

A popular geopolitics of the refugee crisis in Europe: The re-actualization of identity-driven geopolitical narratives in Estonia

Yatsyk A.

Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kremlevskaya 18, Kazan, Russia

Abstract

© 2018 The Author(s). Published by Taylor & Francis. The article examines the question of how the refugee crisis in Europe re-actualizes the existing national geopolitical narratives and affects the border-(re)drawing of European political communities. I particularly refer to the Estonian experience, which I examine through two different case studies. The first one focuses on the refugee issue as seen from the perspective of fostering a less nationalistic and more heterogeneous identity in Estonia, expressed in the language of contemporary art. The second one addresses the perceptions of the refugee debate by Russian speakers in Narva who directly relate this question to their personal experiences with integration into Estonian society since the fall of the Soviet Union. I analyse both issues within the framework of popular geopolitics that tackles cultural representations of territories, spaces, and identity politics from the viewpoint of vernacular, home-grown, and routine meanings, to bring this culturally focused approach to the foreground of research into politically sensitive phenomena.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1486300>

References

- [1] BAC. 2016. In the trails of the boat refugees. Baltic Art Center. <http://www.balticartcenter.com/projects/balticboat/>.
- [2] Bahovski, E. 2016. Toomas Hendrik Ilves: Europe is in serious crisis because of the re-nationalisation of politics. Diplomaatia, May. <https://www.diplomaatia.ee/en/article/too-mas-hendrik-ilves-europe-is-in-serious-crisis-because-of-the-re-nationalisation-of-politics/>.
- [3] Baltnews. 2016. [Kristiina Oyuland: Russkie Tanki — Eto Ne To, Chego Zhitelyam Estonii Nado Boyat'sya]. Baltnews.ee, April 4. http://baltnews.ee/voice-of_the_people/20160404/1014648199.html.
- [4] Berg, E. 2003. Some unintended consequences of geopolitical reasoning in post-soviet Estonia: Texts and policy streams, maps and cartoons. *Geopolitics* 8 (1):101-20. doi:10.1080/714001012.
- [5] Braghiroli, S., and A. Makarychev. 2017. Redefining Europe: Russia and the 2015 refugee crisis. *Geopolitics*. doi:10.1080/14650045.2017.1389721.
- [6] Cianetti, L., and R. Nakai. 2017. Critical Trust in European Institutions: The Case of the Russian-Speaking Minorities in Estonia and Latvia. *Problems of Post-Communism* 64 (5):276-90. doi:10.1080/10758216.2016.1237292.
- [7] Dittmer, J., and N. Gray. 2010. Popular Geopolitics 2.0: Towards new methodologies of the everyday. *Geography Compass* 4 (11):1664-77. doi:10.1111/geco.2010.4.issue-11.
- [8] Ektermann, M. 2017. A round table on post-socialism, post-colonialism, nationalism, travelling and belonging. *Kunst.ee*, 4. <http://ajakirikunst.ee/?c=magazine&l=en&t=a-round-table-on-post-socialism-post-colonialism-nationalism-travelling-and-belonging&id=1868>.
- [9] Err. 2016. Estonia less than enthusiastic about proposed EU asylum system change. *Err*, April 7. <http://news.err.ee/v/3fc82d69-6f26-4ca7-8989-cf69d44b29f6>.
- [10] Err.rus. 2015. [Mar'yu Lauristin: Mezhdue Estoniei i Stranami Zapada Mozhet Poyavit'sya Stena]. *Err. rus*, September 11. <https://rus.err.ee/216951/marju-lauristin-mezhdue-jestonie-i-stranami-zapada-mozhet-pojavitsja-stena>.
- [11] EV100. 2016. Seven Winners of Estonia 100 Art Competition Announced. *EV100*, March 21. www.ev100.ee/en/seven-winners-estonia-100-art-competition-announced.
- [12] Hogan-Brun, G., and S. Wright. 2013. Language, nation and citizenship: Contrast, conflict and convergence in Estonia's debate with the international community. *Nationalities Papers* 41 (2):240-58. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00905992.2012.747502>.
- [13] Kaljurand, M. 2015a. [Ispytanie Dlya Evropy]. *Postimees*. <https://rus.postimees.ee/3373747/ispytanie-dlya-evropy>.
- [14] Kaljurand, M. 2015b. Migration crisis is a trial by fire for all of Europe. *Diplomaatia*, October. <https://www.diplomaatia.ee/en/article/migration-crisis-is-a-trial-by-fire-for-all-of-europe/>.

- [15] Kaljurand, R. 2015. Estonia's 'Virtual Russian World': The Influence of Russian Media on Estonia's Russian Speakers. *Diplomaatia* 147. www.diplomaatia.ee/en/article/estonia-virtual-russian-world-the-influence-of-russian-media-on-estonia-russian-speakers-1/.
- [16] Kallas, K. 2016. Claiming the diaspora: Russia's compatriot policy and its reception by Estonian-Russian population. *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 15 (3):1-25.
- [17] Kasekamp, A. 2010. *A History of the Baltic States*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [18] Kattago, S. 2008. Commemorating liberation and occupation: War memorials along the Road to Narva. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Routledge. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01629770802461225>.
- [19] Khvostov, A. 2013. [Strasti Po Sillamyae]. Tallinn: Kite.
- [20] Klenskii, D. 2016. [Rusofobiya I Neonatsizm v Estonii]. *REGNUM*, December 18. <https://regnum.ru/news/2218901.html>.
- [21] Kolstø, P. 2011. Beyond Russia, becoming local: Trajectories of adaption to the fall of the soviet union among ethnic Russians in the former soviet republics. *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2 (2):153-63. doi:10.1016/j.euras.2011.03.006.
- [22] Kreindler, I. T. 1988. Baltic area languages in the Soviet Union: A sociolinguistic perspective. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 19 (1):5-20. doi:10.1080/0162977870000231.
- [23] Külmoja, I. 2016. No country stands alone - Except Maybe Syria! *UT Blog*, January 15. <http://blog.ut.ee/no-country-stands-alone-except-maybe-syria>.
- [24] Kunstimaja. 2016. Edgar Tedresaar 'Teekond Vabadusse/Journey to Freedom' 05. 05.- 29. 05.2016/Monumentaalgalerii. Tartu Art House, May 1. <http://kunstimaja.ee/2016/05/4577>.
- [25] Kuus, M. 2007. *Geopolitics Reframed, Security and Identity in Europe's Eastern Enlargement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [26] Lauristin, M., and M. Heidmets. 2002. Introduction: The Russian Minority in Estonia as a theoretical and political issue. In *The challenge of the Russian minority. Emerging multicultural democracy in Estonia*, ed. M. Lauristin and M. Heidmets, 19-31. Tartu: Tartu University Press.
- [27] Lenta.ru. 2016. He [Ne Prikhodite v Moi Dom]. *Lenta.ru*, March 31. <https://lenta.ru/artec/2016/03/31/migrants/>.
- [28] Makarychev, A., and A. Yatsyk. 2016. Russia-EU Borderlands after the Ukraine Crisis: The Case of Narva. In *Neighbourhood perceptions of the Ukraine Crisis*, ed. K. Stoklosa and G. Besier, 100-15. London & New York: Routledge.
- [29] Makarychev, A., and A. Yatsyk. 2017. Estonia and the refugees: Political discourses and artistic representations. *Global Affairs* 3 (1): 1-13. doi: 10.1080/23340460.2017.1316593.
- [30] Moisis, S., V. Bachmann, L. Bialasiewicz, E. Dell'Agnese, J. Dittmer, and V. Mamadouh. 2013. Mapping the political geographies of europeanization: National discourses, external perceptions and the question of popular culture. *Progress in Human Geography* 37 (6):737-61. doi:10.1177/0309132512472093.
- [31] Morton, E. 2015. Abandoned Estonian train station in shared memory art project. *The Calvert Journal*, July 10. <https://www.calvertjournal.com/news/show/4389/estonian-train-station-shared-memory-art-project-station-talks-voru>.
- [32] Muravskaja, T. 2018. Tanja Muravskaja. Artist Portfolio. *Tanjamuravskaja*. Accessed May 20. http://www.tanjamuravskaja.com/TanjaMuravskaja_Portfolio_2.pdf.
- [33] Norman, K. 2013. *Common Ground*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKiiyHyvs84&feature=youtu.be>.
- [34] Ojavee, S. 2016. LAIVI: My success is your opinion. In *On dissapearing and for vanishing at the Tartu Art Museum*, 11. 03.-29.05.2016. Exhibition guide, ed. R. Artel and S. Ojavee. Tartu: Tartu Art Museum.
- [35] Orlov, S. 2015. [Estoniya Polykhnuia Nenavist'yu K Bezhtensam]. *Svobodnaya Pressa*, September 4. <http://svpressa.ru/world/article/131049/>.
- [36] Petsinis, V. 2016. The Refugee Question in Europe: 'South' vs. 'East.' *Opendemocracy*, January 7. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/vassilis-petsinis/refugee-question-in-europe-south-vs-east>.
- [37] Pfoser, A. 2015. Between security and mobility: Negotiating a hardening border regime in the Russian-Estonian Borderland. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41 (10):1684-702. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2015.1015408.
- [38] Postimees. 2016a. 1 in 5 respondents in Estonian survey see refugee issue as biggest problem'. *Postimees*, February 18. http://news.postimees.ee/3588993/1-in-5-respondents-in-estonian-survey-see-refugee-issue-as-biggest-problem?_ga=1.85635801.1111549236.1458244389.
- [39] Postimees. 2016b. [Oyuland Predlozhila Zapretit' Koran v Obschchestvennykh Mestakh v Estonii]. *Postimees*, April 3. <https://rus.postimees.ee/3641495/oyuland-predlozhila-zapretit-koran-v-obshchestvennykh-mestah-v-estonii>.
- [40] Raik, K. 2014. [Moya Narva: Mezhdyy Dvykh Mirov]. Tartu: Petrone Print.
- [41] Republic of Estonian Government. 2016. The general attitude of estonian residents towards migration and refugees has significantly improved. Republic of Estonian Government, December 6. <https://valitsus.ee/en/news/general-attitude-estonian-residents-towards-migration-and-refugees-has-significantly-improved>.
- [42] Rogoff, I. 2001. *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- [43] RusPostimees. 2015. [Ofitsial'nyi Otvet Narva-lyesuu: U Goroda Net Vozmozhnosti Prinyat' Bezhtentsev]. *Rus.Postimees*, September 11. <https://rus.postimees.ee/3324561/ofitsial-nyy-otvet-narva-yyesuu-u-goroda-net-vozmozhnosti-prinyat-bezhencev>.
- [44] RusPostimees. 2016. Кылварт: Наша Система Не Готова К Приему Беженцев [Kylvart: Nasha Sistema Ne Gotova K Priemu Bezhentsev]. *Rus.Postimees*, March 30. <https://rus.postimees.ee/3636835/kylvart-nasha-sistema-ne-gotova-k-priemu-bezhencev>.
- [45] Sepp, A., and E. Kõks. 2014. *Mis Teha, Siin Ta On. Pagulase Elu Piltides/Refugee. Refugee Life in Pictures*. ed. Ilvi. Jõe-Cannon. Salmistu: Eesti Diasporaa Akadeemia.
- [46] Sepp, H. 2017. Vaat' Kõrvalt Näotut Emigranti. *SIRP*, October 6. <http://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/c9-sotsiaalia/vaat-korvalt-naotut-emigranti/>.
- [47] Sikorskii, D. 2016. [Estoniya Bez Rossii: Vmesto Zheleznykh Dorog - Bezhtentsy]. *Ekonomika Segodnya*, April 16. <https://rueconomics.ru/169236-estoniya-bez-rossii-vmesto-zheleznykh-dorog-bezhency>.
- [48] Stolitsa. 2016. [Oyuland: Bezhtentsy-Eto Problema, Kotoraya Ob'einyayet Zhivuschchikh K Estonii Lyudei]. *Stolitsa.ee*, February 8. <http://stolitsa.ee/122059>.
- [49] Tambur, S. 2015. Migration crisis polarizes opinions in Estonia. *ERR*, May 5. <https://news.err.ee/115897/migration-crisis-polarizes-opinions-in-estonia>.
- [50] Triisberg, A. 2009. Between nation and people: On concepts of (Un)belonging. In *After war*, ed. K. Norman, 88-108. Tartu: Center for Contemporary Arts.
- [51] Triisberg, A. 2016. "Feminist Art Strategies in the Migration Debate." *Kunst.ee* 2. <http://ajakir.ikunst.ee/?c=magazine&l=en&t=feminist-art-strategies-in-the-migration-debate&id=1573>.
- [52] Trimbach, D. J., and O. Shannon. 2015. Russians in Estonia: Is Narva the next Crimea? *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 56 (5):493-504. doi:10.1080/15387216.2015.1110040.
- [53] Utro.ru. 2016. [Estoniya Ne Primet Bezhtentsev]. *Utro.ru*, June 2. <https://utro.ru/news/2016/06/02/1284674.shtml>.
- [54] Vahtla, A. 2017. Minister: No plan to discuss new refugee resettlement scheme at present. *ERR*, September 28. <http://news.err.ee/633024/minister-no-plan-to-discuss-new-refugee-resettlement-scheme-at-present>.
- [55] Veebel, V., I. Ploom, and A. Kasekamp. 2016. Estonian perceptions of security: Not only about Russia and the refugees. *Journal on Baltic Security* 2 (1):35-70.
- [56] Veretennikova, K. 2017. [Neruskie Iduti!]. *Versia.ru*, February 27. <https://versia.ru/evrosoyuz-zaselyaet-vymirayushhuyu-pribaltiku-bezhencami-iz-afriki-i-azii>.
- [57] Vihalemm, T. 2016. What factors divide and consolidate Russian population in Estonia? *Integration Challenges in a Radicalizing World*, November 29-30. Tartu. <http://www.slide.share.net/misakonverents/prof-triin-vihalemm-what-factors-divide-and-consolidate-russian-population-in-estonia>.
- [58] ViruProspect. 2015a. [Za Leto Otnoshenie Zhitelei Estonii K Priemu Bezhtentsev Ukhudshilos]. *ViruProspect*, September 4. <http://prospekt.ee/respublika/2960-za-let-o-otnoshenie-zhiteley-estonii-k-priemu-bezhencev-uhudshilos.html>.
- [59] ViruProspect. 2015b. [Ida-Viruskie Samoupravleniya Gotovy Skazat' Bezhtensam 'net']. *ViruProspect*, September 8. <http://prospekt.ee/politika/2995-ida-viruskie-samoupravleniya-gotovy-skazat-bezhencam-net.html>.
- [60] Voog, A. 2016. Arvamusuring Eesti Elanike Hoiakutest Pagulastesse', [Opinion Polls on the Attitudes of Estonian Residents towards Refugees]. https://www.valitsus.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/failid/arvamusuuring_eeesti_elanike_hoiakutest_pagulastesse_nov.2016.pdf.
- [61] Yatsyk, A. 2016. *Shaping Estonian: National identity in film, art and song*. In *Suturing the ruptures: Seams and stitches in the Baltic Sea Region*, ed. A. Makarychev and A. Yatsyk, 197-226. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[62] Zabrodskaia, A. 2015. 'What is my country to Me?' Identity construction by Russian-speakers in the Baltic countries. *Sociolinguistic Studies* 9 (2-3):217-41. doi:10.1558/sols.v9i2.26885.