Occasional Paper

Towards a resilient society, or why Estonia does not need 'psychological defence'

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Abstract

Two years ago Estonia's strategic national security and defence documents put forward the idea of 'psychological defence' as a means to protect the values and cohesion of Estonian society from subversive influences. The idea drew sharp criticism from some sections of society for being inappropriate for a democratic state, even though the intentions behind it were noble. The paper suggests that 'societal resilience' is a more attractive and relevant concept in strategy making because it reflects the inherent complexity of states, societies and their highly dynamic threat environments without carrying negative and antagonistic connotations. It is argued that by focusing on the constituent elements of 'societal resilience', e.g. human and social capital, Estonia can better prepare for a wide range of security stressors than by pursuing 'psychological defence'. In addition, 'societal resilience' offers a more appealing narrative for engaging the non-governmental sector and civil society in national security affairs, and even for putting them at the forefront of national security efforts (a 'whole-of-society approach'). The paper also examines the practices for building 'military resilience' and their relevance to society at large.

Introduction

1.   Estonia's National Security Concept (NSC) and its National Defence Strategy of 2010 place a strong emphasis on 'psychological defence' as a means to protect Estonian society against subversive influences and to enhance the will of the nation to defend itself. The NSC defines psychological defence as the "development, preservation and protection of common values associated with social cohesion and the sense of security," the aim of which is "to safeguard the security and safety of state and society, to enhance the sense of security, to avert crisis and to increase trust amongst society and towards the actions taken by the state" (Riigikogu, 2010: 20). At various points the NSC also emphasises social cohesion and the resilience of critical services as factors enhancing national security in times of crisis. According to it, social cohesion is pursued by means of social (e.g. promoting greater involvement) and economic (e.g. ensuring high employment) policies.

2.   Precise mechanisms – means and ways – for implementing psychological defence are not clearly defined in the national policy. In the Estonian public debate, however, the term 'psychological defence' has already prompted some serious controversy (see Poom, 2010; Raud, 2011). It seems that many observers associate the meaning of psychological defence with informational or even mind manipulation conducted by the government for some nefarious purposes. Psychological defence as a strategic concept and a narrative to engage members of society thus runs a substantial risk of causing negative reactions in a democratic society, becoming a self-defeating concept which fosters distrust and discord.

3.   Furthermore, focusing on subversive ("anti-Estonian", as the NSC puts it) influences aimed at eroding values and social cohesion, psychological defence also neglects to address the vulnerability of society to psychological shocks caused by such stressors as terrorist attacks, natural disasters, industrial emergencies, financial collapses, cyber attacks and other contingencies as a result of which the sense of security in society can be profoundly affected. In this regard, it is basically a 'one-trick pony' which may serve national security in a limited range of circumstances. This is partly compensated for by the attention paid in the NSC to the resilience of physical infrastructure and critical services, but the NSC does not provide an overarching concept to address the psychological well-being of the individual members, families and communities of society, and society at large, in the event of crisis.

4.   It can also be argued that 'defence' is not the best term to be used in a discourse about society's responses to psychological stressors – chronic or acute – since it implies resistance and therefore a threshold beyond which defence may collapse, exposing society and its members to most harmful consequences which were supposed to be avoided in the first place. In this paper, we argue that 'societal resilience' is a more constructive term which should be used in the national security discourse instead of 'psychological defence' and which goes well beyond 'social cohesion' and the 'resilience of critical services'. It offers a way of ensuring psychological well-being, perseverance and recovery in national security crises and emergencies of very diverse nature without carrying the negative connotations of 'psychological defence'.

5.   To a certain extent 'societal resilience' can also borrow from a similar concept of 'military resilience', which constitutes the bedrock for building an effectively operating organisation whose members come under intense physical, emotional and mental duress as part of their daily functioning. We argue that some techniques for and approaches to building military resilience are relevant to the achievement of societal resilience, although there are certain limitations too.

6.   Our aim is to discuss 'societal resilience', its constituent elements, methods for its achievement and – if 'societal resilience' is to be instrumental in advancing

3

national security – the applicable requirements for the national policy. We also seek to discuss 'military resilience' and draw parallels with 'societal resilience' in order to expand the possibilities for achieving the latter and to underline the difficulties with transferring elements of a seemingly similar concept from one organisational environment to another. We hope this will provide a productive alternative to the term 'psychological defence' in the public national security discourse.

I.   Resilience in general

7.   The term 'resilience' is used in many contexts. It originates from the field of ecology, where it was initially understood as "the measure of the ability of an ecosystem to absorb changes and still persist," although the ecological definition evolved over time (see Mayunga, 2007: 2). The concept appeared attractive to other fields, especially those involving the management of complex interlinked systems, and therefore it spread beyond its original uses in ecology. It is now employed at different levels (individual, community, state) and in different fields such as psychology, physical infrastructure management, economy, organisational management, community studies, and so on.

8.   So far, its most popular use in the field of security pertains to disaster preparedness and terrorism studies (see Spilerman & Stecklov, 2009; Coaffee, 2006; Coaffee & Rogers, 2008; Rahman, 2009; Furedi, 2007; Boin & McConnell, 2007; Lee & Preston, 2011). Interest in resilience grew particularly after such events as the 9/11 attacks and the Asian tsunami of 2006, although in some countries which have had to deal with terrorism (e.g. Israel) or natural disasters (e.g. Japan, Bangladesh) almost on a routine basis, resilience has long been established as a pivotal concept in framing national security thinking and behaviour. An increasingly complex, unpredictable and volatile security environment prompted a growing interest in and the acceptance of resilience as a key strategy in coping in this kind of environment.

9.   In general, resilience has been defined as a "process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance" (Norris et al., 2008: 130), as "successful adaptation to stressful events, oppressive systems, and other challenges of living" (Sonn & Fisher, 1998: 458) or simply as the "process of reintegrating from disruptions in life" (Richardson, 2002: 309). These definitions imply that resilience is a process, although it can also be seen as a strategy, a theory or a metaphor (Norris et al., 2008) or as the "capability of a system to maintain its functions and structure in the face of internal and external change and to degrade gracefully when it must" (Allenby & Fink, 2005: 1034).

10.   It could be useful to define resilience as a "set of networked adaptive capacities" whereby resilience draws on certain resources of the system and on "dynamic attributes of those resources (robustness, redundancy, rapidity)" (Norris et al., 2008: 135). This perspective allows a proactive approach to building resilience by means of accumulating necessary resources in a system and ensuring that those resources possess the dynamic attributes required at a time when disruptions occur. System managers can thereby devise policies (e.g. principles, norms and standards, priorities of investments) which are conducive to resilience. Furthermore, it underlines the importance of a holistic approach, whereby various aspects, levels and dimensions of resilience are treated as inter-related and given equal consideration at all levels and in all dimensions of analysis (see de Terte et al., 2009, on an integrated approach to psychological resilience; Little, 2004, on a holistic strategy for urban resilience).

4

11.	In defining a resilience strategy, it is important to appreciate the type and the nature of disruption. Usually, this is a traumatic event or experience which shocks a system and disrupts its normal functioning by causing its various elements to fail or underperform. Stressors or "aversive circumstances that threaten the well-being or functioning" (Norris et al., 2008: 131) can differ not only in terms of their nature (e.g. environmental disasters, terrorism, war, loss of a family member, etc.), but also in terms of severity, duration and surprise, which all may require different resources and capacities to deal with. It has already been pointed out in literature that systems which experience a single catastrophic event (e.g. the 9/11 attacks) display different adaptive behaviours compared to those which try to cope with chronic stressors (e.g. prolonged terrorist campaigns, shelling of residential areas, economic crises, etc.) (see Spilerman & Stecklov, 2009; Ganor & Ben-Lavy, 2003). However, the variety and the dynamic nature of potential stressors mean that it is impossible to predict in advance which adaptive capacities of a system will be necessary, thereby calling for a broad-based approach to building resilience. Thus resilience is a "rational strategy when the probability and specifics of a particular challenge are difficult to define" (Allenby & Fink, 2005: 1034).

12.	It is important to highlight that resilience and resistance are two distinct types of coping with stressors. According to Norris et al. (2009: 130), resistance means the mobilisation and the deployment of a system's resources to cope with the immediate effects of the stressors and to ensure a return to normal functioning of the system in a pre-event environment.[1] However, it is suggested that total resistance is "rare in the cases of severe, enduring or highly surprising events" which significantly alter the environment. In a transformed environment, resilience – successful adaptation of a system to adverse circumstances and the eventual establishment of something which is often termed 'new normalcy' (see Buzzanell, 2010) – is a more appropriate strategy. Resistance rather than the exercising of resilience may produce a persistent dysfunction in a system in an altered environment. Resilience, on the other hand, is "more than hardiness and the ability to endure pain; it refers to the ability to find unknown inner strengths and resources in order to cope effectively with long-term pressures <…> Resilience is therefore the ultimate measure of adaptation and flexibility" (Ganor & Ben Levy, 2003: 106).

II. Societal resilience

13.	Societal (or social) resilience is defined as the "ability of a nation-state to preserve the cohesion of its society when it is confronted by external and internal stresses caused by socio-political change and/or violent disturbances" (Long, 2008: 2). It is similar to the concept of community resilience, or a "community's inherent capacity, hope and faith to withstand major trauma, overcome adversity and to prevail with increased resources, competence and connectedness" (Landau, 2007: 352). According to de Terte et al. (2009: 24), what is "key to a community is that it operates based on a social network whereby people interact with one another in some way." Therefore much of what is written on community resilience is applicable at the level of society at large, just as many elements of individual and family resilience feed into community resilience in the model of 'linking human systems' (see Landau, 2007) or in a multisystem approach to trauma recovery and resilience (see Walsh, 2007).

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[1] According to Maru (2010: 11), "most applications of the resilience concept on individual and social systems if not explicit have at least implicit steady-state (an equilibrium) assumption that the entity has to hold onto or bounce back to after a perturbation. Resistance and recovery are key elements of the idea of resilience in individual and social studies." This stands in contrast to an ecological or socio-ecological perspective, whereby resilience is understood as the ability to absorb the impact, to self-organise and to adapt to a new, post-disturbance environment (see Carpenter et al., 2001). In our view, the latter perspective is more appropriate for complex and dynamic systems which constantly undergo incremental changes and occasionally more fundamental paradigm shifts and transformations (such as a society or national security system).

5

14.   Certainly, communities may defy geographical boundaries of nation-states and their societies (e.g. religious communities, virtual communities of shared interest, etc.). A person can belong to several communities simultaneously, although he/she will always be rooted in what Sonn and Fisher (1998: 461) call "primary communities" – the ones that "provide the values, norms, stories, myths and a sense of historical continuity." What makes communities and societies similar in principle is that they are social networks of interacting people who share certain values, norms, principles, interests, needs, myths and history. Therefore the logic of societal resilience is not that different from that of community resilience.

15.   Ganor and Ben-Lavy (2003: 106) have outlined six major ingredients (or six Cs) of community resilience: (1) *communication* about the situation, threats, risks and available support; (2) *cooperation,* especially responsibility on a local level rather than expecting external help; (3) *cohesion* through displays of sensitivity and mutual support; (4) *coping* or the ability to take action and deal with trauma; (5) *credibility* of leadership, especially at grass-roots level; and (6) *credo* for a better, inspiring future. According to them, "the good news is that community resilience does not have to be specifically created; it grows by itself. It is actually a by-product of the investment in community development in many areas, seemingly unrelated to resilience <…> The bad news is that resilience cannot be achieved overnight" (ibid.).

16.   Societal resilience taps into society's own inner resources and capacities (skills, relationships, assets, values, norms, etc.), built over a long period of time and in areas which may appear as having little to do with national security in general or with resilience specifically. Societal resilience is often viewed as society's resources and capacities which are nurtured by society itself through its institutions, interactions and experiences. Norris et al. (2008) distinguish a set of four inter-related types of resources upon which societal resilience rests (see Figure 1):

(1) *Economic development*, which includes such parameters as resource volume and diversity, the equity of resource distribution, the fairness of risk and vulnerability to hazards. In this set, economic growth, employment opportunities and accessible services, such as health care, housing and schools, are very important ingredients. It was noted that groups on lower socio-economic levels of development tend to suffer more adverse consequences from stressors compared to those on higher levels of development.

(2) *Social capital.* This is a resource derived from the web of social relationships. It refers to levels of social support in times of need, the sense of community, formal (organisational) and informal ties linking members of society and their sense of attachment to a place. Citizen participation and leadership with well-defined roles, structures and responsibilities are considered to be especially important for social capital and thus societal resilience.

(3) *Community competence,* which refers to society's knowledge, problem-solving skills and abilities for collaborative action; in other words, collective efficacy. This resource depends on critical reflection skills, a willingness to contribute, an ability to solve conflicts in groups and to reach consensus, empowerment and opportunities for getting involved in collective decision-making. It also requires a "culture that permits challenges to authority and institutions that provide a basis for coordinating a response" (ibid. 142).

6

(4) *Information and communication,* which include trusted sources of accurate information, effective transmission mechanisms and collective narratives which "give the experience shared meaning and purpose" (ibid. 140). In shaping this resource, the media plays an extremely important role. For instance, inaccurate, exaggerated and dramatising stories may establish narratives not conducive to societal resilience and prompt inadequate political reactions to stressors. As Lee and Preston (2011: 3) put it, "the public can be swayed by the most vocal, the most active or the most politically powerful participant rather than the best informed or the most legitimate." Thus the responsibility of the media is a critical ingredient in strengthening societal resilience.[2]
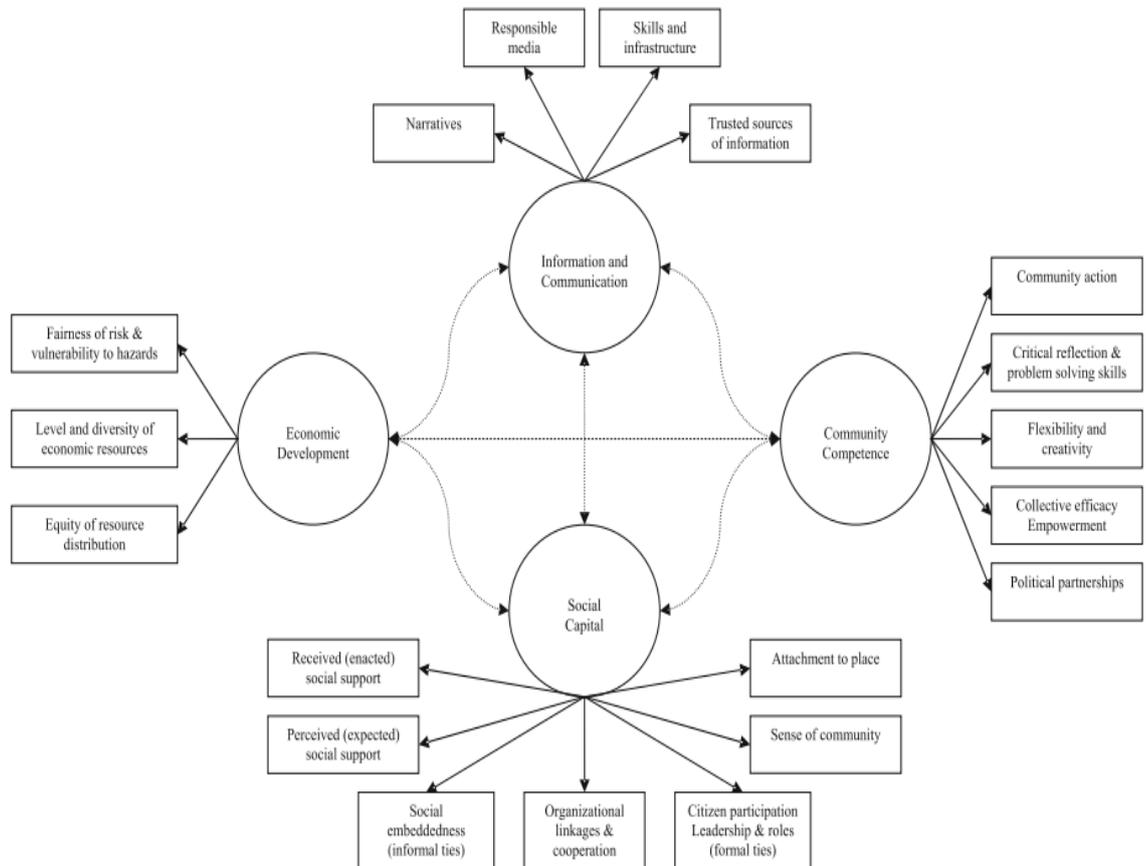

Figure 1: Community resilience as a set of networked adapted capacities (Norris et al., 2008: 136).

17.   The community disaster resilience model of Mayunga (2007: 6) also draws attention to different forms of capital upon which resilience depends. These are: (1) *social capital* (trust, norms and networks) which facilitates coordination, cooperation and access to resources; (2) *economic capital* (income, savings and investments) which speeds recovery processes, increases well-being and decreases poverty; (3) *human capital* (education, health, skills and knowledge/information) which increases awareness of risks and the ability to manage them; (4) *physical capital* (housing, public facilities and businesses/industry) which facilitates communication and transportation and increases safety; and (5) *natural capital* (resources stocks, land, water and ecosystems) which sustains all forms of life, protects the environment and buttresses protection against natural disasters (see Figure 2).

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[2] Social media is on the rise and gaining more importance as a channel of communication for individuals, communities, organisations and governments during crisis. Its impact on societal resilience is yet to be studied, although it is obvious that there are both risks and opportunities to resilience-based strategies flowing from growing reliance on social media (see Morie & Chance, 2012, on the use of social networks for building team resilience).
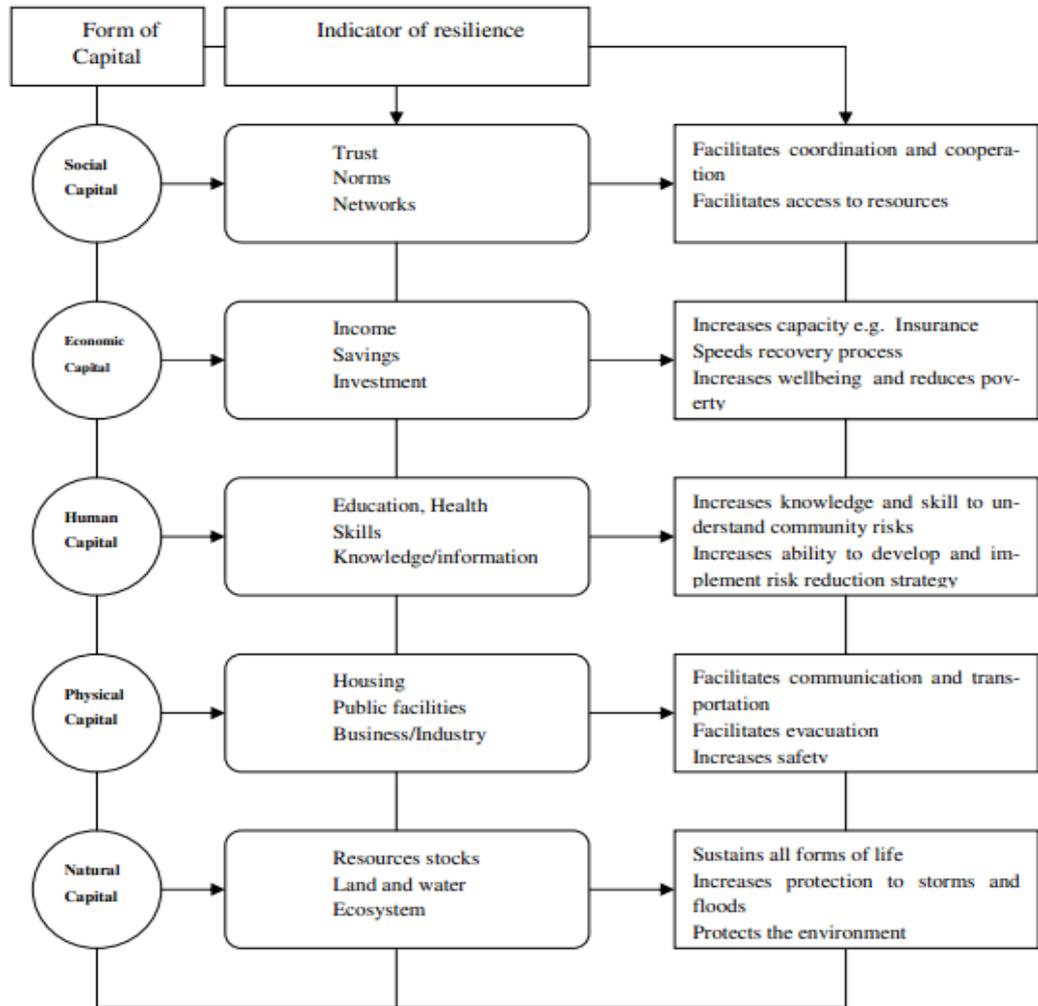
Figure 2: Forms of capital and indicators of resilience (Mayunga, 2007: 6).

18.   Although Mayunga's model was specifically designed with disaster resilience in mind, its forms of capital echo many of the networked resources in the model of Norris et al. (e.g. economic development, social capital, community competence). This further highlights that resilience is very broad-based (i.e. flows from a broad range of sources) and that society's strengths and weaknesses are its key determinants. In terrorism studies, for instance, resilience has already been accepted as a vital ingredient of a broader strategy of 'deterrence through denial': resilient societies are difficult to coerce by means of violent acts which, in turn, denies terrorists the benefits they seek and discourages and deters them from further attacks. According to Gearson (2012: 191):

> Clearly there are political contexts where the incidence of non-state violence against target communities will transcend short-term deterrent messages, but in strategic terms a resilient society is one that is not only better able to withstand shocks, but is also confident about its ability to do so and is therefore a less attractive target for terrorist attack. Resilience then as not merely the capacity for physical recovery but of psychological grit. Terrorism's violence as communication, replied to by society's capacity for community strength and determination, which derives from informed and stoic acceptance of the limits of security, but also belief in its ability to cope with many challenges thanks to preparatory measures and information.

8

19.   Mayunga also makes an important contribution not only by conceptualising community resilience but also by offering ways for measuring it, which makes it an attractive strategy to public policymakers concerned with gauging progress and understanding how well society is prepared to cope with adversity. According to him, social capital is expressed in such indicators as the number of non-profit organisations and voluntary associations, voter participation, newspaper readership, etc.; economic capital is reflected in the indicators of household income, property value, employment, investments, etc.; human capital is measured through educational attainment, health, population growth, demographic features, dependence ratios, etc.; physical capital is a function of the number and quality of housing units, shelters, critical infrastructure, etc.; and natural capital can be measured through water, air and soil quality, the size of forest or wetland areas, nature reserves, etc. (Mayunga, 2007).

20.   There is a great variety of international composite indices (e.g. the Gini index for measuring socio-economic inequality, the UN Human Development Index, the OECD's Education at a Glance, etc.) and standard statistical measures in various fields which could give a reasonable picture of where a particular society stands in terms of its resilience potential. Adger (2000: 352), however, also suggests that "social resilience is <…> observed by examining positive and negative aspects of social exclusion, marginalization and social capital" expressed in income stability and distribution, demographic change, migration patterns, etc. It is extremely important to identify specific societal groups or institutions, or geographical regions (see Maru, 2010, on the resilience of regions) where the lack of networked resources or some elements of capital underpinning societal or community resilience may lead to a failure and breakdown once some stressors put pressure – acute or chronic – on them. According to a Chatham House analysis, "poor communities are more vulnerable to shocks – but they are also more likely to be marginalized economically, politically or socially" (Lee & Preston, 2011: 14). Thus increasing social and economic development, reducing social vulnerability and poverty of such groups and regions should mean enhancing overall societal resilience (Djalante & Thomalla, 2010).

21.   Social and human capital should be of particular interest to those concerned with societal resilience as a strategy to deal with various national security threats. For instance, according to Buzzanell (2010: 6), "the process of building and utilizing social capital is essential to resilience." This entails pursuing societies which are built around high levels of social equity, trust, inclusion and involvement; which are highly educated and therefore able to critically assess risks, messages and leadership initiatives or to question the authorities; and which have a high density of communal relationships and high levels of understanding and trust between various communities (to which racism or ethnocentrism are particularly damaging in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society – see Long, 2008). In turn, this requires sustained policies and leadership behaviour consistent with and conducive to social and human capital growth and the legitimacy of society's institutions, values and norms.

22.   Nurturing societal resilience is a complicated process in the context of national security. On the one hand, the intangible nature of social and human capital means that policymakers tend to focus on economic or physical capital which is easier to measure or which has greater visibility as a key ingredient of resilience. Investing resources, time and effort in social and human capital, which is critical to societal resilience but which leads to resilience as a 'by-product', often receives far lesser attention in the national security discourse. On the other hand, explicitly establishing the notion that social and human capital is essential to national security might 'securitise' such aspects of society as education, voluntarism, community relationships

9

and inter-ethnic dialogue. This may lead to over-emphasising responding to security threats and risks as the main driver of social and human capital development.

III. Military resilience

23.   Resilience and resilience studies are a growing issue in the military (see McGeary, 2011). An expanding body of literature refers to the changed character of conflict and warfare (see, for example, Jordan et al., 2008). These changes, particularly the drawn-out character of conflicts (Casey, 2011) and the high relative importance of unconventional threats (see for description Primmerman, 2006) in modern military operations, have prompted the armed forces to review their planning and training activities in order to meet new challenges.

24.   Traumatic stress responses caused by the threat environment of modern conflicts resolve over time in most individuals, even though this does not mean persons will not be changed (Hamaoka et al., 2010). Sophisticated programmes are created to increase psychological strengths of military personnel and to reduce their maladaptive responses in order to enhance their resilience in operations of indefinite duration and unprecedented complexity (Cornum et al., 2011). Separate programmes are created for training resilience trainers (Reivich et al., 2011). In other words, due to the need to prepare soldiers to deal with military combat operational stressors, the shift of emphasis from reactive coping to proactive coping has occurred in military research. Corresponding training techniques are also emerging.

25.   In a military framework, the definition of resilience is somewhat vague and the concept is sometimes used in inconsistent ways. Some definitions are very narrow and refer to a traumatised patient's ability to function despite his/her symptoms; some are wider and encompass such domains as survival, adaptation, recovery, etc. (McGeary, 2011). For current purposes, resilience in a military context is defined as the "sum total of psychological processes that permit individuals to maintain or return to previous levels of well-being and functioning in response to adversity" (definition provided by the Technical Cooperation Programme, TTCP, see Bowles & Bates, 2010). As such, the concept can be considered a key issue because military mission readiness largely depends on the resilience of service members, their families, military units and communities.

26.   In military studies which explore resilient responses to stressful circumstances, the concept of *psychological hardiness* is widely used. It is an important individual characteristic associated with stress tolerance and successful performance in highly demanding occupations (Bartone et al., 2008). Previous research has established hardiness as a dispositional factor in preserving and enhancing performance and health despite stressful circumstances (Maddi et al., 2006). Hardiness is facilitated by a strong commitment to self, an attitude of vigorousness toward the environment, a sense of meaningfulness and an internal locus of control (Kobasa, 1979).

27.   There are suggestions that the critical aspect of the hardiness mechanism is likely to involve the interpretation of or the meaning that people attach to the events around them and their own place in this world of experiences. High-hardy people typically interpret experiences as interesting, challenging and something they can exert control over (Bartone, 2006). Based on that, training can be implemented so as to allow each individual soldier not only to manage the consequences of being exposed to threats, but also to avoid being traumatised in the first place – this can be done by strengthening their resilience before they face challenging situations (Casey, 2011).

10

28.   One training technique worth introducing here is the *Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF)* programme which was developed for the specific purpose of increasing the resilience of soldiers and improving their performance. According to Casey (2011), the aim of the programme is to train soldiers to *be* better before deployment in combat, so that they will not have to *get* better after they return. By adapting to the psychological resilience level of each individual, the goal is achieved with a preventive approach that enhances soldiers' psychological strengths which are already present in every person.

29.   The programme is composed of four elements:[3]

   (1) The assessment of (emotional, social, family, spiritual) fitness:
       ○ A special psychometric instrument (GAT) is developed and used to assess soldiers' psychosocial fitness;
       ○ Reassessment takes place at least once in every two years throughout everyone's career, so that each soldier is able to monitor his/her growth, maturity and learning.

   (2) Individualised learning modules to improve fitness in these domains:
       ○ Depending on GAT results, soldiers are offered a list of appropriate self-development opportunities;
       ○ Outcomes of the courses are monitored and adjustments (when needed) are made when deciding what components from the list should be sustained, expanded or excluded.

   (3) Formal resilience training:
       ○ Already at the beginning of their initial entry into the Army, soldiers receive instructions on specific mental and physical skills to enhance performance when facing challenges;
       ○ Special educational modules are composed with detailed descriptions of outcomes concerning emotional fitness, social fitness, family fitness and spiritual fitness.

   (4) Training of Army master resilience trainers (MRT):
       ○ These are primarily non-commissioned officers who have direct daily contact with soldiers and who are trained to deliver the resilience training in their units. For this purpose, a special resilience training programme is used, which has been composed in collaboration between civil and military academic and research institutions.

30.   Psychological resilience in the military also appears to be amplifiable via leadership. For example, research has revealed that military leadership plays a significant role in building resilience in military units. In reference to the role of leaders, resilience which can be cultivated through leading by example is related to morale among soldiers. Leaders influence and enhance the morale of their subordinates by providing them with a role model to think and behave in more resilient ways (Bartone, 2006). In military practice, resilience can be built with the help of several organisations and centres available to promote resilience for military members, providers, units, families and communities (Bowles & Bates, 2010).

31.   Due to its dynamic nature, it is useful to consider the Military Demand-Resource Model designed for the military and proposed by Bates et al. (2010). The aim of the MDR model is: (1) to use a strengths-based approach to

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[3] For a detailed description of implementation, see Cornum, Matthews & Seligman (2011).

assess what resources are available and what resources are needed based on the environmental demands; (2) to understand and optimise the interactions between a person's mind-body internal resources and the complexities of the military's demands and external resources; and (3) to assess the dynamic interaction between demands and resources over time. This model captures the complexity of interaction between human (individual level) and military (organisational level) systems. Together with the linkage between resilience, adaptation and wellness (Norris et al., 2008), we can consider resilience 'quasi-observable' by measuring, monitoring and systematically studying psychological wellness indicators in the wider society too (e.g. the occurrence of psychopathologies, healthy patterns of behaviour, adequate functioning in social roles and the level of quality of life).

32.   Programmes to strengthen the resilience of military organisations go above the level of individual factors to encompass factors that strengthen resilience in the military at family, unit and community levels. Individual capacities and their development are significant, but the armed forces operate as organisations where resilience of military units is of paramount importance to mission success and which, in turn, depends not only on the resilience of individuals comprising them. Meredith et al. (2011) list factors at family, unit and community levels which feed into broader military resilience (see Table 1). They find, however, that when it came to assessing various resilience-building programmes in the armed forces, "outcomes tended to be measured most frequently at the individual level, with fewer assessments mentioned at the family and organizational level (including unit)" (Meredith et al., 2011: 85).

Table 1: Resilience factors at unit and community levels (Meredith et al., 2011: 50).

Resilience Factors	Operational Definition
Unit Level	
Positive command climate	Facilitating and fostering intra-unit interaction, building pride/support for the mission, leadership, positive role modeling, and implementing institutional policies
Teamwork	Work coordination among team members, including flexibility
Cohesion	Team ability to perform combined actions; bonding together of members to sustain commitment to each other and the mission
Community Level	
Belongingness	Integration, friendships; group membership, including participation in spiritual/faith-based organizations, protocols, ceremonies, social services, schools, and so on; and implementing institutional policies
Cohesion	The bonds that bring people together in the community, including shared values and interpersonal belonging
Connectedness	The quality and number of connections with other people in the community; includes connections with a place or people of that place; aspects include commitment, structure, roles, responsibility, and communication
Collective efficacy	Group members' perceptions of the ability of the group to work together

33.   At first glance, the applicability of the military resilience-building techniques in a broader societal setting is somewhat limited. It is highly debatable whether a planned, directive, top-down approach inherent in the nature of

12

hierarchical organisations such as the military can work in the context of a vibrant, pluralist society, in which multiple – often clashing – perspectives, interests and groups flourish and where no single authority can strictly impose a uniform doctrinal solution. The complexity and the heterogeneity of society mean that such solutions will be either too simplistic or will be rejected by anyone feeling that the government is overstepping the boundaries of its authority in order to impose a particular mind-set in a very sensitive area of individual psyche. There is a quite obvious contrast between a planned and prescriptive path to achieving military resilience of service members on the one hand and broader collective societal resilience as a useful (and not necessarily assured) 'by-product' of investing in social and human capital on the other.

34.   The military approach to building resilience does, however, reflect some of the key issues pertaining to societal resilience. First of all, it highlights the importance of effective leadership in nurturing resilience at many levels. Leaders are positive role models in situations involving chronic or acute stressors – they serve as a critical pathway to collective resilience both in military and broader societal settings. According to Powley and Lopes (2011: 29), "concerted leadership is a dimension [of unit and organisational resilience] that also improves the resilience and efficacy of organizations while simultaneously contributing to their overall success by binding all resilience factors together (adequate resources, organizational learning, and flexibility and adaptability in the face of adversity)." In addition, although resilience is more observable in military settings through unit and individual performance indicators, societal resilience can also be assessed through surveys of well-being and through various proxy indicators as discussed earlier, which makes it worthwhile to study military experiences and to incorporate them in assessments of societal resilience, and vice versa.

35.   The capacities of psychological fitness (emotional, social, family and spiritual) underpin human flourishing not only in the armed forces but in society too. It must be noted that the successful demonstration of the effects of resilience training in soldiers and their families could also provide the basis for a model for the civilian world (see Seligman & Fowler, 2011), if designed and applied carefully. Usually, there are already multiple government-sponsored and civic support networks and schemes targeted at various social groups and inducing their hardiness in coping with adverse circumstances in life. What could be considered as a valuable addition based on military experiences in the field of strengthening individual resilience is the inclusion of formal (research evidence-based) psychological fitness training programmes, which could be made available both to members of society at large (through a national education system) and to community leaders who play an important role in societal resilience processes (through tailor-made projects and courses).

IV. Building societal resilience in Estonia

36.   In the public discourse, Estonian society is generally considered as rather resilient. The examples offered vary from the nation's survival under Soviet occupation with the fabric of national values largely intact to the absence of any significant social unrest in the face of the austerity measures undertaken by the government and the private sector to withstand the impact of the global financial crisis which started in 2009. The image of a stoical and unperturbed Estonian calmly weathering the storms of life is congruent with the notion of resilient, high-hardy individuals, communities, states and societies. This anecdotal evidence of resilience appears to be confirmed by international statistics which may serve as a proxy

13

indicator of societal resilience, spanning human and economic capital aspects: the UN Human Development Index ranks Estonia as 34th, classifying it under the category of countries with "very high human development", albeit below the average score in this category (UNDP, 2011).[4]

37.		This does not mean, however, that there are no issues to be addressed or challenges to be overcome in moving towards an ever more resilient society in Estonia. For instance:

37.1		Ever since its accession to NATO and the EU – two major strategic goals – Estonia has somewhat lacked a compelling, unifying and mobilizing vision for the future of the state and society. The definition of this kind of vision ("*credo* for a better future") through an inclusive political and societal process and consensus-building is an exercise in political leadership and civic involvement in itself. But it is also a vital source of society's resilience when dealing with turbulence and uncertainty in its security environment.

37.2		There are significant regional disparities in terms of economic development, with peripheral counties in the north eastern, eastern, south eastern and southern parts of Estonia lagging far behind the leading regions (see Kaldaru & Paas, 2009). It is particularly alarming that one of these underperforming regions (Ida-Virumaa) is dominated by ethnic non-Estonians, thus adding an ethnic layer to the problem of insufficient development in certain regions.

37.3		The level of trust within society has to be enhanced (which also pertains to building trust between ethnic Estonians and non-Estonians). This requires continuous monitoring of mutual perceptions of various social groups and developing the mechanisms for conducting an effective dialogue and establishing an enduring consensus between them.[5] Political, civic, economic and cultural exclusion of various societal groups has to be avoided not only as a matter of principle in a democratic egalitarian society, but also because it erodes society's resilience and, by extension, undermines national security.

37.4		The level of voluntarism which could serve as one of the indicators of social capital is quite low in Estonia: some recent findings showed that only 4.5% of the population had performed voluntary work within a month before the survey in 2009–2010 (Kaarna & Noor, 2011: 20). The numbers of those involved in voluntary action from time to time (e.g. in large-scale civic initiatives of short duration) are higher and by some accounts may even reach almost half of the population (see Jõe, 2010: 104). However, further sustained efforts are needed to promote voluntarism in society as a way to develop social capital and thus increase societal resilience.

37.5		The development of civil society, including various community networks and the networks of voluntary social and psychological support for individuals, families and groups, has to be actively

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[4] The UN Human Development Index is a composite of measures reflecting the standard of living (Gross National Income), health (life expectancy) and access to knowledge (years of schooling, etc.). It is also adjusted to reflect inequalities (such as of income, gender, education) within each country.

[5] A great example of the efforts made in this direction is the regular monitoring studies of the integration of Estonian society (i.e. focused on the integration of ethnic Estonians and non-Estonians) commissioned by the Estonian Ministry of Culture (see Estonian Ministry of Culture, 2011). This only serves to underline the point that national security policymakers concerned with societal resilience have to scan a very broad horizon of issues, including those in the remit of an organisation that clearly does not directly deal with national security, i.e. the Ministry of Culture. 14

encouraged and promoted at local, regional and national levels. Support for and the strengthening of the so-called 'third sector' and the mechanisms of governmental cooperation with it should thus form part of Estonian national security policy aimed at building societal resilience. As Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves pointed out in his address upon taking his oath of office, "a strong third sector is the most effective safeguard against populism and the best self-defence in cases where a crisis or catastrophe befalls society" (Ilves, 2011).

37.6   Critical thinking, risk assessment and risk management skills have to be developed and maintained in society, especially through the Estonian national education system. They are indispensable enablers of resilient responses to national security issues, including in situations where there is an active effort by hostile actors to erode trust in society and to undermine the fabric of its values. There are some expert opinions, however, that the Estonian education system is failing to promote critical thought and that manifestations of critical perspectives in society are often interpreted as acts that are harmful to the state and its image (see Postimees, 2011).

37.7   The quality of leadership in politics, civil society, public administration and the private sector must continuously be attended to. Models of leadership behaviour which are conducive to societal resilience under various stressors and therefore to national security have to be well understood and practised at various levels. Such established formats as the Senior Courses in National Defence could be utilised to impart knowledge (e.g. theoretical models and case studies) about credible leadership in sustaining resilience during national security crises.

37.8   More efforts have to be put into general resilience training of individual members of society – their sense of well-being and responses to various stressors eventually affect collective societal resilience.[6] The U.S. Army's example demonstrates it is possible to strengthen self-awareness and inner capacities underpinning individual resilience through programmes based on behavioural research. Similar programmes in the Estonian Defence Forces would not only enhance their organisational resilience but would also have a broader societal effect, especially if targeted at conscripts and members of the Defence League – Estonia still retains a strong link between society and the military through these institutions which can be utilised with the purpose of increasing resilience of individuals in society at large. Elements of resilience training could also be included in the Estonian upper secondary school curriculum as part of national defence or psychology courses.

37.9   Crisis communication effectiveness has to be enhanced and maintained. This is one of the principles the Estonian government has endorsed in the area of crisis management, but its application is not always frictionless as demonstrated by the confusing information issued to the public during a gunman incident in the Estonian MOD building in August 2011. The episode also highlighted the importance of media responsibility in ensuring reliable crisis communication and thus sustaining societal resilience during national emergencies.

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[6] According to conclusions of a pan-European research consortium, "European citizens should be regarded as a decisive and integral part in any future Crisis Management solution. <...> Research and innovation should analyse how the public could be best enabled to actively contribute to such solutions, what the key enablers are and how the public should be educated, trained and prepared to be ready to act accordingly when the moment is there…" (ESRIF, 2009: 114).

38.　　　　The above list is not exhaustive and, of course, places an emphasis on investments in social, human and to a certain degree economic capital of the nation as critical pathways to societal resilience. It is, however, worth reminding ourselves that the approach to nurturing resilience has to be holistic and thus include investments in resilient physical infrastructure (especially critical infrastructure and critical information infrastructure) and in preventing the erosion of Estonia's natural capital.

Conclusions

39.　　　　The attraction of the concept of 'psychological defence' to Estonian policymakers and practitioners is understandable: it creates an impression that inputs and outputs can be controlled and therefore gives a sense of being in charge and proactive in managing a crucial facet of national security. It also implies that certain external hostile forces are actively threatening social cohesion and values of Estonian society, which therefore calls for active measures by the state and society to defend them. The latter may be true, but the variety of security threats and risks which may undermine the sense of security and well-being in society is far broader than just a chronic stressor in the form of hostile efforts by some external actor to sow discord in or to undermine the self-confidence of Estonian society. Resilience as a holistic concept is far better suited as a framework for thinking about how to ensure the flexibility and the adaptation of a small nation who wants to survive and prosper in a turbulent security environment without the risk of developing a 'siege mentality' or drawing charges of manipulation that 'psychological defence' is susceptible to.

40.　　　　Societal resilience provides a whole-of-government approach rooted in Estonia's national security and defence policies because the nurturing of its constituent elements – channelling investments in various forms of national capital (social, human, economic, physical, natural) – is obviously something which can only be done by concerted long-term efforts by different organisations. Furthermore, due to the importance of the non-governmental sector (NGOs, the media, educational organisations, local communities, private enterprises) in enhancing societal resilience, this concept also extends well beyond the government and even calls for putting the non-governmental sector at the forefront of national security efforts ('whole-of-society' approach), with the government acting mostly as a facilitator and enabler.

41.　　　　Notably, 'societal resilience' even serves as a better narrative than 'national security' or 'national defence' (let alone 'psychological defence') for involving many organisations – both governmental and non-governmental – not formally related to the national security sector. These organisations often do not see themselves as an organic part of national security or defence policymaking and implementation and, indeed, are repelled by references to these fields. However, in times of crisis and emergency, they have a vital role to play in ensuring or restoring the sense of security, well-being and trust in a better future within various communities and within society as a whole. Success is more likely if they are engaged by national security policymakers with a reference to the need to strengthen social, human, natural and economic capital of the nation and thus to build its resilience capacities, drawing upon the experiences of particular organisations (e.g. military) when appropriate, than with calls for becoming involved in 'psychological defence'.

16

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18

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19