an opportunity to see, first of all, how capable Estonia is of learning, what is learned, how this learning is applied, and what obstacles there have been during the implementation of this learning. For instance, learning has occurred, but the problem

is financial resources, a lack of people or specialists, or time-consuming solutions must be developed. If learning has occurred in the first place, what is the additional need? If knowledge has already been acquired, new questions may arise from it. With these findings, the study contributes to the literature on impact of war, by showing how external crisis like this war trigger learning, states update their civil protection framework when they experience such a crisis.

First chapter presented the theoretical framework where the focus was on policy learning, triggers and responding to an external crisis. Learning does not just happen out of nowhere; something must trigger it. These triggers can originate from previous failures, new information, advocacy, decline of functionality, and resource constraints. It is possible to classify the triggers as either internal or external within the context of international relations.

Second chapter addresses civil protection, and the concept of civil protection. The chapter focuses on the difference between civil protection and civil defense, where civil protection encompasses measures to protect the populace from disasters during peacetime and civil defense focuses on the protection of civilians during wartime.

In the third chapter are presented method, research design, case selection, operationalization, data, and methods of analysis. For this research to be done, single case study as a research design was used. Estonia's civil protection framework has been affected by Russia's use of hybrid warfare measures in Ukraine making it an insightful case to study the policy learning in Estonia. The two main variables in this research were the occurrence of external crisis and policy learning. The data was collected using primary sources such as Estonia's State Journal, official statements from Parliament, ministries, and the government. For the secondary sources the scholarly literature was used. The method of analysis was chosen to be document analysis.

The fourth chapter analyses how Russia's use of hybrid warfare measures in Ukraine has affected the Estonian civil protection framework. In this chapter were presented the empirical findings on hybrid measures in Ukraine and how the invasion in 2022 has changed the Estonian civil protection framework in response to the crisis. Biggest changes were the public bomb shelters and a siren network in 22 settlements, as well the EE-Alarm system.

An even more precise question is the extent of policy learning. Things that could be done more easily were done, meanwhile events also required a quick response. In the course of all this, it can be seen that the input from Ukraine was needed, i.e., how Russia acted, as well as solutions. The application of all this to Estonia also confirms that it was not simply copied what the Ukrainians did, but on the basis of what was learned, the solutions were created

that fit and are feasible to Estonia. At the same time, the scope of policy learning is always estimated, as it is difficult to say from the surface of the available information whether solutions have been abandoned in certain aspects for financial reasons, technical obstacles, or if they are simply not considered essential in the context of the moment.

While the findings of this study show the policy learning occurred, there are also certain limitations to these findings or the conclusions that can be drawn from them. It relied on documents, which allowed to establish Russia's use of hybrid measures and of changes in Estonian civil protection framework. But to strengthen the claim how Russia's use of hybrid measures were perceived in Estonia, as external crisis, or that changes in the civil protection framework were done because of what happened in Ukraine, interviews with decision-makers involved in making those changes would further strengthen the confidence in the connection between these variables. This study was a single case study. While this allows to establish the connection in Estonia, it cannot conclusively say whether this finding points to a more general pattern in which the war has led to such a response everywhere in the region. Another potential limitation in this work is that policy change takes time, it is an ongoing process. Also, due to security considerations, the state does not disclose its plans, therefore there is a lot of classified information.

The question whether there has been policy learning as consequence of the war in Ukraine as an external crisis is relevant in most post-Soviet states. Especially in Latvia and Lithuania, which have long relied on its memberships in NATO and the European Union as a deterrent of possible Russian aggression. Hopefully this paper would allow comparison for similar research in those countries. More broadly all of Russia's neighbors as the civil populations have an equal access to media and the events in Ukraine, perhaps apart of Belarus, which still holds close relations to Russia. Another possible form of comparison is to assess whether there has been policy learning in between the Baltic States. For instance, since they are relatively comparable and equally vulnerable towards possible Russian attack, this is most likely that all the other Baltic States, Latvia, and Lithuania, have also drawn some lessons and conclusions from an external crisis like the war in Ukraine. It is quite possible that in the long run there could be policy learning in between the Baltic States, especially trying to assess which solutions are the most cost effective, affordable and provide the best protection in the circumstances of the Baltic States. Future studies of this could rely on the interview data. A comparative study could shed light on conditions under which Russia's use of hybrid measures does or does not lead to changes in civil protection framework. Responses to internal crisis

could be a study to find out whether there is a meaningful difference between how states respond to internal and external crises.

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